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A TANGLED WEB

Polish-Jewish Relations
in Wartime Northeastern Poland
and the Aftermath

(PART THREE)

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Part Three: Retaliations, Conquest and Revenge

The Brigade Headquarters decided to raze Koniuchy to the ground to set an example to others. One evening a hundred and twenty of the best partisans … set out in the direction of the village. There were about 50 Jews among them … The order was not to leave any one alive … With torches prepared in advance, the partisans burned the houses, stables, and granaries, while opening heavy fire on the houses. … The mission was completed within a short while. Sixty households, numbering about 300 people, were destroyed, with no survivors.
Chaim Lazar

Immediately after the return of the Red Army to Lithuania, there was very close collaboration between the Jews and the Soviets, considered by the Holocaust survivors as their savior. Moscow trusted the Jewish survivors more than those who had been anti-Communists before the war; more than the Lithuanians who were Communists in the past but behaved in a doubtful way under the Nazis.
Aba Gefen

German Measures to Curtail Contacts and Poison Relations Between Poles and Jews

The notion that Poles treated Jews with endemic hostility and took every opportunity to strike at them for racial or religious reasons is a stereotype, promoted by ethnonationalists, that has little basis in fact. By and large, relations between Jews and Poles in the countryside had traditionally been peaceful and were not marred by the type of incidents that occurred from time to time in cities and towns. As numerous German reports and Jewish testimonies confirm, this relatively favourable situation prevailed in the *Generalgouvernement* during the first years of the occupation. It is to this initial period of the German occupation of Poland that the rescue of Jews in Western Europe should be compared,[1] if at all, and certainly

[1] There were no specific laws penalizing non-Jews who helped Jews in German-occupied France, Belgium, Denmark or Italy. Therefore, the risk of punishment was negligible, as arbitrary acts carried out by the Germans beyond legislative norms for such activities were rare. In the Netherlands, where conditions were the harshest, if Gentiles who helped Jews were punished, usually short-term (up to 6 months) "protective custody" was imposed only severe cases, such defiance of orders by policemen, were sent to concentration camps. (On May 9, 1943, 1,604 Gentiles were incarcerated for helping Jews; slightly more than a year later, the number had increased to 1,997.) In many cases, however, those who were caught harbouring Jews, even repeatedly, were left at liberty. A substantial portion of the rescue activities in France, Belgium and the Netherlands was paid, in other words, the Jews themselves had to absorb the costs of those services. In Belgium, for example, the Jewish self-help organization *Comité de Défense des Juifs* raised huge sums of money, most of it from individual Jews and Jewish groups, and paid thousands of rescuers generous monthly stipends of 300–500 Belgian francs per charge. Only very small numbers of people were actively engaged in helping Jews and not the population at large. (The population of the Netherlands around 9 million in 1942, and that of Belgium was around 8,400,000 in 1939.) The notion that rescue was a socially acceptable norm in Western Europe is simply belied by many factors. The extent of denunciations and betrayal was significant. Of the estimated 28,000 Jews who tried to evade capture in the Netherlands, at least 12,000 were caught, most of them betrayed or hunted down by Dutch collaborators. (While the number of Jewish survivors, approximately 16,000, is known, the number of Jews who went into hiding and those who were caught could have been several thousand higher in each category.) Of the 30,000 Jews

who hid inside Belgium after the deportations, 8,240 were arrested, again largely because of denunciations. The Dutch police, like the French police, played a central role in the deportation of Jews. This was especially true in the smaller cities and villages, where the German police were usually not involved in the deportations. As in Paris, ninety percent of the Amsterdam police reportedly cooperated with the round-ups, and a German occupation official (Lages, head of the Security Police and SD in Amsterdam) proclaimed after the war that without the Dutch police "it would have been practically impossible to seize even ten percent of Dutch Jewry." See Marnix Croes, "The Holocaust in the Netherlands and the Rate of Jewish Survival," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies,* vol. 20, no. 3 (Winter 2006): 474–99; Bob Moore, *Victims and Survivors: The Nazi Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands 1940–1945* (London: Arnold; New York: St. Martin's, 1997); Bob Moore, *Survivors: Jewish Self-Help and Rescue in Nazi-Occupied Western Europe* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), chapters 5–13, passim; Pim Griffioen and Ron Zeller, "Anti-Jewish Policy and Organization of the Deportations in France and the Netherlands, 1940–1944: A Comparative Study," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies,* vol. 20, no. 3 (Winter 2006): 437–73. Conditions in Norway, with a population of 3 million in 1942 including about 1,800 Jews, was also very precarious. Hundreds of Norwegian police took part in raids to capture Jews in the fall of 1942, thus ensuring their deportation to the German death camps. (Of the 761 Jews who were deported, only 24 returned.) The survival of the Jews depended on their ability to reach neighbouring neutral Sweden (about 1,000 succeeeded in doing so, two were killed and robbed by smugglers), and the smuggling services provided by Norwegians couriers were usually paid for by the Jews themselves. Only about forty Jews actually survived in hiding inside the country. See Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews,* Third edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), vol. 2, 584–89; Saul S. Friedman, *A History of the Holocaust* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004), 327–29; Moore, *Survivors,* chapter 4. In the German-occupied British Channel Islands, which was home to only a handful of Jews, local officials even registered individuals who were not legally speaking Jewish, and then handed them over to the Gestapo. Most of these Jews later died in concentration or death camps. According to one important study, "high-ranking government, police and bureaucratic officials in Jersey and Guernsey participated wholeheartedly and almost without question in the persecution of resident Jews and in the programme of Aryanization aimed at the exclusion of Jewish economic and business interests. They did not protest. They did not invoke underlying principles of British justice or of basic humanity. Instead they not only complied with German commands, but they frequently took the initiative in seeking out Jewish individuals or Jewish businesses for the sole purpose of applying Nazi legalized anti-Semitism as fully as possible. … The entire legal, police and bureaucratic machinery of the Channel Islands actively assisted in the implementation of Nazi anti-Semitic legal norms and practices." See David Fraser, *The Jews of the Channel Islands and the Rule of Law, 1940–1945: 'Quite contrary to the principles of British justice'* (Brighton and Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2000).

Comparisons to Denmark, which even by Western European experiences was entirely exceptional, are virtually meaningless. Denmark, a country of 3,900,000 in 1942 including 7,800 Jews, was Nazi Germany's "model protectorate." Denmark surrendered without virtually any resistance, cooperated fully with the invaders, and raised 6,000 recruits for the Wadden-SS to support the German war effort. Following the invasion, Denmark was occupied by a single German infantry division and even that division was withdrawn in May 1940 to participate in the campaign against France and the Low Countries. Allowed to retain its king, ministry, parliament, political parties, army, and police forces, Denmark was supervised by eighty-five German civilian officials and an additional 130 employees. The Germans interfered very little in its internal affairs, and remarkably the standard of living actually improved during the war. Damage to property and loss of lives was minimal (perhaps several thousand civilians were killed during the entire war), so unlike what the citizens of unoccupied Britain endured. Until the fall of 1943 Danish Jews were unmolested. The much lauded evacuation of the Jewish population was in fact orchestrated by the Germans and posed virtually no risk for the Danes who took part in the operation. SS general Dr. Werner Best, the German in charge in Denmark, gave a free hand to Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, the martime attaché at the German embassy in Copenhagen, to do whatever was necessary to derail the planned deportation of the Jews. Duckwitz flew to Sweden, where he secretly met with President Per Albin Hannson, who assured him that, should the action against the Danish Jews take place, Sweden would in principle be ready to admit them. When the round-up of Jews was about to begin, Duckwitz made his way back to Sweden to alert the Swedish government to be ready to admit the fleeing Jews. The local German naval command warned the Danish underground of the impending fate of the Jews, disabled the German harbour patrol, and turned a blind eye to the rescue operation. The Jews who were transported to Sweden by Danish boatmen were allowed entry. Since the rescue operation took place with the collusion of the local German naval command, there were no casualties either among the Jews or among the boatmen. No Dane faced punishment from the Germans for taking part in this operation. While many Danes provided Jews with short-term assistance until they could make arrangements to leave Denmark, the Jews were expected to pay for their transportation out of the country. During the initial stages of the rescue operation, only well-to-do Danish Jews could afford the short passage to Sweden. Private boatmen (mostly fishermen) set their own price and the costs were prohibitive, ranging from 1,000 to 10,000 kroner per person ($160 to $1600 U.S. in the currency of that period). The boat owners considered these hefty payments as a form of guarantee of indemnity for any loss of or damage to their boats. Afterwards, when organized Danish rescue groups stepped in to coordinate the flight and to collect funds, the average price per person fell to 2,000 and then 500 kroner. The total cost of the rescue operation was about 12 million kroner, of which the Jews paid about 7 million kroner, including a 750,000 kroner loan which the Jews had to repay after the war. See Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European*

not to later periods when the Germans imposed a death penalty in Poland for any assistance rendered to Jews.

During the first eastward flights of Jews in September 1939, tens of thousands of Christians took them in and fed them without charge.[2] A Jewish doctor, who was part of a group of Jewish refugees from Łódź, recalled: "The peasants let us sleep in their barns, and by and large were fairly well disposed toward us."[3] A similar situation prevailed when Jews fled to the countryside by the thousands to escape executions and round-ups in later months.[4] One member of a group of four young Jewish men who set out from Ostrołęka westward towards Łomża, ultimately in vain, recalled:

Jews, Third edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), vol. 2, 589–99; Gunnar S. Paulsson, "The 'Bridge over the Øresund': The Historiography on the Expulsion of the Jews from Nazi-Occupied Denmark," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 30 (1995): 431–64; Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Holocaust: A History* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), 153; Mordecai Paldiel, *The Righteous Among the Nations* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: Collins, 2007), 105–109; *Leni Yahil, The Rescue of Danish Jewry: Test of a Democracy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1969), 261–65, 269. Many Jews trying to leave Denmark were turned back by greedy Danish boatmen in the initial stages, and anti-Jewish comments were heard frequently in Denmark at that time. Not only were Danish fishermen not prepared to risk their lives, they were also not prepared to risk their boats. A member of the Danish resistance explains why the entire undertaking was so costly: "Another member of the group, a girl, knew a fisherman who had moved his boat to Copenhagen and she went down to see him and asked him if he would approach his colleagues and try to help because we wanted boats to transport the Jews across the Sound. His answer was yes, but we would have to guarantee new boats in case we were caught by the police or the Germans and lose the boats." See See Emily Taitz, ed., *Holocaust Survivors* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 2007), vol. 1, 181, 216–17; Smith, *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust*, 196. That the boatmen were gouging the Jews is beyond question: Jewish organizations were able to bring Bundists fleeing from the Soviet Union in 1940, from Wilno (Vilnius) to the United States via Vladivostok and Yokohama, for $518 US per person. See Daniel Blatman, *For Our Freedom and Yours: The Jewish Labour Bund in Poland, 1939–1949* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003), 28. Although the hunt for Jews who remained behind after the evacuation lasted only three weeks and was not carried out with any severity, some 120 Danish Jews were betrayed. Some 60–70 Jews who had taken refuge in the loft of the Gilleleje church were captured by the Germans after being tipped off by Danish informants. Only about 100 Jews survived in hiding with the local population inside Denmark. According to historian Vilhjalmur Örn Vilhjalmsson of the Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Danish officials voluntarily handed over at least 132 Jews to the Germans between 1940 and 1944 and later tried to alter documents to make it look as if they had acted under German orders. (Those same officials rose to prominent positions in the police force and the legal system after the war.) On their return to Denmark after the war, many Jews found that their property and belongings had been sold to finance their rescue and met with ill-feeling and opposition from Danes who had taken over Jewish businesses. See Poul Borschenius, *The History of the Jews* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), vol. 5, 57.

[2] See, for example, Ruta Sakowska, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawskiego*, vol. 2: *Dzieci—tajne nauczanie w getcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny IN-B, 2000), 46; Havi Ben-Sasson, "Polish-Jewish Relations during the Holocaust: A Changing Jewish Viewpoint," in Robert Cherry and Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, eds., *Rethinking Poles and Jews: Troubled Past, Brighter Future* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 89–97. Ben-Sasson points out that the initial more objective portrayal of Poles in Holocaust accounts later gave way to negative stereotypes.

[3] Edward Reicher, *Country of Ash: A Jewish Doctor in Poland, 1939–1945* (New York: Bellevue Literary Press, 2013), 30.

[4] When Jewish men were ordered by the Germans to report in Chełm, "A few hundred Jews left for the surrounding *shtetlekh* and villages in order to hear from afar what the Germans had done with the Jews at the market. Hundreds of Jews hid with Christian acquaintances, or hid in closed up cellars, in stalls and did not appear at the market on the 1st of December [1939]." See Lazar Kahan, "The Slaughter of the Jews in Chelm," in M. Bakalczuk, ed., *Commemoration Book Chelm*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/chelm/chelm.html>, translation of *Yisker-bukh Chelm* (Johannesburg: Former Residents of Chelm, 1954), 508. When the Germans carried out round-ups of Jews in Tarłów near Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, "few were successful. Usually, by the time the Germans were able to surround the village, local Jews had run into the fields or hid with their Polish neighbors." See Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part A, 334.

> In order to hide from the Germans, we went through the Czerwoni-Bor [Czerwony Bór] Forest. In the forest, we met many escaping soldiers. We saw corpses of people and horses lying everywhere, and heard the croaking of the ravens swooping down over our heads.
>
> In the afternoon, we reached the village of Puchala [Puchały]. We stayed with a farmer woman, who was alone in her house because her husband had been drafted into the army. She was glad to put us up for the night. She cooked potatoes with onions for us. She knew that we were Jews and, therefore, did not serve us pork. … [we] left, but got stuck at the other end of the village. The farmers advised us not to leave, because the Germans were attacking in the vicinity. A goodhearted farmer let us in to his granary. We stayed there that night, during which the thunder of the bombing and shelling of the area did not stop. In the morning, we learned that the nearby village of Gac [Gać] was shelled during the night and that many people were injured or killed, among them Jews who had fled Lomza [Łomża] because of the bombing.[5]

Irena Bakowska, then a teenager, was part of a group of six Jews smuggled out of Warsaw to the countryside:

> We entered into a single train compartment occupied already by the Christian Poles … We were greeted in a friendly manner, and the man sitting by himself moved over and sat with his four companions. … The conductor, a Christian Pole, entered the compartment to check the tickets. … we uncovered our armbands to identify ourselves. I watched the reaction of the Christian Polish passengers with great apprehension. ... But the attitude of the Christian passengers was sympathetic and not at all hostile. They started talking with us, and urged us to throw away our armbands and our Jewish identity. … Those five people seemed truly to care about my survival, repeating over and over again that I could be saved and survive as a Pole. They persuaded me that all Poles did not hate us, did not wish us to perish."[6]

Such spontaneous assistance and concern extended to complete strangers should not be taken for granted. Jews expelled to Warsaw from the small surrounding towns left scathing reports regarding their shameful treatment by the Jewish population of Warsaw.[7] Similar reports can be found about Jews in other cities who

[5] Yehuda Chamiel, "On the Brink of the Holocaust," in Yitzchak Ivri, ed., *Book of Kehilat Ostrolenka: Yizkor Book of the Jewish Community of Ostrolenka* (Tel Aviv: Irgun Yotzei Ostrolenka in Israel, 2009), 341.

[6] Irena Bakowska, *Not All Was Lost: A Young Woman's Memoir, 1939–1946* (Kingston, Ontario: Karijan, 1998), 142–44.

[7] Magdalena Siek, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawskiego,* vol. 8: *Tereny wcielone do Rzeszy: Okręg Rzeszy Gdańsk-Prusy Zachodnie, rejencja ciechanowska, Górny Śląsk* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma, 2012), 56–57, 212; Magdalena Siek, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawskiego,* vol. 9: *Tereny wcielone do Rzeszy: Kraj Warty* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma, 2012), 44. On the other hand, many reports attest to the helpfulness of Jews in small towns and of Polish villagers.

were unwilling to help fellow Jews on the run.[8] (Christians in Western Europe did not encounter large groups of Jews going door-to-door begging for food on a regular basis, so their track record is unproven.)

Jews who were forced to leave their homes often had to survive by turning to Christians for support. A Jew who was expelled from his hometown of Wilczyn near Inowrocław in March 1940 recalled how bartering soon gave way to begging from impoverished Poles as Jews ventured into the countryside.

> The wagons traveled in a single file in one long xcolumn, a peculiar sight to the Poles who stood in the streets of the villages we passed, curiously watching this endless wagon train go by. After traveling about thirty miles, we came to the small to the small city of Zagórów, which the Germans renamed Hinterberg … From the square we were taken to homes previously inhabited by Polish families. Some were empty, but some were still occupied. My family was taken with three other families and put into a two-room house. … the Germans had gathered about two thousand of us from cities across the region—including Wilczyn, Kleczew, Mogilno, Slesin [Ślesin] and Golina—and squeezed us into this ghetto. We were told we could live here … but we were not to leave the city boundaries. …
>
> Families were given food for a week, maybe two. In order to get more, we had to go into town and barter with the Polish people. And so we did. At times we fought among ourselves, stealing food from each other in order to eat. The few valuables we brought … we sold to the Polish people. When we had nothing left to trade, we were forced to beg and steal.
>
> By November 1940, we were starving, and my father decided to risk leaving the ghetto to find food. He hired a Polish man with a horse and wagon to take him to the countryside around Wilczyn, where he had Polish friends. I often accompanied him, going door to door, asking for food, and we felt like beggars, stripped of our dignity. We gladly took what they gave us—a few loaves of bread, a few pounds of rice and potatoes.
>
> I will never forget one miserable, cold and rainy day, trudging through the slush and snow on our way back to Zagórów. … We brought back enough food to feed the family for a couple of weeks, We were taking a great risk by leaving Zagórów. We would have been shot if they had caught us.[9]

After being sent to a labour camp on Rąbinek, the food quests continued. However, fewer and fewer Jews risked venturing and Poles became more reluctant to extend help because of the harsh retaliations meted out by the Germans. But no one turned the Jewish beggars over to the Germans.

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[8] After escaping from the Janowska concentration camp in December 1941 and making his way back to the ghetto in Lwów, William Koenig went from place to place in the ghetto trying to find a place to spend the night. People were afraid to take him in. He was fortunate enough to find a cousin of his mother's who took him in even though it would mean great danger for him. See the Oral History Interview with William Koenig, dated November 10, 1987, Phoenix Holocaust Survivors' Association in affiliation with the Cline Library of Northern Arizona University, Internet: <http://collections.ushmm.org/oh_findingaids/RG-50.060.0026_sum_en.pdf>.

[9] Abraham W. Landau, *Branded on My Arm and on My Soul: A Holocaust Memoir* (New Bedford, Massachusetts: Spinner Publications with The Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford, 2011), 40–41.

> The SS lived in a nearby city and went home at night. Once we realized this, we came up with a scheme to bring in more food. … Every night two boys would sneak out, head off in the direction of Mątwy, knock on doors and beg for food. … In the beginning, things went well. The people were shocked to see us—starving, dirty boys at their doors and they were generous, offering potatoes, a little meat, whatever they had. For many weeks, we gathered scraps of food and shared it. But the Polish people began learning about the camp's existence and they were suddenly afraid they would be caught. Many no longer gave us food, but we didn't give up. We kept at it until we found a kind soul here or there who would risk helping us. …
>
> One night I was chosen to go with a boy I had known from the Zagórów Ghetto … We knocked on doors, and most people said no or were too afraid to come to the door. A few actually started kissing us and calling is poor dears and lost souls. It was a good night—we had a nice bundle of food from about fifteen homes and we wanted to get back and divvy it up.[10]

Up until at least 1942, when the Germans started to enforce with more frequency the death penalty for assisting Jews, thousands of Jews found temporary refuge with Polish farmers and were often employed as farmhands. Thousands of Jews, very often children, went begging door-to-door and received handouts of food from Poles.[11] After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto in July 1941, without interference from the Polish police standing guard outside the ghetto walls, 10-year-old Szlama Jakubowicz and his older brother made their way to their hometown of Sochaczew. Along the way, they received assistance from a number of farmers whom they turned to for food and lodging. They were greeted warmly by their former neighbours in Sochaczew, and then wandered in the vicinity begging for handouts from farmers until they found jobs as farmhands on two different farms. Several other Jewish boys were working as farmhands in that particular village. They remained there until May 1943, when Szlama's brother was apprehended by the Germans and executed. Frightened by what happened, Szlama was told to leave for a distant village where he would not be known. Szlama secured positions with at least four other farmers and help from several others, thereby surviving the German occupation in that area. On his return to Sochaczew after the war, he was again received warmly by his former neighbours.[12]

A Jewish witness who frequently traversed the Polish countryside recalled the conditions he had observed in Lublin province in the first years of the German occupation:

> Traveling through the Polish countryside in the summer of 1940, the uninformed observer could get the impression that life continued relatively peacefully in those small communities. Most men still wore their Eastern Jewish attire; old Jews, looking like patriarchs out of the Bible were standing dignified in front of their houses, the Star of David on their arms. This picture already belonged to

[10] Landau, *Branded on My Arm and on My Soul*, 50.

[11] See, for example, Aleksandra Bańkowska, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawskiego*, vol. 6: *Generalne Gubernatorstwo: Relacje i dokumenty* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma, 2012), 536–39.

[12] Testimony of Szlama Jakubowicz, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/2427.

> the past in the big cities. It was also pleasing to notice that most Polish peasants treated the Jews in a rather friendly way. They seemed more tolerant than gentiles in the larger centers. Denunciations were exceptional.[13]

According to a diary entry from July 1942, by Jewish chronicler Avraham Lewin,

> As for the Poles in the small towns [near Warsaw] that I have listed … Their relationship to the Jews has recently—according to my informant (and the voice of the people is as the voice of God)—become better, friendly. She sensed sympathy, and a sharing of the Jews' suffering, on the part of the Polish population.[14]

Despite a huge smuggling enterprise bringing enormous amounts of food into the Warsaw ghetto,[15] resettled Jews from the outlying towns became the vulnerable underclass of the ghetto and were particularly prone to hunger, starvation and disease.[16] However, outside Warsaw, ghettos—especially the smaller ones—did not generally experience starvation. Thanks to their continuing contacts with Poles, with whom Jews continued to do business, food was readily obtainable.[17] Thousands of Jews engaged in

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[13] Gary A. Keins, *A Journey Through the Valley of Perdition* ([United States]: n.p., 1985), 72–73. Another Jewish survivor describes a Jewish wedding in the village of Chorzew near Jędrzejów, at the beginning of 1940, which was attended by many Polish guests. Young Polish boys, who believed her to be the daughter of a rabbi, eagerly asked her to dance. See Sabina Rachel Kałowska, *Uciekać, aby żyć* (Lublin: Norbertinum, 2000), 52; English translation: Sabina Rachel Kałowska, *No Place for Tears: From Jędrzejów to Denmark* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2012).

[14] Havi Ben-Sasson and Lea Preiss, "Twighlight Days: Missing Pages from Avraham Lewin's Warsaw Ghetto Diary, May–July 1942," *Yad Vashem Studies,* vol. 33 (2005): 51–52.

[15] About 80 percent of the food that entered the Warsaw ghetto was smuggled. Smuggling was done by individuals, including children, and by organized groups. The professional smugglers became members of the ghetto elite, living it up on their profits, patronizing the more than 60 restaurants and clubs in the ghetto. Kosher butchers from the ghettos of Miłosna, Okuniew, and Rembertów were the main source of meat for the Warsaw ghetto, supplying up to 2,000 kilograms (4,410 pounds) per month with the help of Polish smugglers. The establishment of the ghetto in Warsaw did little to do ongoning Polish-Jewish trade, which was tolerated by the Polish policemen. Wheat was smuggled into the ghetto regularly, and a significant part of the bread made in the suburb of Falenica was sent to the Warsaw ghetto. See Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945,* vol. 2, Part A, 361, 369, 405, 457.

[16] Of the approximately 60,000 Jews who died in the Warsaw ghetto in 1940 and 1941, the vast majority were not natives of Warsaw but had been resettled there from other towns or had sought refuge in Warsaw. See Andrzej Żbikowski, "Żydowscy przesiedleńcy z dystryktu warszawskiego w getcie warszawskim, 1939–1942," in Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc,* 224–28. See, for example, the fate of the Jews from Góra Kalwaria, Jeziorna, and Jeżów in Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945,* vol. 2, Part A, 374, 381, 382. In his diary, Chaim Kaplan notes that widespread tax evasion by the well-off residents of the ghetto seriously exacerbated starvation among the ghetto poor. See Abraham I. Katsh, ed., *Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan* (New York: Macmillan; London: Collier-Macmillan, 1965), 262.

[17] According to Israeli historian David Silberklang' study on the Lublin District, "Yet despite the resultant overcrowding, beyond even the Nazis' plan, and despite the presence of gnawing hunger, there was little starvation in 1940 and 1941, especially outside the city of Lublin. … The Lublin District Jews' contacts with their non-Jewish neighbors … meant the Jews could procure food, some income, information, and human contact." See David Silberklang, *Gates of Tears: The Holocaust in the Lublin District* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2013), 219. The ghetto in Białystok, which numbered 41,000 residents in January 1943, did not suffer from starvation. See Sara Bender, "Similarity and Differences: A Comparative Study between the Ghettos in Białystok and Kielce," in Norman J.W. Goda, ed., *Jewish Histories of the Holocaust: New Transnational Approaches* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn,

lucrative blackmarket activities such as illegal trade and smuggling throughout Poland, often traversing considerable distances and even borders.[18] Accounts from Mława and Rejowiec state:

> Yet despite what we considered to be oppressive conditions, during the first fifteen months of Nazi occupation, the Jews of Mlawa [Mława] were more fortunate than Jews in other cities … The city remained open, and no ghetto was established … For the most part, we were permitted to continue living in our homes. Although Jews were not permitted to own businesses, those who owned merchandise were able to do business secretly. Farms surrounding our city continued to produce plentiful supplies of food, which the farmers frequently brought to the city and made available to us. Secretly, my father would personally make contact with the visiting farmers and let them know that he had merchandise for sale. He would invite those who showed interest to come to our house to complete a sale. … There was enough food available in Mlawa during that period.[19]

> The Jews of Rejowiec received ration cards, but very little food could be obtained with these pieces of paper. Instead, most Jews traded with local peasants who lived in the surrounding countryside, and people did not suffer from hunger.[20]

After leaving the Warsaw ghetto, where conditions were described as abysmal for the poorer Jews, Jerry Koeing moved to the small town of Kosów Lacki where he found conditions entirely bearable: "When we arrived, we found that … things were absolutely normal there."[21] A survivor from Sierpc, north of Płock, recalled: "We were not hungry in the ghetto. Everyone had their own farmers they knew in the villages. People sneaked out of the ghetto and arranged for food."[22]

2014), 80. For reports about smaller towns see, for example, Sakowska, *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawskiego*, vol. 2: *Dzieci—tajne nauczanie w getcie warszawskim*, 48 (Piaseczno near Warsaw), 52 (Pustelnik).

[18] A testimony from Zwoleń near Radom states: "Despite all the dangers, the Jews of Zwolin [sic] … established trade with the Radom ghetto, exchanging goods—especially foodstuff: butter, eggs, cheese." See Chaim Sharit-Shlufman "From Radom Through Zwolin in the Concentration Camps," in Berl Kagan, ed., *Zvoliner Yizkor Bukh* (New York: New York Independent Zvoliner Benevolent Society, 1982), 45–46 (English section). See also the testimony of Israel Ber Cukerman in J. Schwiezer, ed., *Pinkas Szczekociny* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Szczekociny in Israel, 1959), translated into Polish as *Księga Pamięci Szczekocin: Życie i zagłada żydowskiego miasteczka* (Szczekociny: ReBorn Roots, 2010), 198. Many Jews made a living by smuggling goods, mainly textiles, from Reichsgau Wartheland into the Generalgouvernement. See Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part A, 125. Jews from Kłobuck were able to smuggle goods across the border into the Generalgouvernement and trade with Poles to acquire food. Ibid., 154. For additional examples of extremely profitable transborder and long-distance smuggling see Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski, *"Żydów łamiących prawo należy karać śmiercią!": "Przetępczość" Żydów w Warszawie 1939–1942* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2010), 172, 180.

[19] Baruch G. Goldstein, *For Decades I Was Silent: A Holocaust Survivor's Journey Back to Faith* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 2008), 36.

[20] Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part A, 704.

[21] Smith, *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust*, 119.

[22] Hela Listapad-Izakowicz, "Life in the Ghetto and the Activity of the Partisans," in E. Talmi (Wloka), ed., *The Community of Sierpc: Memorial Book*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Sierpc/Sierpc.html#TOC392>,

Economic conditions for Jews in Białystok were also tolerable well into 1942. According to a Jewish wartime report,

> The war with the Soviets left Białystok Jews in a good sithuation, from an economic point of view. During the Soviet occupation one could earn a good salary and save some money because there was lots of work. Besides that speculation was rampant. From the large sums they accumulated most Jews bought all sorts of goods that the Soviets kept dumping in Białystok. So that when the Germans entered Białystok, Jews had sufficient surpluses of goods and clothing, and from mid-year of the first year of the war [i.e., 1941] they would sell these things and make their living. Poles bought these things from Jews and they paid a good price for them.[23]

In Grajewo, in the Białystok district, up until November 1942,

> Economically, life was not of the worst in the Ghetto. It can be said that during its existence, there was no starvation there. …
>
> The Nazi authorities permitted the peasants of the surrounding villages to bring food, peat, and wood into the ghetto. The peasants who had come to market on the specified days, would drive straight to the ghetto, without even stopping at the general market place. On these days, the streets of the ghetto would be choked with wagons as at a fair in the old days, and the Jews would buy out all the produce. This created the following paradox: The Jews who were walled-in the ghetto, completely isolated, had more essential commodities than the Polish population outside. The latter were forced to buy these essentials [at marked-up prices] from the Jews in the Ghetto.[24]

The situation was much the same in the nearby town of Goniądz:

> The Jewish population of Goniondz [Goniądz] consisted of three classes. The first were the rich who were merchants before the War and also manufacturers of such items as leather 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

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translation of *Kehilat Sierpc: Sefer zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Sierpc in Israel and Abroad, 1959), 451. Hela Listapad-Izakowicz also noted: "In general, the Poles did not behave badly toward the Jews. The more intellectual Poles were also persecuted by the Germans—of course, not to the same degree as the Jews. However, they were expelled from their fine houses." For a period of 16 months she was sheltered by Celina Kokowska, a very poor Polish woman, but left on her own when the village population became aware of her presence. After her benefactor's arrest by the Germans, the information of her arrest spread and, understandably, the farmers became very reluctant to help her. See Hela Listapad-Izakowicz, "In the Sierpc Ghetto and in the Camps," in ibid., 446–47.

[23] Andrzej Żbikowski, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawskiego*, vol. 3: *Relacje z Kresów* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny IN-B, 2000), 3009.

[24] Nachman Rapp, "History of Grayevo Ghetto," in George Gorin, ed., *Grayevo Memorial Book* (New York: United Grayever Relief Committee, 1950), xlii–xliii. Rapp goes on to add: "Actually, this was a well-planned maneuver of the German propagandists. They were out to convince the Polish population that the 'zhides' [Jews] take all for themselves and only when they will be wiped out, will there be enough food for the Poles."

for years.

> The second class, consisting of craftsmen, didn't have things so bad either. Their ten fingers were enough to earn a living. The peasants paid well for their work because the supply of craftsmen was limited. … Because they paid a fixed sum to the Judenrat, the craftsmen did not have to do forced labor. …
>
> The third class consisted of poor people, who had even been poor pre-war. They had it much worse than anyone else. They were the small merchants who had run the grocery stores. At one time they had had a small amount of goods, but now it was eaten up or sold during the first few months of the War. They were, therefore, part of the squeezed Jews. They did business with the peasants and bartered their Sabbath clothes, furniture which they had received as wedding gifts, tools … Since a money economy didn't exist for the peasants, a barter system was instituted. All transactions were underground, because there were huge penalties if one was caught.[25]

Even in the areas incorporated into the Reich Jews did not starve.[26] In small towns they were not cut off entirely from the surrounding Polish population. In Bełchatów, a town near Łódź,

> Until the German-Russian war began in 1941, the Jewish population of Belchatow [Bełchatów] was integrated into the everyday life of the town. Craftsmen and weavers continued their work illegally, and when someone was caught, he bought himself free after paying a bribe. At night smugglers transported textiles to the Gouvernement and brought back shoemakers accessories such as leather, nails, pegs, and other things, tailors accessories, cigarettes, candles, in other words everything that was not available in our town. Jews displaced from surrounding villages snuck back to their former houses and smuggled butter, eggs, meat, as well as other agricultural products for us.

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[25] Tuviah Ivri (Yevraiski), "The Destruction of Goniondz," Part 14, in *Our Hometown Goniondz*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/goniadz/Goniadz.html>; translation of J. Ben-Meir (Treshansky) and A.L. Fayans, eds., *Sefer yizkor Goniadz* (Tel-Aviv: The Committee of Goniondz Association in the U.S.A. and in Israel, 1960), 591ff.

[26] In the Łódź ghetto, the food rations were reduced from 1,600 calories in 1940 to 1,000 in 1942; however, this was offset by massive smuggling of food into the ghetto. In the analogous period, food rations for Poles in the *Generalgouvernment* were 736 and 400, respectively. See Grzegorz Berendt, "Cena życia—ekonomiczne uwarunkowania egzystencji Żydów po 'aryjskiej stronie'," in *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały,* vol. 4 (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, IFiS PAN, 2008): 115, 118; Grzegorz Berendt, "The Price of Life: Economic Determinants of Jews' Existence on the "Aryan" Side," in Sebastian Rejak and Elżbieta Frister, eds., *Inferno of Choices: Poles and the Holocaust,* Second edition (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza Rytm, 2012), 122, 128. While Polish language schools in Łódź were closed down in December 1939, Jewish schools in the ghetto continued to function until the fall of 1941, as did Jewish cultural life, something that was also the Polish population was denied. See Adam Sitarek, "Trzy miasta: Dzień powszedni w Litzmannsadt—wybrane problemy," in Chinciński, *Przemoc i dzień powszedni w okupowanej Polsce,* 471–74, 478. The marked pauperization of the Polish population was also reflected in the dramatic increase in the prices of various commodities which, by mid-1941, had risen 30 to 40 times from the prewar levels and continued to soar during the remainder of the German occupation. Housing costs in large cities also escalated enormously. The cost of a modest room in Warsaw increased two to threefold between 1940 and 1944, from 150 złoty to 500 złoty monthly. See Grzegorz Berendt, "The Price of Life: Economic Determinants of Jews' Existence on the "Aryan" Side," in ibid., 118, 127. Unemployment among Poles also soared; for example, in the Kraków district, employment in 1940 stood at just forty percent of the prewar level. Ibid., 117.

> Thanks to the group of Jews mentioned above, the rest of us were able to survive, some by trading, some acting as middlemen. In other words, nobody was starving. The people sold everything that they possessed, willing to survive at any price. They knew that the future would be better, without fears or war, and they expected this new life and the end of the war very soon.[27]

Despite repeated German warnings, trade with the local population assumed massive proportions:

> In Turobin [south of Lublin], one of the hundreds of Jewish towns scattered around Poland, where I had fled from the Warsaw ghetto, the strong arm of the Germans was not felt. … At the same time that so many people were dying daily in the [Warsaw] ghetto, life went on as usual in Turobin—shoemakers made boots for farmers, tailors made them coats; my Uncle Michael traveled around the village … selling notions. The Jews of the town continued to pray each morning, in their synagogue. There was poverty, but no one was starving. The Germans forced the villagers to supply them with a quantity of gold or merchandise such as leather or pelts, and threatened them if they refused—and the rich complained, but they paid. From time to time, the Germans imposed compulsory work details and later, the SS passed through the village and killed dozens of Jews for no reason, but life had somehow returned to normal. No one in Turobin, or in the many similar villages, could imagine that their days were numbered, that the Germans were going to kill all of the Jews without exception—could a normal human being imagine such a thing?[28]

> Suzin, the work manager, had been a functionary in the Magistrate's Court before World War II … Now, he had become a beggar for contributions from the workers in his group. For example, the workers supplied Suzin with bread and butter, honey, cheese, and eggs. In exchange, he did not hurry them at their work, and even allowed them to leave work when they wanted. There were workers who came in the morning to register with him and afterwards they would leave for the entire day, to trade with workers from Bialystok [Białystok]. The men from Sokoly [Sokoły] traded with the men from Bialystok for food, clothing, shoes, fabrics, and leather smuggled from the Bialystok Ghetto. The smugglers would earn tens and hundreds of marks in a day from their trading.
>
> The majority of the workers in Suzin's group did not work very much. Every one of them held a spade or a hoe in his hand on the pretext that he was working. When a "Krok" (German *gendarme*) was relieved from guard duty, they began to work energetically. Suzin himself took care not to be tripped up by the German supervisors. When he saw at a distance a German or the Grandfather, who came from time to time to supervise the work, Suzin would immediately shout, in Polish,

[27] M. [Mendel] Kaufman, "In the Years of the Holocaust," 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), 463.

[28] Dov Freiberg, *To Survive Sobibor* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2007), 528. For a Jewish report attesting to widespread trade between Jews and peasants in the Hrubieszów area in 1941 and 1942, see Adam Kopciowski and Dariusz Libionka, eds., "Życie i Zagłada w Hrubieszowie w oczach warszawskich Żydów," *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały,* vol. 3 (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów IFiS PAN, 2007): 229–40, here at p. 231.

> "*Kalopczi, wada!*" ["C*hłopcy, woda!*"] ("Boys, water!"). Everyone understood that now they must work intensively for a few minutes.[29]

In many areas, daily life continued in this way until the deportations began in 1942. Relations with the local population were generally favourable, much to the dissatisfaction of the Germans. Poles continued to trade with Jews, as they did before the war. Jews frequently stole out of the ghettos to sell goods and brought back food which was often resold at a handsome profit.[30] For some Jews trade continued on a grand scale and smuggling became a fairly lucrative business:

> We in Stroza [Stróża], and even in Krasnik [Kraśnik], were far away from the large Jewish centers, so at first we did not feel the impact of the German policy of extermination of the Jewish people. In fact, until the end of 1941 our area remained quiet, more or less. We knew what was going on elsewhere, but for a long time, practically until December, 1941, we were in contact with businessmen from Cracow [Kraków] who continued to import food from our area. Father was the biggest exporter in this field, and the importers from Cracow used to visit us quite often. I still remember one particular Jewish businessman, dressed as a priest. He was probably our most important customer.[31]

> Zalman Storch became a big shot and an excellent smuggler. He had been a coachman before the war and during the early period of the German occupation went on carrying passengers in his covered coach to Tarnow [Tarnów]. … He found out soon that carrying people was no business. One day Jechiel Brand, the son of Shielle Brand, asked Zalman why he wasn't carrying grain to Tarnow; Jechiel himself did not have permission to do so. Zalman agreed to carry the grain but named his price. He was as familiar with the route to Tarnow as with the contents of his own pockets. He knew exactly how to avoid the check-posts situated along the road. It worked perfectly and business flourished. But soon Zalman was fed up with sitting behind the horses, so Brand had to make him his partner. On the other hand Zalman was perfectly aware of Brand's capacity as a businessman so the partnership was a big success and both men got rich in a short period of time.
>
> Later, Zalman did not have to avoid the posts; both the Poles and the Germans were bribed and co-operated. Others who tried to do the same thing were lucky once or twice and then were caught red-handed. Their goods were confiscated and they had to run for their lives; often beaten cruelly. (After awhile they would not beat a Jew; instead they would shoot him or send him to a camp-camp). Nevertheless Jews kept on smuggling food to Tarnow because it paid well. The city of Tarnow consumed tons of flour, meat and eggs and Radomysl [Radomyśl Wielki] was one of the

[29] Maik, *Deliverance*, 63.

[30] See, for example, Abram and Sonia Hurman, as told to Halina Birenbaum, *Pod osłoną nocy: Wspomnienia z lat 1939–1945* (Kraków and Oświęcim: Fundacja Instytut Studiów Strategicznych and Państwowe Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau w Oświęcimiu, 2007), 18, 20, 27–28; Browning, *Remembering Survival*, 56.

[31] Sam Edelstein, *Tzadikim in Sodom (Righteous Gentiles): Memoir of a Survivor of World War II* (Toronto: North American Press Limited, 1990), 20.

> towns to provide those necessities. Since most provisions were sent to Tarnow, the prices of food in Radomysl went up. I had already mentioned that food was rationed there were ration-cards. Bread and sugar rations were hardly enough for one meal. The rest had to be obtained on the black market for a lot of money. Only those who were in business could afford black-market prices.[32]

The Germans decided to take decisive action to put an end to this state of affairs. On July 3, 1941, *Gazeta Częstochowska*, an official German newspaper published in Polish, complained: "The cases multiply, when Polish peasants, impelled by dangerous sympathy for the Jewish rabble, smuggle products into the ghetto and sell them at even cheaper prices than to their own Polish brethren. Such persons are warned of severe measures against them."[33] The county supervisor (*starosta*) of Puławy, Lublin province, reported that "a significant portion" of the Polish population demonstrated compassion toward Jews."[34] On October 15, 1941, Hans Frank, the Governor of the *Generalgouvernement*, issued an ordinance providing for the death penalty for Jews found outside ghettos without permission and for persons offering them shelter.[35] That same month, the German county supervisor in Kraśnik remarked with incensed incredulity: "according to my observations, the enforcement of this decree [i.e., forbidding the Jews to leave the Jewish quarter] is absolutely necessary because in my entire two years of duty in the East I have never experienced a situation where the Jews wander in such a [free] manner from one locality to another as I have observed here." In January 1942, the Nazis again voiced their anger about the fact that there was no negative reaction on the part of Poles toward Jewish beggars.[36] In their view, the "problem" of the local population coming to the aid of Jews was widespread and persistent, and for that reason stricter measures had to be implemented to eradicate it. *Gazeta Lwowska*, an official German daily published in the Polish language, stated on April 11, 1942:

> It is unfortunate that the rural population continue—nowadays furtively—to assist Jews, thus doing harm to the community, and hence to themselves, by this disloyal attitude. Villagers take advantage of all illegal ways, applying all their cunning and circumventing regulations in order to supply the local Jewry with all kinds of foodstuffs in every amount …

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[32] Pinchas Reichman, "Life in Camp," in H. Harshoshanim, et al., ed.s, *Radomysl Rabati ve-ha-seviva: Sefer yizkor* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Radomysl and Surroundings in Israel, 1965); translated as *Radomysl Wielki and Neighborhood: Memorial Book*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/radomysl/Radomysl.html>.

[33] Cited in S. (Samuel) Mendelsohn (Shloyme Mendelson), *The Polish Jews Behind the Nazi Ghetto Walls* (New York: The Yiddish Scientific Institute–YIVO, 1942), 14.

[34] Dieter Pohl, *Von der "Judenpolitik" zum Judenmord: Der Distrikt Lublin des Generalgouvernements 1939–1944* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993), 64–65.

[35] Governor Frank's ordinance is reproduced in Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 632. The ordinance was subject to the following qualification: "In less serious cases the punishment may be imprisonment with hard labour or imprisonment." In the Warsaw District, on November 10, 1941, Governor Ludwig Fischer removed entirely the possibility of lesser sentences for Poles while expanding that penalty to include providing even a night's lodging providing, food or transportation. Ibid., 633. For other similar orders and proclamations see pp. 634, 639–44.

[36] Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets*, 173–74.

> The rural population must be cut off and separated from the Jews, once and for all, must be weaned from the extremely anti-social habit of assisting the Jews.[37]

As we shall see, the Germans soon imposed the death penalty in occupied Poland for all such transgressions—something unheard of in Western Europe and rarely used in most of Eastern Europe. The Germans also punished severely those Poles who took pity on captured Soviet prisoners of war, whose fate at the hands of the Germans turned out to be no better than that of the Jews. A Jew held in a work camp in the village of Czernice Borowe near Mława recalled:

> Not far from our camp was a prisoner camp for Russian soldiers, whom we saw almost every day marching in groups of tens. They looked terrible—thin, pale, barely able to stand. The Germans were letting them starve. They did get some food from some Polish farmers who were transporting stones in their wagons, to be used to pave the road. Risking their lives, the farmers managed to find ways to give these prisoners small amounts of food to eat. But two of the farmers did pay for this with their lives. When the Germans caught them they took these farmers to the nearby town of Prosnicz [Przesnysz], assembled the entire town in a place where two gallows had already been prepared, and hung them.[38]

The Germans played a large part in encouraging and exploiting friction between Poles and Jews, and in pitting them against each other. A Jewish survivor from Wilczyn near Inowrocław recalled how the Germans tried, unsuccessfully, to incite the Poles by having Jews desecrate Catholic shrines.

> The Germans were inventive in tormenting us. They forced us to carry out acts of desecration against our Christian neighbors so they would turn against us. The Christians worshiped in chapels situated in the town squares. We could see small crucifixes glowing inside, circling and protecting a statue of the Madonna. Such a chapel sat in the middle of Wilczyn, where Christians went to worship and pray to the Madonna …
>
> On a cold snowy day in mid-January [1940], German soldiers were marching door to door, rounding up Jewish boys and men. I was among the recruits yet again, and I wondered what plans they had for us tonight. They ordered us to enter the chapel, remove the Madonna and roll her around the city square. We were horrified but went ahead and rolled and flipped and spun her around the square. We thought we would die of cold and exhaustion. Finally, they demanded that we take the Madonna to the beautiful home of one of the wealthiest Jews in Wilczyn and throw it through his front window. We felt such shame and humiliation when we returned home.

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[37] Reproduced in Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations,* 638–39.

[38] Elya Tzala, "Pain and Suffering in the Second World War," in M. Harpaz, ed., *My Town: In Memory of the Communities Dobrzyn-Gollob*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Golub_dobrzyn/Golub_dobrzyn.html>, translation of *Ayarati: Sefer zikaron le-ayarot Dobrzyn-Golub* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Residents of Dobrzyn-Golub, 1969), 368ff.

> The next day a Jewish friend told me the story of what happened after that. A German soldier went to the man's house and said, "Look, we hear you are hiding something in here." The man stood frozen, not knowing what to say. They searched his house and found the Madonna, then demanded the family bury it in the Jewish cemetery. The Poles observed all this and were stunned and confused by the incident. They knew they couldn't blame the Jews.[39]

The "divide and conquer" strategy was employed in a variety of ways. In the early months of the war, Jews were employed in the executions of Poles. Rev. Roman Pawłowski, a 70-year-old priest from 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. Pawlowski 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.[40]

In the fall of 1939 both Poles and Jews were imprisoned, tortured and murdered in Górka Klasztorna near Łobżenica by the *Selbstschutz*, a paramilitary formation composed of ethnic Germans who were prewar residents Poland. On November 23, a rope was tied to each of Anna Jaworska's legs and two groups of Jews were ordered to pull the ropes in opposite directions until her body was ripped in half.[41]

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.[42]

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[39] Landau, *Branded on My Arm and on My Soul*, 34.

[40] *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. (The American edition was published in New York by Longmans, Green & Co., 1941.)

[41] Barbara Bojarska, "Zbrodnie Selbstschutzu w Łobżenicy," *Przegląd Zachodni*, nos. 5–6, 1963, 147.

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

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 concentration camp.[43] In Auschwitz, Polish inmates were processed by Jews and vice versa.[44]

The Germans also unleashed a barrage of anti-Semitic propaganda that played into the prejudices of some Poles and fostered anti-Polish feelings among Jews. Berenstein and Rutkowski comment on the scope of this divisive tactic:

> 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.[45]

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."[46] Jews played into this strategy by spreading anti-Polish propaganda in 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."[47] 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.[48]

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[43] 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.

[44] 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. It was not until mid-1942 that Jews began to arrive, in any significant number, at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Prior to that time, Auschwitz contained mostly Christian Polish prisoners. Even during the war, informed Jews in occupied Poland recognized this reality. Franciska Rubinlicht, of Warsaw, wrote in a letter, dated March 21, 1943, to her family in the United States: "There is another place, in Auschwitz, where the condemned are burned. There, many of our relatives and friends, and Jews in general, have been murdered. However, it is mainly a mass-execution place for Poles." See Howard Roiter, *Voices from the Holocaust* (New York: William-Frederick Press, 1975), 117.

[45] Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945*, 19. See also Jan Grabowski, "German Anti-Jewish Propaganda in the Generalgouvernement, 1939–1945: Inciting Hate through Posters, Films, and Exhibitions," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies,* vol. 23, no. 3 (Winter 2009): 381–412.

[46] Shepetinski, *Jacob's Ladder,* 45.

[47] 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.

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

Many Jews could not comprehend why it was they, rather than the Poles, who were suffering the brunt of the German brutality. Stories spread in the ghetto that Poles were leading "normal lives" outside the ghetto: "Everything there is brimming with life. Everyone eats and drinks until they are full. … On the other side, the houses are like palaces … there is freedom to the full … complete safety … justice reigns."[49] A young Jew who witnessed the expulsion of the Poles after the failed Warsaw Uprising of August 1944 recalled: "I must admit that we even derived a certain *schadenfreude* from seeing Poles treated like Jews, driven like cattle through the streets the way Jews had been herded, beaten down and hardly saying a word. … This was so reminiscent of when we had first been evicted from our home and forced into the crowded ghetto more than two years before. How ironic. For the first time we were equal … Poles now [sic] also had a taste of what it was like to be at the receiving end of Nazi brutality and retribution."[50] (As if Poles had not experienced mass expulsions and executions before!)

The ensuing resentment many Jews felt toward the Poles was noted in his wartime diary by Samuel Golfard, a perceptive Jewish observer the residing in Przemyślany, Eastern Galicia.

> I am constantly writing about the martyrdom of the Jews. But I know that not only we are suffering. In the camps, the flower of the Polish nation is perishing. Millions of Poles in Germany do the work of hard labor convicts. Tens of thousands have perished in camps. Suffering and disease, the whole nation gives itself with blood for the "contribution." Children are torn away from their mothers. Fourteen-year-old girls carry on the hardest jobs as farmhands on German farmsteads. The [Polish] nation in bondage is carrying a heavy yoke. But not for a moment does the nation lose hope that freedom and the fatherland will be restored. Such hope has been taken away from the Jews, and this is why their fate is so tragic, why it is so difficult to last through every death-branded day. They envy the Poles and rightfully so. Moreover, they bear a grudge against the Poles for not being fellow sufferers in misery and brothers in misfortune. They forget that the Polish nation is defenseless. … The thing of greatest consequence is that there is general passivity dictated by weakness. No one can save his neighbor. Everyone's life is threatened. And if in a moment of great danger somebody is in a position to save the life of someone else, he cannot do so while being in ghastly fear for his own life. However, there are even such people who, endangering their own lives, hide and save Jews. …
>
> Perhaps there also are those who in the face of the massacres think, not without a certain satisfaction, that the Germans render a service to Poland by clearing it of Jews. I believe there are few such people.[51]

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[49] Diary of Jehoszua Albert cited in Marcin Urynowicz, "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Warszawie w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej," in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 563.

[50] Rubin Katz, *Gone to Pitchipoï: A Boy's Desperate Fight for Survival in Wartime* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2012), 200–1.

[51] Samuel Golfard as cited in Wendy Lower, *The Diary of Samuel Golfard and the Holocaust in Galicia* (Lanham, Maryland: AltaMira Press/Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 63–64.

Golfard then compares accounts of Poles who were utterly indifferent to the sufferings of Jews, with Jews who were utterly indifferent to the sufferings of other Jews, giving several examples of the latter.[52] Golfard rejects the dialectic of Jews as victims and Poles and Ukrainians as victimizers, and alludes to the demoralization caused by Nazi policies. He comments:

> They can be found in each nation, even among the Jews, who in the past were famous for being repulsed by bloodshed. While in camp, I saw human beasts among Jewish group leaders [*grupenführerzy*], the Ukrainian militia, and the German Gestapomen. It is they who are guilty of letting loose man's most primitive animal instincts as the war made human life worthless and all morality a museum relic. People are embarrassed to affirm the former moral "superstitions." The day-to-day ethics of the prewar.[53]

Golfard's observations are also relevant for the earlier Soviet occupation of that region in 1939–1941.

Of course, the Germans played it both ways. While disseminating anti-Polish propaganda among the Jews, they also 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 miniature 'Jewish state,' protected by the kindly German authorities from the wrath of the local Gentile populace.[54]

In Słonim,

> 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 *Aktions*. They said the previous *Aktion* had been a Polish provocation, and that as long as Jews worked hard, they would survive the war.[55]

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.[56]

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[52] Ibid., 64–65.

[53] Ibid., 82–83.

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

[55] Account of Mordechaj Jonisz, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 302/ 141.

[56] 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]." See Marek Maciągowski and Piotr Krawczyk, *Żydzi w historii Chmielnika* (Kielce: F.P.H.U. XYZ, 2006), 194.

Because warnings, anti-Semitic propaganda, and sanctions such as fines and imprisonment failed to curb Polish behaviour and isolate the Jews, which was a precondition for their annihilation, the Germans felt compelled to introduce Draconian measures to curtail contacts between Poles and Jews, to the fullest extent possible. A circular issued on September 21, 1942, by the SS and Police Chief in Radom District, outlined and justified those measures in the following terms:

> The experience of the last few weeks has shown that Jews, in order to evade evacuation, tend to flee from the small Jewish residential districts [i.e., ghettos] in the communities above all.
>
> These Jews must have been taken in by Poles. I am requesting you to order all mayors and village heads as soon as possible that every Pole who takes in a Jew makes himself guilty under the Third Ordinance on restrictions on residence in the Government General of October 15, 1941 (*GG Official Gazette,* p. 595).
>
> As accomplices are also considered those Poles who feed run-away Jews or sell them foodstuffs, even if they do not offer them shelter. Whatever the case, these Poles are liable to the death penalty.[57]

These warnings were not hollow. Adolf Folkmann recalled the scenes he had witnessed in June 1943 during the final liquidation of the ghetto in Lwów:

> After a day or so the action extended beyond the Ghetto confines into the town. S.S. and Ukrainian Militia looked everywhere for escaped Jews. The corpses of Poles who had been discovered giving shelter to Jews and the corpses of the Jews themselves could be seen all over the town, in the streets, in the squares and in all residential quarters. The extent of the terror increased. Hundreds of non-Jewish Poles who had made themselves suspect were murdered. The S.S. indulged in an orgy of blood-lust, and for three weeks no law existed in Lwow [Lwów] but their arbitrary will.[58]

Several thousand Christian Poles—men, women and children, entire families and even whole communities—were tortured to death, summarily executed, or burned alive by the Germans for rendering assistance to Jews.[59] Such harsh punitive measures, coupled with their own mistreatment at the hands of the

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[57] Cited in Bartoszewski, *The Blood Shed Unites Us,* 40.

[58] Stefan Szende, *The Promise Hitler Kept* (New York: Roy Publishers, 1945), 168–69. These recollections were recorded in the early part of 1944, after Folkmann's escape from Poland and arrival in Stockholm in October 1943.

[59] Hundreds of such cases have been documented though the list is still far from complete. Poland's Institute of National Rememberance is presently working on a comprehensive register of Poles who were killed for coming to the aid of Jews. See the following partial lists of victims: Philip Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1978), 184–85; Wacław Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity: Christian and Jewish Response to the Holocaust,* Part One (Washington, D.C.: St. Maximilian Kolbe Foundation, 1987), Part One; Wacław Bielawski, *Zbrodnie na Polakach dokonane przez hitlerowców za pomoc udzielaną Żydom* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce–Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 1987); 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, *Those Who Helped: Polish Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust,* Part One (Warsaw, 1993), Part Two (Warsaw, 1996), and Part Three (Warsaw, 1997). A selection from last of these publications is reproduced as Appendix B in Richard C. Lukas, *The Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles under German Occupation, 1939–1944,* Revised edition

(New York, Hippocrene, 1997), and an extensive list of Polish victims also appears in Tadeusz Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust: Ethnic Strife, Collaboration with Occupying Forces and Genocide in the Second Republic, 1918–1947* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland, 1998), 119–23. See also "Polish Righteous: Those Who Risked Their Lives," Internet: <http://www.savingjews.org/perished/a…z.htm>.

Some Holocaust historians, who endeavour to deprecate the Poles' rescue efforts, have argued that there was essentially no difference in the penalty that the Poles and Western Europeans, such as the Dutch, faced for helping Jews. See Lucy C. Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the Historians* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1981), 166. However, reliable sources belie this claim. Historian Raul Hilberg accurately describes the situation that prevailed in the Netherlands as follows: "If caught, they [i.e., the Dutch] did not have to fear an automatic death penalty. Thousands were arrested for hiding Jews or Jewish belongings, but it was German policy to detain such people only for a relatively short time in a camp within the country, and in serious cases to confiscate their property." See Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933–1945* (New York: Aaron Asher Books/Harper Collins, 1992), 210–11. More recent research shows that the risk was even smaller and that people caught sheltering Jews were often not punished at all. According to a Dutch historian, "usually, if Gentiles who helped Jews were punished, they were punished with short-term Schutzhaft, or protective custody; only severe cases were sent to concentration camps in Germany." See Marnix Croes, "The Holocaust in the Netherlands and the Rate of Jewish Survival," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies,* vol. 20, no. 3 (Winter 2006): 474–99. Although Dutch rescuers, if caught, could be sent to a concentration camp, this kind of punishment was not often meted out to people who only sheltered Jews: "supporters of Jews *on a large scale* were usually sent to concentration camps in Germany when caught … In other cases of help, people were usually sent to Vught concentration camp in the Netherlands, which had a less brutal regime. However, people *who only housed Jews in hiding* were often not punished at all. Especially in 1943 and 1944 they frequently were left alone and only the *onderduikers* were arrested." See Marnix Croes and Beate Kosmala, "Facing Deportation in Germany and the Netherlands: Survival in Holland," in Beate Kosmala and Georgi Verbeeck, eds., *Facing the Catastrophe: Jews and Non-Jews in Europe during World War II* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2010), 8, 129, 146. In Belgium, a decree of June 1, 1942 warned the local population against sheltering Jews under punishment with "imprisonment and a fine." See Mordechai Paldiel, *Churches and the Holocaust: Unholy Teaching, Good Samaritans, and Reconciliation* (Jersey City, New Jersey: Ktav Publishing House, 2006), 131–32. Even in Germany, there was no speficic law that prohibited helping Jews. The closest thing was a decree by the Head Office for Reich Security, dated October 24, 1941, that prescribed "on educational grounds" protective custody or up to three months' imprisonment in a concentration camp to persons of German blood who openly displayed friendly relations to Jews. See Israel Gutman, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust,* vol. 8: *Europe (Part I) and Other Countries* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2007), liii. However, there is no evidence of any death penalty being issued for helping Jews within German borders. While branded "as the abnormal and shameful behavior of deviants," helping Jews was considered to be less harmful than other offences. As historian Beate Kosmala points out, "Ultimately, many Catholic priests who defended their Corpus Christi processions, people listening to foreign radio stations, Communists putting up subversive posters, and black market dealers, to name a few, took a greater risk than those who gathered the courage to help Jews." See Beate Kosmala, "Facing Deportation in Germany, 1941–1945: Jewish and Non-Jewish Responses," in Beate Kosmala and Feliks Tych, eds., *Facing the Nazi Genocide: Non-Jews and Jews in Europe* (Berlin: Metropol, 2004), 35–36. Elsewhere we learn: "The risk for non-Jewish helpers was difficult to calculate. It could result in being sent to a concentration camp (in some cases leading to death), prison or penitentiary sentences, a relatively short period of imprisonment in a *Gestapo* prison, warnings and intimidation, or simply a small fine. Sometimes it happened that Jews in hiding were arrested in their non-Jewish helpers' flat, without anything happening to the latter." See Marnix Croes and Beate Kosmala, "Facing Deportation in Germany and the Netherlands: Survival in Holland," in Kosmala and Verbeeck, *Facing the Catastrophe,* 123. Moreover, unlike in occupied Poland, a significant group of people defined as "mixed race" and even Jews married to Germans could escape most of the Nazi regime's anti-Semitic policies, provided they and their children did not practice the Jewish faith. However, thousands of Jews subsequently committed suicide when their protection came to an end. See Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich at War, 1939–1945* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin Books, 2008), 70–71, 251, 272–73. Likewise, in Austria no specific penalty was legally established for concealing Jews, yet rescue efforts there, as in Germany proper, were exceedingly rare. See Gutman, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 8: *Europe (Part I) and Other Countries,* xxix. Such laxity was virtually unheard of in occupied Poland, where the death penalty was meted out routinely with utmost rigour. Although the death penalty was also found on the books in some other jurisdictions such as Norway and the Czech Protectorate, it was used infrequently. See Nechama Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 215–16; Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity,* Part One, 111–18, 284–86, 294, 295. Several Norwegian resistance fighters were executed for helping Jews to escape to Sweden, and a number of others imprisoned. See Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous,* 366. Several dozen individuals in the Czech Protectorate were charged by Nazi special courts and sentenced to death. See Livia Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: Facing the Holocaust* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), 218–27, 303–304. Rescuers were also put to death in other occupied countries such as Lithuania the occupied territories of the Soviet Union. See Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews,*

Lithuanians and the Holocaust (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), 326–27; Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press; Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2009), 428, 438.

Jan T. Gross ignores the reasons given by the Germans themselves for introducing the death penalty in Poland, and he dismisses factors such as the qualitatively harsher nature of the occupation in Poland and the Germans' total disregard for Polish public opinion, or the fact that Poland was chosen as the place where the murder of millions of Jews and others was carried out for practical and logistical reasons. Rather he advances the bizarre argument that "it is *because* the Poles were not ready to assist the Jews and by and large refrained from doing so that the death punishment for harboring Jews was meted out by the Germans systematically and without reprieve and the task of helping the Jews was so difficult. … The deviant behavior of a few, who were censored for helping the Jews by their own community, was sanctioned severely and very effectively policed." See Jan T. Gross, "A Tangled Web: Confronting Stereotypes Concerning Relations between Poles, Germans, Jews, and Communists," in 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), 74–129, especially pp. 80, 87. Under the circumstances, one wonders why the Germans would need, or even want, to impose *any* sanctions, and would not simply rely on courting public sentiment as a more effective means of compliance. Gross offers no empirical evidence for his speculative premise, one that is so out-of-keeping with the attitude of grateful survivors that, it is fair to say, only someone who would not take such a risk could possibly formulate it. Moreover, Gross's theory is thoroughly discredited by the example of Germany, where help for Jews was a rare commodity and yet no death penalty was deemed necessary, and it has not found acceptance among Holocaust historians who have conducted solid and extensive research in this area. For example, Livia Rothkirchen contends: "Ultimately, the nature and extent of German control were the primary factors determining the toll of Jewish lives. … Perhaps the most crucial point was the degree of intimidation and the punishment meted out by the Nazis to gentiles who were ready to extend assistance to the persecuted Jews." See Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia,* 217, 304. Nor does Gross offer any empirical evidence (relying instead on impressions gathered from a small selection of anecdotal material) in support of his claim that Polish assistance to Jews was negligible (unlike, allegedly, the situation in other countries) and that providing help was frowned on by Polish society. Gross also contends that the risks and efforts it took to shelter a Jew were not significantly more onerous or dangerous than concealing a gun or an illegal underground publication or engaging in black marketeering, and adds that the former activity never assumed the massive proportions of the latter. This disingenuous argument presupposes that both sets of activities had comparable risk of discovery, and comparable experiencing of the death penalty if caught. In fact, they were not. According to scholarly studies on the German courts in occupied Poland, capital punishment was rarely meted out, and was reserved only for the most heinous crimes and aiding Jews. See Andrzej Wrzyszcz, *Okupacyjne sądownictwo niemieckie w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945: Organizacja i funkcjonowanie* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2008), 199, 202. The equating of risk in black market activity and that of aiding Jews, as argued by some in order to disparage Polish fears of the German-imposed death penalty, is clearly misplaced. Gross treats black marketeering, which virtually everyone including Jews had to engage in order just to survive, as part of a universal anti-German conspiracy, rather than the basic necessity that it was. In fact, only a small minority of Poles (and even a much smaller minority of Jews) were active in the underground. Objectively speaking, it does not take much intuition to discern that secreting a flyer or purchasing some food, which is soon disposed of or consumed, hardly constitutes the same order of risk, not to mention effort, as concealing and caring for a person for a long period of time. Moreover, Gross conveniently ignores the fact that if someone was caught hiding a Jew, his or her entire family could also be executed summarily. On the other hand, the punishment for blackmarketeering varied enormously, the activity was often overlooked by the authorities, and even German soldiers and officials took part in it. Gross's lack of appreciation of conditions in wartime Poland and Holocaust sources is apparent in the following statement, among many similar, of a Jewish underground fighter from Warsaw, who writes: "Open black markets in primary products were working in different parts of Warsaw. The German authorities looked the other way where Poles were concerned. Germans were making the greatest profits anyway." See David J. Landau, alias Dudek, Janek and Jan, *Caged: A Story of Jewish Resistance* (Sydney: Macmillan, 2000), 58. It should be noted that Jews who dealt on the black market for food rarely ever contemplated engaging in risky ventures such as obtaining a weapon or joining an underground organization in the relative safety of the ghetto, where only a fellow Jew could betray them. As pointed out by a renowned historian, with considerable dismay, the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto preferred to rely on the Polish underground transmitters for their contact with the outside world rather than run the risks associated with the construction of their own, despite the available expertise and materials to manufacture wireless transmitters inside the ghetto. See Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth about Hitler's "Final Solution"* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980; reissued in 1982 by Penguin Books), 107.

Gross, who has a marked penchant for advancing the most unfavourable interpretation of Polish attitudes possible, then goes on to develop another highly skewed theory of widespread complicity of the Poles in the Holocaust, as evidenced by their "generalized, diffuse hostility toward the Jews" (at p. 84) and the alleged, near-universal eagerness of ordinary citizens, including children, to rob and betray Jews on the run. It is altogether amazing how, based on the scant evidence he actually marshals, Gross does not shy away from advancing sweeping and partisan generalizations about Polish conduct. While treating objectionable behaviour on the part of the Jews as non-consequential (to the extent he even cares to acknowledge such behaviour), Gross builds his case against the Poles based precisely by focusing on

such exceptions. Curiously, he sees himself, and his jaded polemics (which are highly reminiscent of those advanced decades prior by Lucy Dawidowicz), as part of an avant-garde poised to make an important historical breakthrough: "We are on the verge, I believe, of a major reassessment of the epoch by Polish historiography…" (at p. 129). At one point, after referring to some anecdotal material from the Lublin district, Gross even contends that the majority of Jews were killed not in the death camps, but in plain view of the Polish population, who "by and large did little to impede it, to slow it down, or to interfere with it" (at p. 91). The existing scholarship clearly establishes that Gross is very far off the mark: the vast majority of Jews in that district, some 242,000 people, were murdered in the death camps (Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka, Majdanek); the number of Jews executed outside the camps, including labour camps, was relatively small, perhaps 10,000–15,000. See T. [Tamara] Berenstein, "Martyrologia, opór i zagłada ludności żydowskiej w dystrykcie lubelskim," *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego,* no. 21 (1957): 32–45; Janina Kiełboń, *Migracje ludności w dystrykcie lubelskim w latach 1939–1944* (Lublin: Państwowe Museum na Majdanku, 1995), 175–76. The proportion of Jews executed outside camps in the districts of Warsaw, Radom and Kraków, as well as in the so-called Wartheland, was even smaller. Moreover, Gross displays a remarkable lack of awareness of the extent and conditions of rescue in Poland and other countries (these are described below). Despite his cutting edge tone, Gross's arguments are by no means novel. Moshe Bejski of the Yad Vashem Institute, who too claimed that "in Poland possibilities of rescue by individuals did not exist in a lesser degree than they did elsewhere," offered the following explanation for the Nazis' *modus operandi* more than two decades ago: Where a criminal offence—and such was in the Nazis' view aid to Jews—hardly ever took place, as allegedly was the case in Poland, the penalty for it was escalated up to automatic execution on the spot, but where this kind of "crime" was rampant, as allegedly was the case in Holland, the penalty was reduced. See Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One, 60.

In this regard, it is worth noting, first of all, that the effort to win informers, which in Poland escalated from material rewards to the death penalty for failing to inform, in Holland dropped to only 7½ gulden (about 2 U.S. dollars) from the original price of 50 to 70 florin. See Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers,* 184. Moreover, as we shall see, rescue of Jews in Holland was not a more frequent occurrence than in Poland and there are ample testimonies that show that betrayal was very common. See, for example, Martin Gilbert, *The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust* (Toronto: Key Porter, 2003), 320–55; Jozeph Michman and Bert Jan Flim, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, vols. 2 and 3: *Netherlands*, Part One and Two (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), passim; Mordecai Paldiel, *Sheltering Jews: Stories of Holocaust Rescuers* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 15, 169, 170; Mordecai Paldiel, *The Righteous Among the Nations* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 53, 56, 98, 172, 208, 215, 251, 254, 519, 554; Emily Taitz, ed., *Holocaust Survivors*, vol. 1 (Westport, Connecticut, and London, 2007), 24, 108; Interviews with Ursula Stern, Selma Wijnberg, and Jozef Wins, Internet: <http://www.sobiborinterviews.nl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6>. 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. After conducting pioneering research, Dutch investigative journalist Ad van Liempt concluded that about 8,000 to 9,000 Jews were turned in to the Germans for cash, which represents almost half of the Jews who attempted to hide. See Ad van Liempt, *Kopgeld: Niederlandse premiejagers op zoek naar joden, 1943* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2002). Glib remarks about Polish conduct during the war should be contrasted with the balanced assessment made by Columbia University historian Isvtán Deák, who wrote perceptively: "The penalty for assisting or even trading with a Jew in German-occupied Poland was death, a fact that makes all comparisons between wartime Polish-Jewish relations and, say, Danish-Jewish relations blatantly unfair. Yet such comparisons are made again and again in Western histories—and virtually always to the detriment of Poles, with scarce notice taken of the fifty thousand to one hundred thousand Jews said to have been saved by the efforts of Poles to hide or otherwise help them. … it was far easier for a Pole to be a part of the underground resistance than to help a Jew." See István Deák, *Essays on Hitler's Europe* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 71, 143.

Empirical studies carried out by historian Gunnar S. Paulsson on the rescue efforts in the Warsaw area (referred to below) not only confirm wartime reports about the numbers of Jews sheltered by Poles, but also that the incidence of rescue in Poland was no less frequent than in Western European countries such as Holland and France, and much higher than in the Czech Protectorate and other Eastern European countries occupied by Germany. The number of Jews rescued by the Christian Poles—who numbered no more than 23 million in 1939 (this was before their large wartime losses of some two to three million and massive deportations to the Soviet Union and Germany)—is variously estimated: 50,000 according to Philip Friedman; 80,000 according to Szymon Datner of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw; and 100–120,000 according to Joseph Kermish from the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem. Given that most of the Jewish population was expelled from the Polish territories incorporated directly into the Third Reich before the Holocaust got underway in 1942 (except for the hermetically sealed Łódź ghetto), Polish rescue activity was confined largely to the Generalgouvernement, where some 11 million Poles resided, and to a much lesser extent the Polish territories to the north and east.

By way of comparison, in Holland, a country with a Christian population of about 9 million and a highly integrated Jewish population of 140,000, 115,000 Jews were deported to Nazi camps with a high degree of Dutch cooperation. It is estimated that only some 7,000 out of the 25,000 Jews who attempted to hide survived; the higher figure of 16,000 who survived in Holland appears to include 8,000 to 9,000 intermarried Jews and another 4,000 belonging to other special categories exempt from deportation. (Such "special categories" of exempt Jews were unknown in occupied

Poland, but in Berlin there some 800 "privileged Jew" married to Gentiles who were spared.) See Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews,* Revised and definitive edition (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985), vol. 2, 593–94. Despite the fact that Dutch rescue activity was neither numerically nor relatively a more frequent occurrence than that of the Poles, Holland has enjoyed a rather favourable treatment in Holocaust writing and public opinion. In fact, denunciation was rampant and rescue in Holland faced obstacles similar to those in Poland: "In the Netherlands, for instance, experience taught the hosts as well as the hiders that movement and frequent changes of hiding places were essential for survival. There were blackmailers anxious to inform on a Jew in hiding in return for even a petty reward. The Gestapo … routinely paid one quart of brandy, four pounds of sugar, and a carton of cigarettes, or a small amount of money, to anyone turning in a Jew." See Mordecai Paldiel, *Sheltering the Jews: Stories of Holocaust Rescuers* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 15. In recent years, Holland's rescue efforts have undergone considerable downward reassessment. See, for example, Suzanne D. Rutland, "A Reassessment of the Dutch Record During the Holocaust," 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, 527–42, which makes the important point the Dutch were far more likely to collaborate with the Germans than fight in the resistance. By way of further comparison, it is estimated that no more than 500 Jews were rescued by the Czechs, then a nation of about 7 million, who too generally enjoy a favourable treatment in Holocaust literature. See Livia Rothkirchen, "Czech Attitudes towards the Jews during the Nazi Regime," *Yad Vashem Studies,* vol. 13 (1979): 314: "At the end of the war, it is estimated that about 424 persons survived 'underground' in Bohemia and Moravia, some hiding with Czech friends and acquaintances, and others living under assumed names or with forged Christian papers." This article was reprinted in Michael R. Marrus, ed., *The Nazi Holocaust: Historical Articles on the Destruction of European Jews (Public Opinion and Relations to the Jews in Nazi Occupied Europe)* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Meckler, 1989), vol. 1, part 5, 415–48. Neither Dutch nor Czechoslovak Christians, whose global wartime losses were in the vicinity of 100,000 and 75,000 respectively (as opposed to Polish losses of up to three million), routinely had to face summary execution if caught concealing or otherwise assisting Jews, as was the case in Poland.

Regarding Norway, historian István Deák wrote in *The New York Review of Books* ("Holocaust Heroes," November 5, 1992): "*Norway's Response to the Holocaust: A Historical Perspective* [New York: Holocaust Library, 1991], by Samuel Abrahamsen, is a book sponsored by the 'Thanks to Scandinavia' Foundation ... but having read this eminently objective account, I wonder why Jews should be particularly thankful, at least in the case of Norway. Nearly half of that country's minuscule Jewish population of 1,600 (0.05 percent of the total population) was killed during the war and, as Abrahamsen, a professor emeritus at Brooklyn College in New York, points out, 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. To begin with, the small number of Jews in Norway was the result of a long and, at least to me, astonishing tradition of anti-Semitism combined with an extremely restrictive interwar immigration law that kept out nearly all refugees from Nazi terror. 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 powerful Norwegian resistance movement, it resembled all the other European resistance movements in caring little about what happened to the Jews. Just as elsewhere, there were thousands of decent Norwegians who helped hundreds of Jews escape, for the most part across the Swedish border." Those Norwegian Jews who did survive the war were not sheltered in Norway for long years, as was the case in Poland, but took refuge in Sweden where they were out of reach of the Germans. Only a few dozen Jews actually survived by hiding in Norway. See Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews,* Third edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), vol. 2, 584–89. One should further add that, unlike in Poland, where German forces were plentiful and the degree of control absolute, the objective conditions for rescue were far more favourable in Western European countries like the Netherlands, Norway and Vichy France, as "German manpower was stretched very thin" and "local administrative assistance was essential in registering, arresting, and deporting the Jews and Gypsies." See Donald Niewyk and Francis Nicosia, *The Columbia Guide to the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 87–88.

As for the accomplishments of Poles in rescuing Jews, the most in-depth study is that conducted by Gunnar S. Paulsson, who has summarized some of his findings about conditions in Warsaw in an article entitled, "The Rescue of Jews by Non-Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland," which appeared in *The Journal of Holocaust Education,* vol. 7, nos. 1 & 2 (summer/autumn 1998): 19–44, as follows: "In the league of people who are known to have risked their lives to rescue Jews, Poland stands at the very top, accounting for more than a third of all the 'Righteous Gentiles'. … Of the 27,000 Jewish fugitives in Warsaw, 17,000 were still alive 15 months after the destruction of the ghetto, on the eve of the Polish uprising in 1944. Of the 23,500 who were not drawn in by the Hotel Polski scheme, 17,000 survived until then. Of these 17,000, 5,000 died in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, and about 10,500 were still alive at liberation. … As it happens, there is an excellent standard of comparison, because it is estimated that in the Netherlands, 20–25,000 Jews went into hiding—about the same number as in Warsaw—of whom 10–15,000 survived—again, about the same number. … The conclusion, then, is quite startling: leaving aside acts of war and Nazi perfidy, a Jew's chances of survival in hiding were no worse in Warsaw, at any rate, than in the Netherlands. … The small number of survivors, therefore, is not a direct result of Polish hostility to the Jews … The Jews were deported from the ghettos to the death camps, not by Poles, but by German *gendarmes,* reinforced by Ukrainian and Baltic auxiliaries, and with the enforced

co-operation of the ghetto police. Neither the Polish police nor any group of Polish civilians was involved in the deportations to any significant degree, nor did they staff the death camps. Nor did the fate of the Jews who were taken to their deaths depend to any significant degree on the attitudes and actions of a people from whom they were isolated by brick walls and barbed wire. … the 27,000 Jews in hiding in Warsaw relied on about 50–60,000 people who provided hiding-places and another 20–30,000 who provided other forms of help; on the other hand, blackmailers, police agents, and other actively anti-Jewish elements numbered perhaps 2–3,000, each striking at two or three victims a month. In other words, helpers outnumbered hunters by about 20 or 30 to one. The active helpers of Jews thus made up seven to nine per cent of the population of Warsaw; the Jews themselves, 2.7 per cent; the hunters, perhaps 0.3 per cent; and the whole network—Jews, helpers and hunters—constituted a secret city of at least 100,000: one tenth of the people of Warsaw; more than twice as many as the 40,000 members of the vaunted Polish military underground, the AK. … How many people in Poland rescued Jews? Of those that meet Yad Vashem's criteria—perhaps 100,000. Of those that offered minor forms of help—perhaps two or three times as many. Of those who were passively protective—undoubtedly the majority of the population. All these acts, great and small, were necessary to rescue Jews in Poland."

Another study of this topic by Gunnar S. Paulsson, entitled "The Demography of Jews Hiding in Warsaw, 1943–1944," appeared in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 13 (2000): 78–103. There Paulsson wrote (at pp. 96, 99): "Despite frequent house searches and the prevailing Nazi terror in Warsaw (conditions absent in the Netherlands), and despite extortionists, blackmailers, and antisemitic traditions (much less widespread in the Netherlands), the chance that a Jew in hiding would be betrayed seems to have been lower in Warsaw than in the Netherlands. … it is clear that Warsaw was the most important centre of rescue activity, certainly in Poland and probably in the whole of occupied Europe. … The 27,000 Jews in hiding there also constituted undoubtedly the largest group of its kind in Europe." See also Gunnar S. Paulsson, "Evading the Holocaust: The Unexplored Continent of Holocaust Historiography," in John K. Roth and Elisabeth Maxwell, *Remembering for the Future: The Holocaust in an Age of Genocide* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2001), vol. 1, 302–318; Gunnar S. Paulsson, "Ringelblum Revisited: Polish-Jewish Relations in Occupied Warsaw, 1940–1945," in Joshua D. Zimmerman, *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and Its Aftermath* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 173–92; Gunnar S. Paulsson, *Secret City: The Hidden Jews of Warsaw, 1940–1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), passim.

Wacław Zajączkowski has pointed out the inherent distortion in assessing the willingness of the local population to help the Jews by stressing the number of Jews actually saved as a proportion of the country's prewar population: "Here, again, Catholic Poland is severely censored because the number of Jews saved by the Poles is unfavorably compared with the great number of Jews permitted since immemorable times to enjoy Polish tolerance and hospitality." As Zajączkowski points out, this fallacy was remarked on by historian Teresa Prekerowa, who was active in the Żegota, the wartime Council for Aid to Jews, in her book, *Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie 1942–1945* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy 1982), 324–26. "Huge numbers of Jews to be saved in Poland certainly did not make the job easier than did the minute number of Jews to be saved in Denmark." See Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, Part One, 61. Unfortunately, this fallacy permeates much of Holocaust literature. After acknowledging that Żegota helped some 50,000 Jews, the entry "Poland: Jewish Polish Relations During the War" in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: The MacMillan Company, 1971), vol. 13, column 777", goes on to state: "Of all the occupied countries, the percentage of Jews saved in Poland was the smallest, since the predominant attitude was hostile, while rescue an exception to the rule." Reliance on such statistical manipulations masks the inherently unfair expectation that Poles should have saved significantly more Jews than others, despite their incomparably more difficult objective circumstances (which are generally ignored), simply because Poland's Jewish population was numerically much larger. The holders of such views also somehow manage to overlook the fact that it took heroic individuals to rescue individual Jews in every country—one was not rescuing a percentage of the population. There is no evidence that the number of persons taking part in rescue activities in Poland, as a proportion of the total population, was smaller than in any other country under German occupation. The same lack of balance is evident in other statements found throughout *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, where patently untrue variations on the theme of lack of Polish assistance are harped on. For example, in vol. 8, column 876, one reads: "With the exception of the Polish-Soviet area, the extent of indigenous anti-Semitism generally had no bearing on the number of victims." The fallacy of this argument, in relation to countries such as France, Holland and Norway, is all too apparent.

In Western Europe, the extent of Jewish vulnerability varied with the degree of German control exercised within a particular jurisdiction. The fewer the escape routes, the tighter the controls, the further removed geographically, and the smaller the number of Jews, the proportion of Jews who perished rose dramatically. For a survey of conditions in Holland and France, see Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Third edition, vol. 2, 600–32 (The Netherlands), and 645–703 (France). 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. See 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. 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. That the survival rate was as high as it was had to do in large measure with the exemption created for 8,000–9,000 Jews in mixed marriages and some 4,000 Jews in special categories who were spared deportation to the death and concentration camps. See Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Third edition, vol. 2, 619, 622–24, 229 n139.

Regarding the situation in France, historian Michael R. Marrus states: "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." Therefore reliance on the French police to carry out the round-up and deportation of the Jews was absolutely 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, 509–13; see also the entry for the infamous French assembly and detention camp in the Paris suburb of Drancy in vol. 1, 404–6. By way of comparison, there were about 150,000 SS or Waffen SS stationed in Poland in 1944. See Teresa Prekerowa, *Zegota: Commission d'aide aux Juifs* (Monaco: Éditions du Rocher, 1999), 285. American historian Joseph Rothschild writes: "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 West European complicity in the Holocaust 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 in the interwar period even though 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 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), 480.

Szymon Datner, an historian with the Jewish Historical Museum in Warsaw, arrived at the following balanced assessment on conditions in occupied Poland: "On the other hand, to speak concretely of the attitude of Poles toward Jews: the majority of Poles behaved passively, but that can be explained by the terror and also by the fact that Poles, too, were being systematically murdered on a mass scale by the Germans. On the other hand, aside from passivity, which I regard as entirely justified by a situation in which every action was heroic, there also existed an indifference that I regard as negative—although even here one could look for a psychological explanation. Next, as if on parallel lines, come two active groups. Those who betrayed, attacked, or murdered either from a desire for gain or out of pure hatred, and those who sheltered Jews and aided them in various ways. The second group was more numerous and more representative both of Poles and of the leadership of the Polish underground. Yet the first group was more effective in its actions. We sometimes forget that saving one Jew often took several or even a dozen or more people, with actions that generally lasted for long years. On the other hand, one person and one moment were enough to betray a Jew. Second, many attempts at aid ended in failure. Both the Jew and the Pole sheltering him died, and this is not counted in the positive statistics." See Małgorzata Niezabitowska, *Remnants: The Last Jews of Poland* (New York: Friendly Press, 1986), 249–50.

As alluded to already, successfully sheltering a Jew in Poland was rarely the accomplishment or one person, or even one family. Commenting on the estimate of 100,000 Polish rescuers made by Joseph Kermish of the Yad Vashem Institute, in an open letter to B'nai B'rith dated February 7, 1996, Joseph S. Kutrzeba wrote: "This may still be a very

German occupiers, naturally had an impact on the attitude of the local population. According to historian Arno Mayer, they "became indifferent to the torments of the Jews less because of any residual Judeophobia than because they, too, were being terrorized and brutalized, even if to a lesser extent."[60] One must reject, therefore, the charges that Poles were not just innocent bystanders and that they failed to act (that is, to defy the might of the Nazis!) because the Jews remained outside their sense or circle of moral responsibility. First of all, neither the Jewish nor Christian religion imposes a duty on someone to risk their life for another person. Secondly, most Jews considered themselves to be a nation apart from the Poles, and the Poles, as the "other," remained outside the Jews' sense or circle of moral responsibility. Finally, very few people in Western Europe came to the assistance of Jews even though they risked no punishment for doing so, as it was not forbidden by law, or perhaps a monetary fine or short period of incarceration.

The ability of the average Pole to extend assistance to anyone, for any significant period of time, was also severely circumscribed by the poverty that afflicted most of the population.[61] Even before the war Poland was one of the poorest countries in Europe and its workers were among the lowest paid. The average working family occupied a one-room dwelling, usually without a toilet and running water, often without electricity, and almost never with gas. These tiny dwellings were generally occupied by five or more

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conservative view, for it is generally ascertained that it was impossible for anyone to singly save a Jew during World War II in Poland; rather, it had taken the cooperation of a number of persons to achieve this—Poland being the only country in Nazi-occupied Europe where a death penalty was mandated for assisting a Jew in any way. In my own case, it had taken the cooperation of nine persons to save my life, not including some 20 who'd aided me along the way. Only one has been recognized by Yad Vashem." Hanna Krall, a well-known journalist and author, counted 45 Poles who risked their lives to shelter her. See *Polityka* (Warsaw), April 20, 1968. Anna Forkasiewicz identified three Polish families (consisting of 11 people), three individual Poles, four priests, and a boarding school run by nuns. Her testimony is found in Andrzej Chciuk, ed., *Saving Jews in War-Torn Poland 1939–1945* (Clayton, Victoria: Wilke and Company, 1969), 26–27. Another Jewish woman had to change hiding places 25 times. See Nathan Gross, "Unlucky Clara," *Yad Vashem Bulletin*, no. 10–11 (1956): 34. The renowned immunologist Ludwik Hirszfeld moved eleven times. See Ludwik Hirszfeld, *Historia jednego życia* (Warsaw: Czytelnik 1946; Pax, 1957), translated as *The Story of One Life* (Rochester: Rochester University Press, 2010). When asked "What help did the residents of Warsaw provide to people of Jewish origin who hid?", Władysław Szpilman, the protagonist of Roman Polański's film *The Pianist*, replied: "A great deal. Poland is not an anti-Semitic country. Those who state the opposite don't speak the truth and perform a bad service that is hostile to Poland. Let us remember that for taking part in rescue activities on behalf of Jews one was threatened with death. Not everyone could muster up the strength to run this risk. Not everyone is born a hero. At least thirty Poles were engaged in rescuing me. At least thirty, at the risk of their lives." See Tadeusz Knade, "Władysław Szpilman ostatni wywiad," *Rzeczpospolita*, October 12, 2002. Unfortunately, such opinions are generally overlooked or discounted, whereas a great deal of unwarranted legitimacy is given to extremely unfavourable, impressionsistic views about Poles which fly in the face of in-depth research such as Paulsson's (cited above). For example, Calek Perechodnik, a Jewish policeman from the town of Otwock near the outskirts of Warsaw who dispatched his own wife and daughter to Treblinka, claims that only one out of every 10,000 Poles was prepared to help Jews in any way, which translates to a little over 2,000 Poles in all of Poland. See Calek Perechodnik, *Spowiedź* (Warsaw: Karta, 2004). Unfortunately, such views are widely held and disseminated. Interviewed on Dutch television in 1979, former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin stated: "What concerns the Jews, the Poles were collaborating with the Germans. Of the thirty-five million of Poles [actually, there were no more than 23 million ethnic Poles at that time—*M.P.*], only at most one hundred people have been helping Jews. Between ten and twenty thousand Polish priests did not save even one Jewish life. All these death camps were (therefore) established on Polish soil." See Stewart Stevens, *The Poles* (London: Collins/Harvill, 1982), 317.

[60] Arno J. Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken? The "Final Solution" in History* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 273.

[61] On economic conditions in Poland see Derek H. Aldcroft, *Europe's Third World: The European Periphery in the Interwar Years* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

people. The Great Depression hit Poland hard and the country struggled to try to attain pre-World War I economic levels. In the countryside, millions of impoverished families owned little or no land and lived in humble one or two-room cottages, often with dirt floors. After the German invasion, conditions deteriorated considerably and soon destitution became the norm for most city dwellers and farmers. It was therefore extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the average Pole to care for a Jew for an extended period of time.[62] The advantage that farmers had over town dwellers was space, in the form of a barn and a small plot of land, and privacy, provided their farm was at the edge of or outside a village. However, rarely did they have enough food to share with others for any duration. The assistance provided was therefore, generally casual or short term and usually without charge. Such assistance was widespread. Jewish fugitives had to rely on a number of Poles to survive and often had to resort to petty theft which—unlike robbery—most farmers grudgingly tolerated:

> My father [Isaac Gamss] and uncles began taking turns sneaking out at night in search of food. In the summer, they stole plums, apples, and pears from neighbors' gardens. And they went into fields to gather carrots, radishes, tomatoes, and onions—vegetables that could be eaten raw.
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> Besides what they picked outside, they also gathered food that sympathetic neighbors left out for them on doorsteps. Because they knew that as Jews we kept kosher, neighbors mostly set out potatoes, beans, or bread. From time to time, my father and uncles chanced knocking on the doors of casual acquaintances. Often they were turned away with angry replies, which was not surprising. Even if they were not anti-Semitic, Poles were terrified of being caught helping a Jew.[63]

> When [Jews] had neither money nor goods to exchange, they begged for food or stole it. This was the case with Szoszana Atłasowicz, who while hiding with her brothers exchanged various items with the peasants. When that source of income was exhausted, she was forced to steal. In her testimony she writes, "In the beginning, at night, the Poles would let us into their houses, and we would exchange some items of clothing and other objects for food. Later on, the Poles were afraid of a Jew as if he had been a ghost; they shut their door before us. So we stole from the basements [food storage cellars] and granaries; usually turnips, carrots, potatoes. We'd bring the loot into our hideout."[64]

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[62] Grzegorz Berendt, "Cena życia—ekonomiczne uwarunkowania egzystencji Żydów po 'aryjskiej stronie'," in *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały*, vol. 4 (2008): 110–43, especially at p. 119.

[63] Leslie Gilbert-Lurie with Rita Lurie, *Bending Toward the Sun: A Mother and Daughter Memoir* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 47. The extended Gamss family was sheltered by Polish farmers near Urzejowicze south of Przeworsk.

[64] Barbara Engelking, "Murdering and Denouncing Jews in the Polish Countryside, 1942–1945," *East European Politics and Societies,* vol. 25, no. 3 (August 2011): 433–56, here at 437.

The notion that Poles were eager to see the Jews being mistreated and abused by the Germans and relished in their misfortune is discredited by first-hand observers, as many Jewish testimonies attest to.[65] Most Poles were appalled at the treatment the Germans meted out to 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 Walther 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."[66] A Jewish eyewitness from Parczew recalled that the burial of 200 Jewish prisoners of war executed by the Germans in February 1940 "made a huge impression on the population both Jewish and Polish."[67] Villagers from Wyszków near Dolina described "with horror" how the Gestapo murdered hundreds of Hungarian Jews in the summer of 1941.[68] On two different occasions, when the Germans were parading or humiliating the Jews before killing them, Bruno Shatyn observed: "The Poles lined the sidewalks, looking on in absolute silence, as though frozen in place." Also: "Poles gathered on the sidewalks, incredulous, some crossing themselves at this monstrous sight."[69]

Rabbi Chaim Yitchok Wolgelernter noted in his memoir that most Poles in Działoszyce displayed empathy, prayer, and crying as the Jews were taken by the Germans to be shot.[70] According to Rabbi Wolgelernter,

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[65] Chaim Kaplan, an otherwise harsh critic of Poles, acknowledged: "We thought that the 'Jewish badge' would provide the local population with a source of mockery and ridicule—but we were wrong. There is no attitude of disrespect nor of making much of another's dishonor. Just the opposite. They [the Poles] show that they commiserate with us in our humiliation. They sit silent in the street cars, and in private conversation they even express words of condolence and encouragement. 'Better times will come!'" On February 1, 1940, Kaplan wrote: "But the oppressed and degraded Polish public, immersed in deepest depression under the influence of the national catastrophe, has not been particularly sensitive to this [pervasive anti-Semitic] propaganda [which is being spread by the Germans]. It senses that the conquerors are its eternal enemy, and that they are not fighting the Jews for Poland's sake. Common suffering has drawn all hearts closer, and the barbaric persecutions of the Jews have even aroused feelings of sympathy toward them. Tacitly, wordlessly, the two former rivals sense that they are brothers in misfortune; that they have a common enemy who wishes to bring destruction upon both at the same time." See Katsh, *Scroll of Agony*, 82, 114. Abraham Lewin recorded in his diary: "I have heard many stories of Jews who fled Warsaw on that momentous day, 6 September 1939, and were given shelter, hospitality and food by Polish peasants who did not ask for any payment for their help. It is also known that our children who go begging and appear in their tens and hundreds in the Christian streets are given generous amounts of bread and potatoes and from this they manage to feed themselves and their families in the ghetto." 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), 124–25.

[66] 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 Books, 1988), 939.

[67] Account of Nuchem Perlman, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/608.

[68] Account of Zania Rattenbach, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/670.

[69] Bruno Shatyn, *A Private War: Surviving in Poland on False Papers, 1941–1945* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985), 42, 121.

[70] Chaim Yitzchok Wolgelernter, *The Unfinished Diary: A Chronicle of Tears* (Lakewood, New Jersey: Israel

> It was easier to save oneself in the countryside. The simple peasant did not feel hatred towatds us; on the contrary, he always contacted Jews eagerly and trusted them in every matter. If a Jew did not entrust his belongings to him to care for, there was no reason to harm him or do him wrong. The peasants empathized with us in our suffering and misfortune. They showed this by welcoming us with bread and water. It was true they were fearful of letting us into their homes but the reason for that was that, in every village, notices were posted warning that whoever takes a Jew in or gives him a piece of bread would pay with their life. Notwithstanding, when things quietened down a little, they let us sleep in their barns, and they even took women and children into their homes.[71]

A survivor from Radom recalled:

> All inmates of the Szkolna Street camp [in Radom] were lined up by the Germans and ordered to march in the direction of Opoczno. The S.S. men hurried the tardy marchers along with the aid of their clubs and whips. The Jews all marched together—old men, women, children and the sick. … They passed farms and hamlets and noticed how the Polish villagers locked themselves behind their doors, hoping thus to shut out the sight of the Jewish prisoners walking and falling again toward an unknown destination. …
>
> They were marched to the railroad station to board a train; no one suspected that these were death trains speeding to the crematoria. Some of the Polish railroad men working on the wheels of the locomotive whispered to the prisoners:

Bookshop Publications, 2015), 110, 119, 181, 210. As for the mass shootings of Jews, the non-German participants were Ukrainians. Ibid., 174. Large groups of Jews were in hiding in the surrounding countryside, for significant periods of time, without being denounced. For example, over sixty Jews hid among Poles in Szyszczyce. A cave behind Tetele's field was the shelter to over thirty people, and the local Poles thought it a religious duty to bring them food and other provisions. Another group of Jews hid in a *mikveh* building. Their presence was an open secret among the Poles, and even children talked about them. Yet no one denounced them. After being warned about the common knowledge of their existence, these Jews moved to a secure location two weeks later. Ibid., 221, 234, 285–86. In contrast to historians who try to belittle the German-imposed death penalty for the slightest Polish aid to Jews, Wolgelertner, who actually went through the Holocaust, does not. Ibid., 121, 218, 221, 226, 294, 300, 367, 468. In fact, in several of the cases he sites, the Polish benefactors were so terrified by the nearby German killings of other Polish benefactors that they evicted the Jews they were hiding. To add to the terror, the Germans also threatened to burn down entire Polish villages for individual Poles hiding Jews. Ibid., 221. The Germans did not need Polish informers to find Jews. They conducted house searches for Jews in hiding among Poles. Ibid., 299. The Germans intentionally spread false rumors, about Jews being allowed to gather in certain "sanctuary towns," in order to lure Jews out of hiding. Ibid., 223. The Germans conducted *łapankas* in order to kidnap Poles for forced labour. In doing so, they often came across hidden Jews. Ibid., 226. Finally, many Jews, exhausted from living as fugitives, gave up, and turned themselves in to the Germans. Ibid., 282–83. A few Poles denounced or killed Jews they knew or suspected were stealing from them. One evening, Moshe Rederman, the butcher, instead of buying food, slipped into a Polish neighbour's storage room to get some flour. A Pole saw him, followed Moshe to his hideout, and informed the Polish police. Ibid., 234. Chaim Wolgelernter ate kosher food while in hiding, and his Polish benefactor, Biskup, supplied it. Ibid., 370. Years later, Abraham Fuhrman described how Wolgelernter reacted to food, that had, under different circumstances, been acquired by banditry, "When Chaim Yitzchok witnessed our methods of extorting provisions from the Poles, he himself was loath to eat the food, but at the same time he said to me in a fatherly way, "*mein kind, ess gezunterheit*—eat in good health, my child." Ibid., 370.

[71] Barbara Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień…: Losy Zydów szukujących ratunku na wsi polskiej 1942–1945* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum nad Zagładą Żydów, 2011), 52–53.

> "You poor beggars, they're taking you to Auschwitz. Save yourselves, if you can."[72]

A Jewish underground journal, *Undzere Weg,* wrote on March 1, 1942:

> The Poles, who avoided any negotiations and contacts with the Germans and who didn't want to hear anything about establishing a Polish government which would obey the Germans and their rulers, announced their sympathy for the tortured Jews on every occasion. That was the reaction from members of the Polish intelligentsia, the Polish workers and peasants; they stressed that the Poles, as a people with beliefs, a politically mature people, would not be tempted to catch the racial hook. … The occupier did everything in his power to isolate the Jews from the Poles.[73]

These accounts, and many others, contradict the selectively-chosen ones of Poles rejoicing at Jewish suffering. A thorough review of the Polish underground press of all political stripes has not revealed any evidence of approval for the crimes of the Holocaust; on the contrary, those involved in atrocities committed against the Jews were unequivocally condemned by all political factions, including those on the extreme right.[74]

We must be cautious in attributing "indifference" to the passivity most of the population (including the vast majority of the Jews) demonstrated in the face of relentless German terror. Such charges are unpalatable if they come from the mouth or pen of someone who does not have an exemplary record of humanitarian accomplishments or has not displayed personal heroism. Fair-minded Jews who lived through those times eschew such generalizations. Rabbi Abraham D. Feffer, a Holocaust survivor from Drobin, wrote:

> Yet many fortunate survivors from my own shtetl, remember well and with great fondness and admiration the help of the brave Christian farmers who lived in nearby villages where we worked on cold winter days. (In Poland, hiding a Jew, or feeding him was punishable by death, usually hanging). We remember how these men and women, at great peril, opened their poor "chatkis" [cottages] to share with us warm soup, bread and potatoes.[75]

Z. Ben-Moshe from the town of Łask wrote about both named and unnamed rescuers, none of whom have ever been recognized as Righteous by Yad Vashem:

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[72] Tuviah Friedman, *Nazi Hunter* (Haifa: Institute for the Documentation of Nazi War Crimes, 1961), 97–98.

[73] As cited in Havi Ben-Sasson, "Polish-Jewish Relations during the Holocaust: A Changing Jewish Viewpoint," in Robert Cherry and Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, eds., *Rethinking Poles and Jews: Troubled Past, Brighter Future* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 90. As Havi Ben-Sasson shows, the initial objective portrayal of Poles in Holocaust accounts later gave way to negative stereotypes.

[74] Andrzej Friszke, "Publicystyka Polski Podziemnej wobec zagłady Żydów 1939–1944," in Grześkowiak-Łuczyk, *Polska, Polacy, mniejszości narodowe,* 193–213, especially at 210.

[75] Rabbi Abraham D. Feffer, *My Shtetl Drobin: A Saga of a Survivor* (Toronto: n.p., 1990), 22.

> We must remined [sic—be mindful of] all those people, not Jews, who gave their hand to save many of our town when they escaped from the Nazi murderers. Also in Lask [Łask] there were good Christians who suffered seeing how the Jews of their town suffered. In the hard days of distress and banishment, they endangered themselves by hiding Jews and giving them from their bread. Gabrionchik and his wife from Lask [Łask]; he gave documents and food [to] two escapers: Vovtche Raichbard and Shmuel Friedman. A Christian woman emerged as a saver-angel, when they had to pass the boundary of the German protectorate [i.e., into the Generalgouvernement]. Heinzel, Skibinski [Skibiński]'s son-in-law, guided the two to the Polish secret organization in order to receive German documents, and hid them in his home some days. He gave them the address of Zvi Michalovitz in Grushkovitza [Gorzkowice], and did so that they would be accepted by a priest, who was the chief of the secret organization in this place. This priest, whose name is unknown, accepted them with bright face, and immediately gave them the necessary documents. The young Christian, who knew they were Jews, hid them in her parents' house, telling them these two are Polish officers from Varsha [Warsaw], who escaped from the Gestapo.
>
> The Polish policeman Krakovski [Krakowski], who saved Zvi Michalovitz from the death-waggon [sic], just in the last minute, and brought him to a refuge place. The family Banashchiek, who hid him in the threshing-floor, and gave him all he needed for lessons he gave their children in the nights. … The villagers who disperse pieces of bread and turnip on the ways, for the caravans of hungry people, who went under the watching of the S.S. The villagers who gave their shoes to barefooted and weak. How can we forget the villagers who refused to give food [to] the watchers of the women-caravans who were transported from work-camp. Shraga Noiman tells about a Polish boy who worked as an electrician in Kolomna. He offered to save the whole group of Jews that worked there, and to transfer them to a secure place near Varsha. This electrician and his fellows, who acted a period of time to save Jews, were caught at last by the Nazis.[76]

Matus Radzivilover, a cantor who hails from Warsaw, stated:

> I never had the tendency to be a nationalist. I am positively devoted to my Jewish brethren and I am proud of my heritage, but I also loved the country of my birth, Poland. I loved my neighbors, the Poles I grew up with and lived with in love and peace. I never accused them of failing to help us because they were in great danger themselves. Hundreds of thousands of them were killed or deported to concentration camps. They paid their price under Nazism, too. Hitler's intentions were to exterminate the Poles after he was done with the Jews.[77]

About the Poles' reaction to the plight of the Jews, Raul Hilberg, whose knowledge of archival sources is second to none, wrote:

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[76] Z. Ben-Moshe, "Respect for Jew Savers," in Z. Tzurnamal, ed., *Lask: sefer zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Residents of Lask in Israel, 1968), 124–25.

[77] Matus Radzivilover, *Now or Never: A Time For Survival* (New York: Frederick Fell, 1979), 82.

For some right-wing Poles, who had always wanted the Jews to depart, the deportations came virtually as a wish fulfillment. The broader center, however, had more complex thoughts. Poles knew that they were not a favored group in German eyes, and the realization that the end had come for the Jews inevitably raised questions whether the Poles would be next. The reaction was observed in Volhynia, and it surfaced again in the Lublin District, where the Germans followed their roundup of the Jews with a more benign, but forcible resettlement of Poles from one zone to another.[78]

Overall, the general Polish population is not mentioned in German documents in respect of its participation as harassing Jews and helping the Germans. To the contrary; many German reports indicate that Poles felt anxiety for their own safety after the Jews disappeared. There are some German documents that mention some Poles, notably Polish police, railroad-workers and low-level employees in German offices but there was no Polish central authority collaborating with the Germans, as we find in e.g. Norway and its Quisling government or France and its Vichy regime. This was never the case in Poland.

As was the case in many European countries, there were also Polish individuals that played extortion games with Jews, but then there were also Poles that helped Jews under risk of facing death penalty from the German occupants. Both categories were relatively small in comparison to the general population, albeit one must take into consideration that most survivors made it through the war by Polish help and protection. A friend of mine, Bronia Klebanski, who is Jewish but lived on the "Aryan" side of society and was an active member of the Jewish underground in the Bialystok [Białystok] area, once told me a story of how she at a time took the train during the war, and was suddenly pointed out by a little girl who yelled "Jew!". All the Polish passengers sat quietly, and nobody said anything to instigate further interest. This account is a small example of the general practice of non-collaboration among the Poles during the war.

… In Ukraine, contrary to Poland, where the Germans built secluded death camps, Jews were often massacred on the spot. The Nazi death camps in occupied Poland such as Treblinka, Belzec [Bełżec], Sobibor [Sobibór] and Chelmno [Chełmno] were all hidden to the public.[79]

Of all the native police forces in occupied Eastern Europe, 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

[78] Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933–1945* (New York: Aaron Asher Books/HarperCollins, 1992), 97–98.

[79] Interview with Professor Raul Hilberg, June 20, 2005, available on line at <http://www.maxveritas.com/pb/wp_1add70b0.html?0.611384753320024>. There are many Jewish accounts attesting to the fact that Poles generally did not succumb to anti-Jewish incitement. See, for example, the testimonies of Stefan Chaskielwicz, Israel Shahak, Halina Gorcewicz, Roman Solecki, George Sten, Marek Edelman, Stasia Ałapin Rubiłowicz, Zosia Goldberg, Ruth Altbeker Cyrprys, Natan Gross, Irena Bakowska, Zdzisław Przygoda, Hania Ajzner, and Yitzhak Zuckerman, cited in Mark Paul, *The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and the Poles: The Untold Story,* Internet: <http://www.kpk-toronto.org/2008-fundusz_obrony.html>.

> 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.[80]

After the Jews were deported from the cities and towns, what property of value Jews left behind (by then, much of it had already been officially seized or privately looted by the Germans or sold or hidden away by the Jews themselves) was for the most part taken by the Germans. The less valuable items, including wooden cottages and market stands, were put up for sale by auction. Given the shortages of basic neccesities such as clothing and wood, it is not suprising that buyers could be found.[81] Not all Poles, however, rushed to take over Jewish property. A Jewish memoir from Działoszyce memoir mentions that some local Poles took part in such auctions, while others did not. In fact, the Poles around Działoszyce came to the soon-to-be-doomed Jews and offered to buy their property in advance. "We have your benefit in mind," they explained. "If you sell us your possessions, at least you'll get some money out of it. With public auctions taking place all over, what do the Jews gain by leaving their things behind?" The auction of the remaining belongings of the Jews of Działoszyce eventually took place. The Polish farmers of nearby Szyszczyce refused to take part. Ironically, one of the chief duties the local Jewish collaborators was to empty Jewish houses of valuables so that they could be shipped to the Reich—all done so that the property would not get auctioned off and fall into the hands of the Poles.[82]

A Polish partisan from the Klimontów area recalled:

> Several weeks after the deportation of the Jews of Klimontow [Klimontów], the Nazis held an auction of the property left in the Jewish homes. As an eyewitness of the auction, I know for sure that no one in our village of Jeziory or in the neighboring villages bought anything at that auction. Our good people were saying, "Why should we buy Jewish property from the Nazi criminals? As soon as they liquidate the Jews, they will begin liquidating us."[83]

In Biała Rawska, abandoned Jewish homes remained empty throughout the war, and it was only with the encouragement of the Communist regime that they were occupied by the local poor after the war.[84] Given the widespread poverty, it is not surprising that there was also a great deal of looting, even though this was a risky business as looters caught in the act could face severe punishment. Those who looted did not loot because the property belonged to Jews, but rather because it had been abandoned, as it were. There is more than ample evidence that looting is a universal phenomenon during warime and civil strife. It would be

[80] Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders,* 92–93.

[81] Jan Grabowski and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Klucze i kasa: O mieniu żydowskim w Polsce pod okupacją niemiecką i we wczesnych latach powojennych 1939–1950* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą, 2014), 100–102, 154, 188, 265, 266.

[82] Wolgelernter, *The Unfinished Diary,* 161, 181, 221.
[83] Mazgaj, *In the Polish Secret War,* 58.

[84] Barbara Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twardych* (Warsaw: ABC, 1997), 59.

surprising if there was none under such conditions. Therefore, spontaneous—as opposed to (state) organized—looting should properly be attributed to opportunistic greed rather than to racial motives.[85]

[85] See Bethany M. Paluk, "Looting as a Case Against Racial Determinism," in Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, Wojciech Jerzy Muszyński, and Paweł Styrna, eds., *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold? Studies on the Fate of Wartime Poles and Jews* (Washington, D.C.: Leopolis Press, 2012), 201–14. One should not assume that looting property during the war was something only non-Jews engaged in or that only Jewish property was targeted. Jews looted Jewish homes and properties from which Jews had fled or been expelled temporarily. See Bańkowska, *Archiwum Ringelbluma,* vol. 6, 560 (Grodzisk), 650 (Pustelnik). Jews looted the property of foreign firms in Lublin in September 1939: "Even the rich came in their carriages and drove away with the hogs inside. I went up to Shlomo Biderman: 'What has come over you?' I demanded. 'You, the richest Jew in Lublin, grabbing hogs and selling them!' … 'You,' he said in reply, 'are a fool.'" See Shiye Goldberg (Shie Chehever), *The Undefeated* (Tel Aviv: H. Leivick Publishing House, 1985), 79–80. Jews in Kałuszyn pillaged and then traded in foodstuffs and clothing stolen from a Polish military train at the Mrozy railway station. See Zaydman, "Children in the Midst of Ruins," in A. Shamri and Sh. Soroka, eds., *Sefer Kaluszyn: Geheylikt der khorev gevorener kehile* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Kaluszyn in Israel, 1961), 367ff., translated as *The Memorial Book of Kaluszyn,* Internet: <http://jewishgen.org/yizkor/kaluszyn/Kaluszyn.html>. Ukrainian nationalists and Jews, who had joined together to erect a triumphal arch for the German invaders, participated in looting Polish military buildings in Przemyśl. See Eugeniusz Buczyński, *Smutny wrzesień: Wspomnienia* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1985), 132. For conditions in the vicinity of Tarnów see Żbikowski, *Archiwum Ringelbluma,* vol. 3, 327. Emanuel Ringelblum recorded that Polish Jews were quick to seize valuables discarded by deported German Jews, who were afraid that possessing them might lead to serious repercussions at the hands of the Germans. See Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego,* 69. Mary Berg confirms that Jews also participated in looting of Polish property during the German-Soviet conquest of Poland. When she and her fellow Jews were on the move they came across a bullet-ridden house containing a dead Polish peasant. They looted his house, as she describes (October 10, 1939): "The kettle which we 'inherited' from this murdered peasant became our faithful companion on the long road to Warsaw." See Mary Berg and S. L. Shneiderman, ed., *Warsaw Ghetto: A Diary* (New York: L. B. Fischer, 1945), 14. Jewish porters in the Warsaw ghetto were notorious for stealing Jewish property (and acting as informers for the Germans), as were Jewish gravediggers. Groups of teenagers, among others, also engaged in that lucrative activity. A memoir of a participant recalled how these youngsters descended on Warsaw's burial grounds and used ploers and knives to extract gold teeth, crowns and bridges from the mouths of corpses. See Bogdan Wojdowski, *Bread for the Departed* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 299–315. The Jewish police was second-to-none in their ability to extort money and other valuables, especially during deportations from the ghetto. Looting was a common occurrence when the size of the Warsaw ghetto was reduced due to population attrition: "The fact that the Jewish mob stole mercilessly from their fellow men during such shifts only magnified the feeling of contempt for those who were perishing." During the great deportation in the summer of 1942, they looted vacated apartments on a massive scale, amassing considerable fortunes for themselves. Afterwards, the remaining Jews widely looted property left behind by Jews seized for deportation and began dealing in such property on a massive scale. See Itamar Levin, *Walls Around: The Plunder of Warsaw Jewry during World War II and Its Aftermath* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 2004), 90–91, 96, 98, 149–54; Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City* (New Haven, Connecticut and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 479, 749; Henryk Makower, *Pamiętnik z getta warszawskiego: Październik 1940–styczeń 1943* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1987), 62; Calel Perechodnik, *Am I a Murderer?: Testament of a Jewish Ghetto Policeman* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press/HarperCollins, 1996), 104; Engelking and Libionka, *Żydzi w powstańczej Warszawie,* 279, 300, 306; Ludwik Hirszfeld, *Ludwik Hirszfeld: The Story of One Life* (Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2010), 234, 235; Reicher, *Country of Ash,* 122. A Jewish woman who discovered a large cache of money (52,000 złoty) during the Warsaw uprising of August 1944 thought nothing of dividing up the loot with her sister. See Alejandro Parisi, *El ghetto de las ocho puertas* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2009), 139. After the failed Warsaw Uprising of August 1944, Jews who remained in the ruins of Warsaw acquired belongings from evacuated Poles for a pittance and formed expeditions to search for valuables buried by Poles (in the hope of digging them out later) and appropriated them. See Bernard Goldstein, *The Stars Bear Witness* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1950), 251–52, 262, 270–71. Chiel Rajchman, who took refuge in bombed-out Warsaw, recalled how he and other Jews went to abandoned warehouses and homes of people who were forced to evacuate the city and "carried off a couple of hundred pounds of food and clothes." See the Interview with Chiel Rajchman, December 7, 1988, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C. Rubin Katz also engaged in the desecration of the deceased. When he lacked candles for illumination, he stole candles from a local Catholic cemetery, and hid this behaviour from his Polish colleagues." Katz, *Gone to Pitchipoï,* 231–32. After the Soviet front passed through, Jews also took part in removing valuables from the corpses of German and Soviet soldiers. See Uri Huppert, *Podróż do źródeł pamięci* (Warsaw: Więź, 2004). The situation was much the same in other localities. Jews seized belongings left behind by Jews who had been deported from the ghettos. See Sara Bender, *The Jews of Białystok During World War II and the Holocaust* (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2008), 202, 211. "Jumpers" left the ghetto in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski to bring back some of the belongings abandoned by Jews when they were forced to move into the ghetto, considering that

they were entitled to inherit ownerless Jewish property. Rubin Katz boasts of the advantage that Jewish looters had over Polish ones; the latter "didn't know where to dig for valuables. It was only fair that we should benefit from what the Poles called 'Jewish booty' rather than them, or the Germans." See Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 563; Katz, *Gone to Pitchipoï*, 87. A Jewish itinerant trader active in Lublin province in 1942, "used to bring to the villagers bedclothes, clothing worn left behind by murdered Jews. The villagers bought them." See Goldberg, *The Undefeated*, 129. A Jew from Chełm recalled how his property was misappropriated by fellow Jews:

> 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 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. … 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.

See Kalmen Wewryk, *To Sobibor and Back: An Eyewitness Account* (Montreal: Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 1999), 25–27. A characteristic attitude on the part of Jews acquiring post-Jewish property during the war has been aptly summed up as follows: "It is an established social order that the living inherit from the dead. What is wrong, some argued, in taking over the abandoned property of an evacuee? The conscious individual was the one who was first on the scene, acting on the assumption that 'someone will do it if I don't'. Of course, there was always the possibility that there remained in the ghetto a close or distant relative, under almost any law the rightful heir of the evacuee. The conscious would meet this objection with the assurance that, should an heir of the former appear, the goods would be returned (something which hardly ever happened), while easing his conscience with the knowledge that he had saved the goods from falling into the hands of the Germans …" See Ben A. Soifer, *Between Life & Death: History of Jewish Life in Wartime Poland 1939-1945* (London, England: Janus Publishing Company, 1995), 45.

During the Soviet-occupation of Eastern Poland in 1939–1941, the property of Poles often fell into the hands of their unscrupulous Jewish neighbours. The estate of the Kiersnowski family in Podweryszki near Bieniakonie was totally stripped of its belongings in September 1939 by roving gangs, one of which was led by a local Jew. See Kiersnowski, *Tam i wtedy*, 39. When the village of Miłków was cleared of its Polish inhabitants (they were deported by cattle car to Bessarabia in the dead of winter in January 1940), Jews descended on the village with their carriages and dismantled and plundered what remained. See Józef Mroczkowski, "Wojna w Oleszycach," *Karta* (Warsaw), no. 24 (1998): 108. When Poles were evicted from their homes in the villages of Jaremecz and Mikulczyn they were taken over by Jews. See Grzegorz Mazur, *Pokucie w latach drugiej wojny światowej: Położenie ludności, polityka okupantów, działalność podziemia* (Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1994), 44. Frequently the property of Poles deported to the Gulag was simply confiscated by Jewish militiamen or by Jewish neighbours who had ostensibly taken it for "safekeeping." See, for example, the account of Izabella Dybczyńska from Telechany:

> Before the war these Jews behaved in a very friendly manner, but as soon as the Bolsheviks arrived they joined forces with them. They pretended to be friendly, but in an underhanded way they "informed" us of what might happen and offered their help. …
>
> Right after the entry of the Bolsheviks, some Jews told my parents that they should hide their clothing because it would, in all likelihood, be taken from us. I remember very well packing suits and fur coats belonging to my parents … Two huge suitcases (that folded twice) were taken by these Jews

> for safekeeping. Soon after another man arrived—sent, it appears, by these Jews—who told us to get ready by evening a desk and two more suits which would be "borrowed." By November [1939] we were living in two nearly empty rooms. Our furniture was "borrowed" and some people had occupied the remainder of the dwelling.
>
> The situation became progressively worse since we had to live from something. My mother approached Szamszel to return the clothing he had taken for safekeeping. This exchange probably lasted for a few days and finally he told her that he would not return anything. It was all his and we shouldn't make any claims or things might get worse. What was "worse" actually occurred on December 21, when my father was taken away. Two days later he was shipped out of Telechany; to this day I do not know where he was murdered. In April 1940 my mother and I were deported to Kazakhstan, where we spent six years.

See Jerzy Robert Nowak, *Przemilczane zbrodnie: Żydzi i Polacy na Kresach w latach 1939–1941* (Warsaw: von borowiecky, 1999), 134–35. When the Soviets retreated in June 1941 in advance of the Germans, Jews plundered state property in many localities. See Kazimierz Leszczyński, "Dziennik wojenny Batalionu Policji 322 (Opracowanie i tłumaczenie dokumentu)," *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce,* no. 17 (1967): 219 (Białystok); Meir Peker, "In the Bielsk Ghetto & the 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 (Bielsk Podlaski); Maik, *Deliverance,* 20 (Sokoły near Białystok); G. Beil, "The Holocaust (The Shoah)," in Betzalel Shwartz and Israel Chaim Biltzki, eds., *The Book of Kobrin: The Scroll of Life and Destruction* (San Francisco: Holocaust Center of Northern California, 1992), 382 (Kobryń); Żbikowski, *Archiwum Ringelbluma,* vol. 3, 172, 202 (Słonim); Wierzbicki, *Polacy i Żydzi w zaborze sowieckim,* 218 (Słonim); Samuel Lipa Tennenbaum, *Zloczow Memoir* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1986), 167–68 (Złoczów).

Throughout Europe Nazi German policies were responsible for the widescale plunder of Jewish property. A case in point is the city of Salonica (Thessaloniki) in northern Greece, home to that country's largest Jewish community. Not only did the local authorities facilitate the expropriation of Jewish property including the large Jewish cemetery, which was destroyed by 500 Greek workers, but also the local population engaged in looting on a massive scale. Even the leaders of the Jewish police tortured, extorted and killed their fellow Jews in order to force them to reveal where their possessions were kept. Despite a police warning against looting, the deported Jews' empty homes and shops were quickly plundered by Greek gangs looking for valuables which had been left behind: "As soon as they were marched away, people rushed into their houses, tore up floorboards and battered down walls and ceilings, hoping to find hidden valuables." There was a "complete breakdown of law and order" wrote an official at the time, and the second-hand shops of the city began to fill up with stolen goods. Residential property was invaded by squatters after the authorities removed furniture to warehouses. Only a small number of Greeks helped Jews to hide, and few of them survived even though the penalty for helping a Jew was no more than imprisonment. On their return the survivors found Jewish tombstones in urinals and driveways; they had been used to make the dance-floor of a taverna built over a corner of the former cemetery. Because graves had been ransacked for the treasure that had been supposedly hidden there, many Jewish skulls and bones were visible. See Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430–1950* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 397–98, 403, 405, 406, 412–13, 418. There is ample evidence that residents of wealthy nations are equally prone to looting. When Germany invaded France in June 1940, both Frenchmen and Germans soldiers took turns looting stores and other premises. See Evans, *The Third Reich at War, 1939–1945,* 132. After the Jewish diamond dealers were deported from Antwerp, vacated Jewish dwelling were searched with a fine-tooth comb by Nazis and their local helpers to locate hidden loot (diamonds and jewelry); they ripped up floors, took apart bricks, and dug in cellars. See Elaine Saphier Fox, ed., *Out of Chaos: Hidden Children Remember the Holocaust* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2013), 198. In wartime Britain, the problem became critical despite the fact that there was no occupation or breakdown of state apparatus:

> Looting occurred as soon as the bombs of the Blitz began to fall. Bombed houses were raided. Valuables disappeared. Carpets and lead pipes were ripped out. In the first prosecutions in November 1940, it was members of the ARP and of the AFS who faced the charges. The blackout created ideal conditions for burglars, pickpockets and rapists. Offences proliferated as the rate of police successes dropped.
>
> Fraudulent claims provided another problem. People who had lost their home were entitled to a £500 advance on post-war compensation up to £20,000. People who took in evacuees or service personnel were entitled to payment of 10*s.* 6*d.* per week. The National Assistance Office was swamped with claimants, and found it easier to pay than to verify.
>
> A British MP called black-marketeering 'treason of the worst kind'. But, with food, fuel and clothes rationing in force, illegal trade of all sorts flourished. In Glasgow, many people died from drinking home-brewed 'hooch'.
>
> Murders in England and Wales increased by 22 per cent. The increase was partly due to the ready

supply of firearms, and partly to opportunism. Bombed-out ruins provided good cover for murderers, who sought to disguise their prey as Blitz victims.

See Norman Davies, *Europe at War, 1939–1945: No Simple Victory* (London, Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 2006), 382. From the summer of 1944, looting grew more widespread in Germany, especially during night-time air raids; however, it seems that only foreign workers caught looting were executed by the German authorities or lynched by German mobs. See Evans, *The Third Reich at War, 1939–1945*, 703–6. At war's end, Allied soldiers—American, French, and British—engaged in widespread plundering in war-ravaged Europe. Looting began even before the German frontier was crossed in 1945: American reports confirmed that pillage of Belgian civilian property by U.S. troops took place on a considerable scale. Once in Germany looting became a full-blown epidemic, with the military authorities joining in to confiscate works of art, resources and technical equipment. See Antony Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin 1945* (New York: Penguin/Viking, 2002), 192–93; Norman G. Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering*, Second paperback edition (London and New York: Verso, 2003), 178; Giles MacDonogh, *After the Reich: From the Liberation of Vienna to the Berlin Airlift* (London: John Murray, 2007), 240, 269–71, 310, 382, 388–90, 404, 419. Of course, pillaging by the Soviets also took on massive proportions. See MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 297ff., 381–88.

After the Second World War, the Palestinian (Arab) population was driven out of Israel en masse, leaving behind most of their possessions, including their homes, furnishings and personal effects. These were then systematically looted by Jewish soldiers, officials and civilians. Most of the land owned by Palestinians was expropriated by the Israeli state and their abandoned dwellings were allocated to Jewish immigrants. "Legal" measures were put in place to ensure that none of this property would ever return to its lawful owners. Tom Segev describes what happened:

> During the [1948 Arab-Israeli] war and afterwards plundering and looting were very common. "The only thing that surprised me," said David Ben-Gurion at a Cabinet meeting, "and surprised me bitterly, was the discovery of such moral failings among us, which I had never suspected. I mean the mass robbery in which all parts of the population participated." Soldiers who entered abandoned houses in the towns and villages they occupied grabbed whatever they could. Some took the stuff for themselves, others "for the boys" or for the kibbutz. They stole household effects, cash, heavy equipment, trucks and whole flocks of cattle. Behor Shitrit told his colleagues of the Ministerial Committee for Abandoned Property that he had visited some of the occupied areas and saw the looting with his own eyes. "From Lydda alone," he said, "the army took out 1,800 truck-loads of property." Minister of Finance Kaplan admitted: "As a matter of fact, neither the Ministry of Finance nor the Custodian of Abandoned Property is in control of the situation, and the army does what it wants." The Custodian, Dov Shafrir, told the ministers that the regional commanders and their adjutants wanted to stop the looting, "but not the storekeepers of the various companies and squads." …
>
> In Haifa, Jaffa and Jerusalem there were many civilians among the looters. "The urge to grab has seized everyone," noted writer Moshe Smilansky. "Individuals, groups and communities, men, women and children, all fell on the spoils. Doors, windows, lintels, bricks, roof-tiles, floor-tiles, junk and machine parts. …" He could have also added to the list toilet bowls, sinks, faucets and light bulbs. …
>
> Amin Jarjouria, MK of the (Arabic) Nazareth Democratic List, which was associated with MAPAI, reported: "Two days after the seizure of Jish, in the Safed district, the army surrounded the village and carried out searches. In the course of the search soldiers robbed several of the houses and stole 605 pounds, jewelry and other valuables. When the people who were robbed insisted on being given receipts for their property, they were taken to a remote place and shot dead. The villagers protested to the local commander, Manu Friedmann, who had the bodies brought back to the village. The finger of one of the dead had been cut off to remove a ring. ..." …
>
> Altogether, between 140,000 and 160,000 immigrants were settled in abandoned homes: in Jaffa some 45,000, in downtown Haifa about 40,000, and in Acre about 5,000. … By the end of the year some 600 shops in Ramlah had been distributed to immigrants. …
>
> And so tens of thousands of Israelis, soldiers and civilians, helped themselves to the spoils. One took an armchair, another a rug, a third took a sewing machine and a fourth-a combine; one took an apartment and another took a vineyard. Very quickly and easily a whole class-albeit a small one-of newly prosperous people appeared on the scene: merchants, speculators, contractors, agents of all sorts, industrialists and farmers. Some stole what property they could, others received theirs legally. A good many of the transactions fell into that gray area between what the law permitted and what was considered illegal, between outright robbery and official expropriation. …
>
> Starting in the latter half of 1948, the Ministry of Justice worked on the drafting of an Absentees' Property Law, giving the Custodian a share in the ownership of the property he had hitherto controlled as a trustee, and authorizing him to transfer it to a newly established "Development

> Authority." The Ministry's draft proposed a literal definition of the term "absentee," namely, one who was no longer present in the territory of the state. When the draft was brought before the Ministerial Committee, Moshe Sharett demanded that the definition be changed to designate anyone who had left his home after a certain date (November 29, 1947), regardless of where he might have lived thereafter. He drew attention to thousands of refugees who had left their villages and settled in Nazareth. If they were not defined as absentees, it would be necessary to let them return to their homes. Sharett also raised the possibility that Israel might one day seize Nablus on the West Bank, which was a "reasonable likelihood," he thought. In that case thousands of refugees would come within Israel's jurisdiction and they would demand to return to their homes and take back the properties they had abandoned. Sharett's reservation was accepted. Consequently, the definition in the law was changed to embrace all who had abandoned their "usual place of residence," even if they were still living in Israel. Some time after, the Custodian was authorized to sell the abandoned property to the development authority, and the Government of Israel authorized the latter to sell it to the Jewish National Fund. More than half a million acres were thus expropriated from their owners. A few thousand of these owners were actually living in Israel, yet the law defined them as absentees, even if they had only left their homes for a few days and stayed with relatives in a nearby village or town, waiting for the fighting to end. Later they came to be referred to as "present absentees." The majority of them were not allowed to return to their homes. Those refugees who were permitted to return to Israel after the war were also formally absentees and their property was not restored to them. …
>
> The authority of the military governors was also utilized to expropriate lands. The military governor would issue an order to expel villagers from their homes, or forbid them entrance to their fields and thereby prevent them from cultivating them. Then the Minister of Agriculture would declare the lands to be uncultivated and use his authority to hand them over to others to cultivate. In this way Arab farmers lost their lands without actually losing their title to them. Other laws which served the same purpose were later passed. …
>
> In the latter half of 1948, the settlement department of the Jewish Agency prepared a list of several dozen Arab villages which it proposed to repopulate with new immigrants. Most of the villages had been abandoned, but a few were not quite empty. Some were meant to be demolished and their lands to be used for new settlements. Some of the Cabinet ministers criticized the army for demolishing some of the villages it occupied.

See Tom Segev, *1949: The First Israelis* (New York: Henry Holt, 1998), 68–91. Even in recent years, the Israeli army has continued to engage in looting of poor Palestinian villages and in wartime operations directed against Palestinians. See Dan Williams, Reuters News Agency, "Israeli Army Under Fire For Looting," *Toronto Star,* August 26, 2002; Gili Cohen, "Israeli Army to Charge Soldiers With Looting Palestinian Homes During Gaza Operation," *Haaretz,* February 4, 2015.

Looting is a common feature of civil strife, social upheaval and natural disasters. Race riots in the United States have always been accompanied by looting on a massive scale. For a modern twist, the 9/11 tragedy led to thousands of cases of fraudulent bank transactions in New York City, and many of those involved were city employees. See Devlin Barrett, AP, "Thousands Investigated in 9/11 Fraud: Bank Accounts Overdrawn to Tune of $15M," *Toronto Star*, August 6, 2002. In early 2014, more than 130 retired New York City firefighters and police officers were arrested for falsely claming social security benefits in the wake of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre. Retirees lied about their alleged mental and physical diabilities, even though some of them were never at the scene. Many of them claimed they couldn't sleep, work, drive a car, or even leave their homes as a result of their disabilities, only for investigators to find they were flying helicopters, riding on jet skis, leading martial arts classes, and more. Investigators believe that up to $400 million in funds could have been stolen. In the so-called "BlackBerry riots," between August 6 to 11, 2011, thousands of people rioted in several London boroughs and in cities and towns across England. Vehicles, homes and shops were attacked and set alight. The resulting chaos generated looting, arson, and mass deployment of police. At least 100 homes were destroyed. The following days saw similar scenes in other parts of London. From 8 until 10 August, other cities in England including Birmingham, Bristol, and Manchester, along with several towns, saw what was described by the media as "copycat violence." By August 15, 2011, about 3,100 people had been arrested, of whom more than 1,000 had been charged. There was a total 3,443 crimes across London linked to the disorder. Along with five deaths, at least 16 others were injured as a direct result of related violent acts. In total, 189 police and community support officers were injured. An estimated £200 million worth of property damage was incurred. When devastating floods hit England in December 2015, business and evacuated homes were broken into by opportunistic thieves and even a school was also reportedly looted. A police strike in Argentina in December 2013 resulted in more than a week of looting on a massive scale throughout that country. Many Argentines armed and barricaded themselves in their homes and stores as mobs of people swarmed into the streets, attacking people, smashing through storefronts, fighting over merchandise inside, and hauling out anything they can carry. At least eight people were killed, including a police officer and a store owner whose burned body was found in his looted and torched market. The others died while

During deportation operations, especially in the smaller ghettos, Jews would often attempt to flee into the countryside, only to return because of the difficult conditions of survival. It was not primarily the antipathy of the local population that drove the Jews away, but rather their fear of harsh reprisals for aiding Jews. Lea Reisner recalled her departure and return to the ghetto in Izbica:

> Exhausted, my mother insisted that my brother and I must run away. "Go to a village; there must be some kind people somewhere; your life may be saved," she said. The moment we got to the other side of the ghetto, an SS officer saw us. He shot and killed my brother. I reached the forest all alone and found some fugitives. We spent the days lying on the ground, and at night we stole potatoes in the fields.
>
> The peasant we met were kind, but were too frightened to help us. They said, "There is a new ghetto in Izbica; you can't spend the winter here, you will die." Desperate, I returned to Izbica, but my parents were gone.[86]

A wartime diary describes why, after fleeing from the ghetto in Sokoły near Białystok by the hundreds to nearby forests, Jewish fugitives soon returned to the ghetto:

> Notices had been posted in all the villages—warnings to the residents that anyone hiding a Jew would be punished by death. Notices were also sent to each head of a village council (*Soltis [sołtys]*), stating that every farmer was obligated to inform the *Soltis* about where Jews could be found and to reveal the places where Jews were hiding. Anyone who handed a Jew over to the regime would be awarded a prize, and anyone hiding information about the location of Jews would be punished severely.
>
> The warnings spread panic and fear among the farmers. Even close friends who had been prepared to help the Jews in their trouble were afraid of endangering their own lives and the lives of their families.[87]

A local execution of Poles caught sheltering Jews understandably paralyzed many benefactors with fear for themselves and their families, and many Jewish charges were asked to leave their shelters. In extreme

looting. Hundreds were injured and thousands of stores ransacked (by crowds of as many as 500 to 1,000 looters at a time) and homes robbed as the violence spread to at least 19 of the country's 23 provinces. See Michael Warren (Associated Press), "Deadly Looting, Police Strikes Test Argentina on 30th Anniversary of Dictatorship's End," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), December 10, 2013; Michael Warren (Associated Press), "Looters Take Advantage of Police Strikes in Argentina," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), December 10, 2013; Shane Romig, "Wave of Looting Sweeps Argentina," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 10, 2013.

[86] Miriam Novitch, ed., *Sobibor: Martyrdom and Revolt: Documents and Testimonies* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1980), 101.

[87] Maik, *Deliverance*, 114–15.

cases, the fear that their charges might betray them under duress or do so willingly in revenge for being expelled, so overpowered some benefactors that in desperation they took their charges' lives.[88]

The Germans conducted endless searches within the ghettos and raids in the countryside—sometimes conscripting the Jewish police, the Polish police, and the local population to assist in this task—to capture Jews who had hidden or escaped during the liquidation of the ghettos.

> The liquidation of the Jewish community in Kosów Lacki began on September 22, 1942. … SS officers ordered the Judenrat and Jewish Police to gather all the Jews in the marketplace but separated off the families of the labor camp craftsmen in the building where the Judenrat met. SS and Ukrainian auxiliaries accompanied the Jewish Police on a house-to-house search for those in hiding, shooting those they found. … About 150 ghetto residents were killed trying to flee and were buried in a mass grave at the Jewish cemetery. The next day, the SS searched Polish houses throughout the town and in the surrounding countryside, killing Jews they discovered there.[89]

> … more than 1,000 Jews, including from Markuszów, [were] hidden in the Wola and Borek Forests. Joined subsequently by escaped Soviet prisoners of war (POWs) and fugitives from the deportations of the Garbów and Kamionka Jewish communities, they formed three partisan units. However, the partisans mostly were closer to Lublin in December 1942, when a group of SS and Ukrainian auxiliaries arrived to search the two forests closer to Markuszów for hidden Jews. On December 2, the first day of the search, about 400 Jews were killed. Another 600 perished before the sweep ended on January 20, 1943.
>
> … on December 10, 1942, and February 18, 1943, the Germans executed at least 14 Wola Poles for aiding Jews. Four others, similarly accused, disappeared without a trace. … After the executions, many Poles ordered Jews they were protecting to find other hiding places. Most ended up in the forests and fell victim to subsequent forest sweeps, including in the Borek Forest during the winter of 1942–1943, which claimed the lives of 42 Jews.[90]

> The Germans also continued to search for Jews in hiding. The day after the liquidation of the Baczki and Łopianka ghettos, Gendarmes shot more than 50 Jews found in the Perlis factory. In Budziska that day, the Gendarme Hartmann shot another 10 Jews. … In September 1943, the Gendarmes shot 16 Jews in Łopianka. They also killed Jews hiding in Budziska and Jasionówka. In

[88] See, for example, the cases described in Tomasz Frydel, "Konstrukcja pamięci o ratowaniu Żydów na polskiej wsi: Studium przypadku Radomyśla Wielkiego i powiatu mieleckiego," in Adam Sitarek, Michał Trębacz, and Ewa Wiatr, eds., *Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego; Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Oddział w Łodzi, 2012), 359. Cases of Jews apprehended by the Germans betraying their Chrisatian benefactors were frequent. See Mark Paul, *Patterns of Cooperation, Collaboration, and Betrayal: Jews, Germans and Poles in German-Occupied Poland during World War II*, 2012, Internet: <http://www.kpk-toronto.org/archives/Collaboration.pdf> and <http://glaukopis.pl/pdf/czytelnia/PatternsOfCooperationCollaborationAndBetrayal.pdf>.

[89] Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945,* vol. 2, Part A, 390.

[90] Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945,* vol. 2, Part A, 683.

May 1944, the Gendarmes shot 25 Jews in Kamionna village, south of Baczki. The Germans murdered the largest number of Jewish survivors in the forest areas north of Łochów, in neighboring Sadowne. There between January and February 1943, they killed about 300 Jews and escaped Soviet POWs. In the winter of 1942–1943, the Germans also attempted to extricate hidden Jews by taking punitive measures against Poles though to be assisting them. These Aktions included an execution on January 13, 1943, of 2 Jewish women, outside of Sadowne, along with the baker Leon Lubkiewicz, his wife, and son, for having given the women bread. From March 16 to 31, 1943, the SS tortured and then executed 16 farmers from around Zarzetka (Sadowne parish), arrested about 150 others suspected of aiding Jews and escaped Soviet prisoners, stripped villagers of their livestock and agricultural stores, and then set fire to a part of Zarzetka. The number of Jews who perished in this reprisal is unknown.[91]

Forewarned by local Poles several days before Yom Kippur 1942 about German plans to liquidate Sterdyń's ghetto, the Judenrat announced the impending liquidation of their community on September 22. About 700 of the village's 1,200 Jews found hiding places in forests, villages, and estates surrounding Sterdyń. When the Germans arrived the next morning to liquidate the ghetto, they found only 500 of the village's Jews there. Those who did not seek shelter were marched, on foot by some accounts, to their deaths at the Treblinka extermination camp, located 26.3 kilometers (16 miles) northwest of Sterdyń. Over the next two days, the Germans extricated between 270 and 300 Jews from hiding places. These Jews were shot in Sterdyń and buried in a mass grave there.

Beginning in the winter of 1942–1943, the Germans embarked on a series of measures to find Jews from Sterdyń still in hiding. To discern where Jews were sheltered, the Germans planted at least one agent in the forest surrounding part of the town. Based on this information, the Germans began rounding up and executing Jews who had survived the ghetto's liquidation. In March and April 1943, for instance, the Germans murdered 1 Jewish woman and 3 Jewish children. In the autumn, the German Gendarmes executed 40 Jewish men, women, and children. The Germans simultaneously took punitive measures against Poles know to be hiding Jews from Sterdyń. The best documented of these reprisal Aktions was on February 24, 1943, at the Paulinów estate just south of Sterdyń. There the Germans shot 10 Poles suspected of providing food and shelter to Jews from Sterdyń. From March 25 to April 23, 1943, the Germans executed as many as 47 other Poles and may have arrested 140 others suspected of rendering assistance to Sterdyń's Jews. These reprisals, coupled as they were with similar punitive actions in Sadowne, near the Łochów and Stoczek ghettos, provoked many polish villagers to renege on promises of assistance they had extended to Sterdyń's Jews. Following the reprisals, some Poles [out of fear] purportedly murdered Jews they had agreed initially to protect.[92]

[91] Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945,* vol. 2, Part A, 397–8.

[92] Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945,* vol. 2, Part A, 447.

The following account, by a Jewish survivor from a village near Zambrów, tells how his Polish rescuer and the largely friendly or passive villagers were transformed into "Jew hunters" by order of the German authorities, who commonly took hostages in the village to ensure compliance:

> Every evening, under cover of darkness, I made my way alone to Tishke's house. At a pre-arranged time, I waited for him in a field behind the cowshed and he would bring us food, including bread, milk and other items. We wanted to pay Tishke for all the help he had given us, but he refused to hear of it.
>
> One dark night, Yudke and I decided to leave our families in the forest hideout and visit our friend Biali [Biały].
>
> When we arrived at his house he welcomed us with open arms. … We continued to make occasional nocturnal excursions to visit him, in order to wash and to obtain food. …
>
> On one of our visits Biali said that we should all come over to his house, women and children included, so that we could all wash ourselves, have a proper meal and relax. …
>
> It was getting late, when suddenly there was a knock at the door. Biali did not open it at once, he first rushed us to a hiding place, some room at the back of the house where we sat with bated breath. The unexpected visitor was Biali's neighbor. He entered the house, complaining that he had been kept waiting, and that he had something urgent to say that could not be delayed. The neighbor informed Biali that a meeting was about to take place in the house of the Commissar and that attendance was compulsory. The meeting was all about the Jews who had managed to escape to the forests and who were receiving aid from the villagers. …
>
> A few hours later he returned. It was clear from his report that the following day the Germans had arranged for a thorough roundup of all Jews hiding in the forests. This time the armed Germans would not rely on the villagers to carry out this deed, they themselves would be in charge and every effort would be made to cover all the ground; the villagers would act as their assistants. At the meeting, the villagers were warned that anyone caught helping the Jews by providing food or shelter would share their fate. We were taken aback by this information. I told Biali that I did not want him to endanger himself for our sakes, but he insisted that we were not to leave until after the roundup. …
>
> The following day the search and the roundup began. Biali, like all the villagers joined in at the command of the Germans, but before he left he made sure to hide the women and children in the potato store pit. Yudke and I hid in the hayloft. From our hiding place we were within earshot of the mayhem: the creams, the gunshots, the sound of weeping and the curses. Much thought and rigorous preparation had gone into the planning of this roundup and it resulted in many victims being killed or wounded. Those who the Germans did not kill were caught and deported.
>
> By evening, everything was completely quiet. The mission was accomplished and the villagers who aided the Germans were released. Biali came to our hiding place quaking with fear …
>
> Biali told us that he was sorry, but he could no longer give us shelter. He would continue to supply us with food as far as he was able, but it was too dangerous for him and his family to continue to let us stay in his home. He mounted his horse and went off to town to find out what had really happened.

> On his return, he informed us that those who were caught, and there were many, had been taken to Chervony Bur [Czerwony Bór] and were let loose there for one evening. They were free to walk around the town to make as many purchases as they wished before being deported to the work camp at Zambrov [Zambrów]. The Germans knew that they could not escape; they had nowhere to go.
>
> There was a heavy snowfall that day …[93]

Jews, and their Polish benefactors, could also be discovered in the periodic raids conducted by the Germans to apprehend young Poles for forced labour in the Reich. A Jew who was hidden in a village near Kałuszyn recalled:

> The distant roar of motors tell us the village is surrounded. People are fleeing in terror. …
>
> Suddenly huge hounds, followed by German police on bicycles … All helmeted, rifles swung over their shoulders, pistols at their side. …
>
> They went from house to house and ransacked every attic, cellar, and barn. They were looking for young men to send as forced labor to Germany. There was no hiding from them. They smashed walls and found camouflaged bunkers. They searched everywhere …
>
> This wasn't the first raid on the village. We've already lived through several dozen such searches. They always last about a day …[94]

Although one often reads stories about posses of villagers organizing "spontaneously" to rid the area of Jews hiding in the forests, the reality was quite different. The following account describes conditions in the environs of Chełm, where the Germans pacified the village of Wereszczyn on May 26, 1942. After providing assistance to escaped Soviet prisoners of war, at least one of whom was in the services of the Nazis and denounced them, fourteen villagers were executed and the village was set on fire. The Germans also used this opportunity to strike at the local Jewish population.

> After the pacification of Wereszczyn the Germans still did not give us peace. They travelled to villages and caught people to ship to Germany [for forced labour]. … In the following months of 1942, the Germans carried out raids to capture Jews hiding in the forests.
>
> The manhunts for Jews looked like this. There was a German gendarmerie outpost in Cyców, and in Urszulin there was an outpost of the Polish police, the so-called "blue" police. The commander of the "blue" police in Urszulin was a certain G. [Grajek]. The manhunt was organized by the Germans, and those who executed it were the "blue" police and peasants. On instructions from the Germans the local authorities ordered the village administrators [*sołtys*] to round up peasants from the surrounding villages and have them take part in the manhunt. …

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[93] Rivka and Israel Teyer, eds., *The Red Forest: As Narrated by Izhak Shumowitz* (Raanana, Israel: Docostory, 2005?), 103–107.

[94] Leyb Rochman, *The Pit and the Trap: A Chronicle of Survival* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1983), 96–97.

> In December 1942 German gendarmes rounded up peasants from several villages for the manhunt. They caught one Jew, and later I saw two or three more who were shot dead. Of our Jews from Wereszczyn poor Alta and his son were hiding in the forest. They sat in a stack of grain at Podstawski's farm. During this manhunt the peasant Stacho D. ran there with his pitchfork and chased out these two Jews of ours. The commander of the "blue" police in Urszulin, named G., told them to undress, remove their shoes, and then shot both of them. This was strange because that same G. had transported our Maszka [Miriam Zonsztajn, a five-year-old Jewish girl] to a grandmother named [Marianna] Kozłowska in Urszulin. First he procured a certificate for her in the name of Maria Kozłowska. … Later the Germans killed him in the Lublin Castle [which had been turned into a prison—*M.P.*]. Supposedly this was for his cooperation with the underground. In any event commander G. saved Maszka, but shot Alta and his son. …
>
> The peasant Stacho D., who hunted down Alta and his son, perished during that manhunt in December. Nobody felt sorry for him. He was a bad fellow. Earlier Stacho D. had caught a Polish boy by the name of Lolek Biernacki, who was escaping from Germans who were pursuing him. He caught him and turned him over to the Germans. A German took out his revolver and shot Lolek. He was an innocent boy. Then he hunted down Alta and his son in the stack of grain and sent them to their deaths. Finally, during the December manhunt, someone mentioned the three Soviet prisoners of war hiding in the forest. Stacho D. was so zealous that he perished while hunting them down. The Soviets were soldiers and did not allow themselves to be apprehended so easily. One of them perished, but first he had shot Stacho D., who wanted to block their escape route. Nobody felt sorry for him. And the two Soviet prisoners of war who managed to survive the manhunt escaped to [the nearby village of] Wincencin.[95]

As this account shows, both the local police and peasants were simply ordered to participate in manhunts and other activities organized by the Germans, such as digging graves. Those who refused to take part could face harsh retaliations. Historian Martin Gilbert notes that Christian conscripts from Raduń who refused to dig pits for Jews who were still alive were killed on the spot, together with the Jews.[96]

Few of the Poles conscripted for service by the Germans displayed ardour in the tasks meted out to them. Those who did often had an equally grim track record when it came to other victims of Nazi repressions, regardless of their nationality. Moreover, their deeds were generally frowned on by the community. This was equally true in other places, where denouncers of Jews became social outcasts.[97] In many rural

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[95] Ewa Kurek, *Poza granicą solidarności: Stosunki polsko-żydowskie 1939–1945* (Kielce: Wyższa Szkoła Umiejętności, 2006), 221–22; translated as *Polish-Jewish Relations 1939-1945: Beyond the Limits of Solidarity* (New York: iUniverse, 2012). For more details and a description of the pacification of Wereszczyn, see pp. 218–19 (Kurek) and Adam Panasiuk, *Śladami zapomnianej historii… Wereszczyn,* Internet: <http://historia.urszulina.net>. Kurek also mentions a certain Abram Tauber, who along with his sister Ryfka was rescued by a local Home Army leader. After the arrival of the Soviets Tauber served in the Security Office in Chodel near Lublin where he gained a reputation as a persecutor of the local population. See Kurek, *Poza granicą solidarności,* 222–23, 276 n.387.

[96] Gilbert, *The Holocaust,* 335.

[97] In an unspecified village outside Warsaw, "A Jew who had been starving in the woods turned up one day, asking for water. The farmer called the police, who shot the Jew on the spot. This had so outraged the village that the offender had to flee to Warsaw in fear of reprisal." See Natan Gross, *Who Are You, Mr Grymek?* (London and Portland, Oregon:

localities, the Jewish police was also employed to round up Jews working in the countryside and bring them to town for deportation to the camps:

> At the beginning of November 1942, Jewish militia men went to all the villages near Hrubieszów, and also to the small towns, in which Jews still remained, with an order to the *wójt* [village mayor] and the mayor, that all Jews must appear … in Hrubieszów. In fact, all of them appeared.[98]

The manhunts in the countryside pale in comparison with the round-ups of hundreds of thousands of Jews in large the ghettos of Warsaw, Lublin, Sosnowiec, Częstochowa, Kraków, Łódź, and others, which were carried out not by the Polish police, but by the Jewish police, often with the assistance of Ukrainians and Balts, with little or no direct German participation. Poles were in no way responsible for the ghettoization of the Jews and were every bit as powerless to stop the deportations, just as the Jews themselves were.[99] Efforts to assist Jews were fraught with danger and often unsuccessful. Barbara Szacka, an eminent sociologist, recalls an incident that occurred when she was twelve years of age:

> In the summer of 1942 my brother and I went to see a cousin who worked in Biadoliny, a village near the Kraków-Tarnów railway line. Trains carrying Jews and Soviet prisoners of war used to pass by. The trains stopped at the signal. People riding in the trains extended their hands through the small grilled windows of the freight wagons begging for food and water. …
>
> We wanted to help those in the train. There was one obstacle—a German. Dressed in a uniform and armed, he stood between the wagons, but was not visible to the passengers. We tried to explain with grimaces that we wanted to hand a cup of water to the thirsty. We took a step in the direction of the train. Then aother step, while staring at the guard. What will he do? Will he nod his head with approval? Will he go for his rifle? He often went for his rifle, so we backed away.

Vallentine Mitchell, 2001), 248–49. Władysława Słotwińska, from a family of rescuers from Bystrzyca Nowa near Lublin awarded by Yad Vashem, recalled that a Pole who turned a Jewish woman and her two children over to the Germans was ostracized by the villagers. After the war he was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. See Anna Dąbrowska, ed., *Światła w ciemności: Sprawiedliwi Wśród Narodów Świata. Relacje* (Lublin: Ośrodek "Brama Grodzka–Teatr NN," 2008), 171. Local Poles who took part in capturing two Jews in the village of Falkowa near Nowy Sącz, which also resulted in the arrest of two rescuers, met with the aversion of the rural society; Wacław Noworol, the ringleader of the vigilante group, was sentenced to death by the underground Special Civil Court (*Cywilny Sąd Specjalny)* in Kraków. See Dagmara Swatłek, "For a Coat, a Suitcase, and an Apple: Crimes Against Jews Hiding in the Villages of Falkowa, Wieniec and Janowice in the Light of Post-War Trial Documents," *Holocaust: Studies and Materials* (Warsaw), vol. 2 (2010): 399–419, here at 403–6. When a Pole from a village near Białystok by the name of Linczewski, who had betrayed a number of Jews, was struck and killed by a train, the villagers declared that this was God's punishment for what he had done to the Jews. See the account of Abram Manelis in Diatłowicki, *Żydzi w walce 1939 – 1945*, vol. 1, 280.

[98] Account of Motel Kaufman, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/2182.

[99] Notwithstanding Jan Gross's unsupportable assertion that the Poles accepted the Nazi policies of ghettoization. See Jan T. Gross, "Polish-Jewish Relations during the War: An Interpretation," *Dissent* (Winter 1987): 73–81. As pointed out by Yisrael Gutman, a leading Holocaust scholar and eyewitness to these events, "Poland was a completely occupied country. There was a difference in the kind of 'occupation' countries underwent in Europe. Each country experienced a different occupation and almost all had a certain amount of autonomy, limited and defined in various ways. This autonomy did not exist in Poland. No one asked the Poles how one should treat the Jews." See *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies* (Oxford: Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies), vol. 2 (1987): 341.

> Those pantomimes with the guard, who was not visible to the people in the wagon, were probably seen by them as mocking them.
>
> My cousin went to the station with a pail of water and backed away when threatened with a rifle. An old Jew in the train, who did not see the entire situation, then started to curse him terribly. "And you know," said my cousin, "though I am ashamed to say it, I returned his abuse."[100]

In the face of these obstacles, and unable to find long-term hiding places or cope with severe conditions in the forests, tens of thousands of Jewish fugitives decided to return to the ghettos on their own accord. Many Jews were lured back by false promises of clemency by the German authorities.[101] In November 1942,

> the Germans announced that four gathering places would be organized for Jews. Among them was Radomsk [Radomsko]. The Germans well knew that hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of Jews could be found in the woods, in bunkers, with Poles or 'on' Aryan papers or the like. In order to seduce the Jews back into their hands, the Germans legalized four areas for the Jews, and there began a mass migration of the hiding Jews with their wives and children back into the ghetto. A large number of them knew that this was a devilish plan to seduce the Jews and to gather them in one place. However, they found themselves in such condition that they had no choice but to return to the ghetto.
>
> Jews arrived from the Lodz [Łódź] area, hundreds of Jews from Zhurek (Zharki [Żarki]), from the Czenstochow [Częstochowa] area, so that the number of Jews in the small ghetto reached four thousand five hundred souls. Life in the ghetto began to become more normal, one should understand, to the extent that the Germans had an interest in it doing so.[102]

However, the Jews' enemies were not the Poles. The vast majority of Poles never harmed a Jew during the war, nor did they harbour any such intention. During one of the last *Aktions* in Łuków, when the Germans came to round up Jews working outside the ghetto, their Polish co-workers did not cooperate with the Germans:

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[100] Barbara Szacka, "Wspomnienie," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, August 24, 2009.

[101] The Germans made announcements encouraging Jewish fugitives to return to the ghettos and established "remnant ghettos" (*Restghetto*) especially for this purpose. Tens of thousands of Jews were lured back in this manner. See Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part A, 209–10 (Chmielnik), 267 (Opoczno), 295 (Radomsko, one of four remnant ghettos established in the Radom District, attracted over 4,000 Jews), 302 (Sandomierz), 320 (Staszów), 330 (Szydłów), 332 (Szydłowiec), 390 (Kosów Lacki), 401 (Łosice), 446 (Stanisławów Mazowiecki), 489–90 (Bochnia), 497 (Dąbrowa Tarnowska), 504 (Działoszyce), 553 (Proszowice), 625 (Chełm and Rejowiec), 642 (Izbica), 669 (Łęczna), 680 (Łuków), 698 (Piaski), 704 (Rejowiec), 732 (Włodawa); vol. 2, Part B, 1192 (Głębokie).

[102] Simkha Hampel and Yisokhar Minski, "The Megillah of Suffering," in L. Losh, ed., *Sefer yizkor le-kehilat Radomsk ve-ha-seviva* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Radomsk, 1967), 362; translated as *Memorial Book of the Community of Radomsk and Vicinity*, Internet: <http://jewishgen.org/yizkor/radomsko/Radomsko.html#TOC>.

> A few days later, one of the women who sometimes let me stay at her house brought me a birth certificate froma Polish girl who had died. She asked me to leave and live with her as a Christian, and that her priest would help me. Again, I had to say no—I didn't want to leave my *Tateh* [i.e., dad] and brothers. …
>
> In all of Lukow [Łuków] there were only four Poles who openly worked with the Germans, including one man whose wife flicked chickens at the factory. When they came to take us out, a little Jewish boy came running in and she grabbed him to cover him with her skirt. When the Germans came in and asked, "Are there any Jews hiding here?" the Poles all said no.
>
> *Tateh* was still hidden behind the crates, in an area where about eight Poles were working. Again the Germans asked if Jews were present, and the Poles said no. They never found *Tateh* and I managed to get him out later, with help from the workers.
>
> After that, the Germans closed the factory and told everyone to go to the ghetto, where, with no access to water, people were starving and suffering from infectious diseases. Many died.[103]

Conditions in the countryside continued to worsen. As the Germans became more demanding and strict in enforcing contributions of foodstuff from the peasants, there was less and less to go around. The Germans seized more grain and sugar in the *Generalgouvernement* than in occupied France, Holland, Serbia, and the Czech Protectorate and Moravia *combined*, and three times as many potatoes as in those countries.[104] Much of the Polish population was on the verge of starvation and was in no position to offer extended assistance to strangers. The goodwill of the peasants was also squandered by various partisan and forest groups who treated them as no more than a source of provisions.

Lawlessness and Banditry

Holocaust historians have traditionally laid the blame entirely on the Poles for confrontations between Poles and Jews during the German occupation. A careful analysis of the documentary evidence, however, does not support this one-sided view. The principal culprit was lawlessness. After analyzing scores of accounts of Jews who escaped from the death camps of Treblinka, Sobibór and Bełżec, historian Teresa Prekerowa, who was active in Żegota, the wartime Council for Aid to Jews, dismissed the notion that anti-Semitism was the driving force behind the reaction of the local population to the plight of Jewish fugitives hiding in the countryside. While denunciations and even altercations did occur, these were not the norm, but rather the activities of a relatively small number of people who were motivated by greed or involved in criminal activity. Prekerowa also notes that Jewish groups often took food and other belongings from farmers by force, something that no farmer appreciated.[105] Over time relations between Jewish fugitives

[103] Eta Wrobel with Jeanette Friedman, *My Life My Way: The Extraordinary Memoir of A Jewish Partisan in WWII Poland* (New Milford, New Jersey: The Wordsmithy; and New York: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, 2006), 75.

[104] Brzoza and Sowa, *Historia Polski 1918–1945*, 599.

[105] See Teresa Prekerowa's study "Stosunek ludności polskiej do żydowskich uciekinierów z obozów zagłady w Treblince, Sobiborze i Bełżcu w świetle relacji żydowskich i polskich," *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu–Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* vol. 35 (1993): 100–14, translated as "The Attitude of

and Polish farmers turned sour largely because of increasingly frequent and violent confrontations over food and other supplies. However, one cannot generalize and accuse all or even most Jews of behaving like common robbers; nor should one accuse all or even most Poles of innate hostility toward Jews. Indeed, there are many recorded cases of entire villages sympathizing with Jewish fugitives and participating in their rescue.[106]

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the Polish Population Towards Jewish Escapees from the Treblinka, Sobibór, and Bełżec Death Camps in Light of Jewish and Polish Testimonies, in Chodakiewicz, Muszyński, and Styrna, *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold?*, 97–116. Jewish accounts attesting to the seizure of possessions, especially food, from farmers by force are plentiful and numerous examples have been cited herein. Historians have identified many other cases that are not described in this work. See, for example, the testimonies of Tuwie Miller and Ignacy Zimmerman in the Yad Vashem Archives, files 03/2078 and 03/2213, respectively, cited in Grzegorz Berendt, "Cena życia—ekonomiczne uwarunkowania egzystencji Żydów po 'aryjskiej stronie'," in *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały,* vol. 4 (2008): 136, 140; and a Jewish account describing the activities of a Jewish "self-defence" group from Jadów near Łochów led by Mosze Zieleniec that robbed landowners already in 1942. See Bańkowska, *Archiwum Ringelbluma,* vol. 6, 657. It is in this context that the following quotation from Zygmunt Klukowski's diary should be placed: "There are several Jews active with the bandits. The villages have turned against the Jews because of this and try to find them in the fields and forests. It is hard to believe but the attitude toward Jews is changing. There are many people who see the Jews not as human beings but as animals that must be destroyed." See Zygmunt Klukowski, *Diary from the Years of Occupation, 1939–44* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 227. Authors like Jan Gross, Jan Grabowski and others cite only the last sentence as allegedly showing that the Poles started to imitate the Nazis by de-humanizing the Jews, without acknowleding Klukowski's observation that rampant banditry is what explains eventual anti-Jewish attitudes on the part of some Poles.

[106] This well-documented phenomenon goes contrary to what is often claimed in Holocaust literature. Moreover, with rare exceptions, these rescuers have not been recognized by Yad Vashem. See Ryszard Tyndorf, "Collective Rescue Efforts by Poles on Behalf of Jews in the German-Occupied Polish Countryside," in Chodakiewicz, Muszyński, and Styrna, *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold?,* 153–200. Some examples follow. Emanuel Ringelblum recorded: "I heard from Jews of Glowno [Głowno] how peasants helped them during the whole of the winter. A Jew who went out to a village in search of food usually returned with a bag of potatoes … In many villages, the peasants showed open sympathy for the Jews. They threw bread and other food [through the barbed-wire fence] into the camps … located in their neighborhood." See Philip Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1978), 116. Hercek Cedrowski, Tojwje Drajhorm and Jankiel Borkowski wrote in 1947: "The Jews of Ozorków maintained contact with the Poles. The Polish population did not help the Germans in the liquidation of the Jews. They traded with the Jews and brought food to the ghetto. The Jews were afraid of speaking with Poles, and Poles were afraid of helping Jews, but there were no denunciations of Jews." See Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945,* 488. Isadore Burstyn, as a boy of eleven, was able to survive through the kindness of people in the village of Głupianka near Otwock (outside of Warsaw), where he passed as a local boy and herded cows. He hid in the forest when his presence threatened the family with whom he often stayed and friends from the village would bring him food. "In my case the entire village sheltered me even though I know there were still about 20 per cent anti-Semites among them." See "Edmonton survivor returns to Poland," *The Canadian Jewish News* (Toronto), August 2, 1990, and "Return to Otwock brings back rush of memories," *The Canadian Jewish News*, August 30, 1990; Mary Kaye Ritz, "Holocaust Survivor Sees Own childhood on Film," *Honolulu Advertiser,* January 31, 2003. See also Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 5: *Poland,* Part 2, 927. Abram Jakub Zand, a tailor from the village of Bolimów near Skierniewice, "stole back to his village; the local peasants welcomed him back, and he was passed from house to house, working a week or two in each. … 'If I were to thank everyone, whole villages would have to visit me.'" Both he and his sister survived in this way. See Tatiana Berenstein and Adam Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Polonia Publishing House, 1963), 27; Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień…,* 123–24. Shmuel Eliraz, then known as Ludwik Poznański, was born in Warsaw in 1935. Confined in the Warsaw ghetto with his parents, they arranged for their little son to be taken to safety, and entrusted him to his mother's former nanny, Maria Walewska. Walewska was unmarried, had no children of her own, and after a long service to their family had moved to the village of Nowy Kawęczyn near Skierniewice. Shmuel became Wiesiu, Maria's nephew. When she first brought the boy home, her neighbours were distrustful and suspected that she was hiding a Jewish child. However, they eventually left them in peace. He remained in the village under Walewska's care for the rest of the war years. See Maria Walewska, The Righteous Database, Yad Vashem, Internet: <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/walewska.asp>. A Polish Red Cross worker gave over to a Polish couple by the name of Kaczmarek, themselves refugees from Western Poland living in the town of Żyrardów near Warsaw, a young Jewish girl found abandoned in an empty death train: "Many of the neighbours knew that she was Jewish, yet no one informed." See Zbigniew Pakula, *The Jews of Poznań* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine

Mitchell, 2003), 51. Ten-year-old Estera Borensztajn was sheltered by the villagers of Osiny, between Żelechów and Łuków: "the peasants arranged among themselves that each would hide a Jewish girl for a certain period so that 'everyone would be guilty and no one could inform.'" See Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945,* 27. Sara Bryn took up residence in the village of Adamów near Łuków with her young child, passing as a Christian by the name of Stefania Romaniuk. Although it was widely suspected that she was Jewish, and she was told as much, no one betrayed her. See Janina Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów: Słownik* (Warsaw: Neriton, 2014), 165; Stefania Romaniuk, "Moja okupacja," *Odra,* no. 5 (1988): 24–32 , here at 30–31. The Latoszyński family of Lendo Wielkie near Ryki took in 12-year-old Arthur Cytryniaz (later Citrin) from Warsaw as a farmhand, at the behest of his mother, who also hid in the vicinity under a false identity and visited her son from time to time. Although the boy had a good command of Polish, his mother's Polish accent gave her Jewish identity away. Among the people on the farm it was never openly said that he was Jewish but everybody knew it. See Israel Gutman, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005),* volume II (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), 586–87. Hinda Żaboklicka was rescued by Salicki family in the village of Złotokłos near Warsaw. The rescuers were her prewar teachers, who smuggled her from the ghetto in Kałuszyn and brought her to their home. They obtained false identification for her and kept her for the rest of the occupation, even though the neighbours suspected she was Jewish and some of them expressed concerns anout the risk this posed. See Joanna Michlic, "Stories of Rescue Activities in the Letters of Jewish Survivors about Christian Polish Rescuers, 1944–1949," in Glenn Dynner and François Guesnet, eds., *Warsaw: The Jewish Metropolis* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 530–31. Henryk Prajs survived the war passing as a Pole in the village of Podwierzbie near Magnuszew where the fact that he was Jewish was widely known, with the protection of the head of the village. See the testimony of Henryk Prajs, January 2005, Internet: <http://www.centropa.org>. Hana Grynberg, who was just ten years old when she escaped from the ghetto in Kozienice in 1942, lived openly with the Polish Bratos family in the village of Trzebień near Magnuszew for some two years, where the fact that she was Jewish was widely known. See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* volume 4, Part 1, 112. In the small village of Bokowo Wielkie near Sierpc four Jews were rescued by diverse Polish farmers. See Leon Gongoła, "O prawach i ludziach," *Polska* (Warsaw), no. 7 (1971): 170–72. Mindzia Kirszenbaum (Mindze Kirschenbaum) was taken in by the family of Bolesław Topolewski in the village of Przeradz Mały near Bieżuń, where she lived openly for some two years and her origin was known to the villagers. Previously she had lived with farmers in the village of Lutocin where her origin was also known. See Artur K.F. Wołosz, ed., *Księga pamięci Żydów bieżuńskich* (Bieżuń: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Bieżunia and Muzeum Małego Miasta w Bieżuniu, Oddział Muzeum Wsi Mazowieckiej w Sierpcu, 2009), 100–1; translation of *Sefer ha-zikaron le-kedoshei Biezun* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Biezun, 1956). After being smuggled out of the Warsaw ghetto with her bother and wandering around villages working for farmers as shepherds, 12-year-old Ester Rotfing (later Livny) began working for the Jankowski family in the village of Młyniec(?). She remained with them until the end of the German occupation, even though many of the villagers knew that she was Jewish. See Gutman, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005),* volume II, 563–64. After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto in August 1942, 13-year-old Chana Ajzenfisz and her ten-year-old sister Chaya wandered for two weeks from village to village, in the countryside north of Warsaw. Unkempt and dirty, they were readily recognizable as Jews by their appearance and accent but received food and temporary lodging from farmers on whose doors they knocked. When they arrived in the village of Krzyczki-Pieniążki near Nasielsk, about 50 kilometres from Warsaw, they were taken in by the extended Krzyczkowski family. The girls lived in the village openly, passed off as distant family members, for the rest of the war. Although the villagers were aware of their Jewish origin no one betrayed them. See Jacek Leociak, *Ratowanie: Opowieści Polaków i Żydów* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2010), 23–24, 128–29, 131–35. After marrying and converting to Catholicism, shortly before the war Władysław Gugla, a school teacher, settled in the village of Chociszewo, north of Warsaw, where his origin was widely known. He survived with assistance of a number of villagers who sheltered him, as he moved from place to place, teaching village children clandestinely. See Suzanne Rozdeba, "A Polish Village's Secret: A Farming Town Hid a Jewish-born Teacher During the Holocaust," *Tablet,* August 21, 2012. Yisrael Golos, then a 12-year-old boy, managed to escape from the ghetto in Ciechanów during an *Aktion.* He took on an assumed Polish identity and began to wander in the area, hiring himself out to do farm work in villages where he was not known. In early 1943, he arrived at the home of Stanisław and Maria Pajewski in the village of Mierzanowo near Grudusk. They hired Golos in return for room and board. One day a farmer from another village happened to arrive at their house. He recognized Golos and revealed that he was Jewish. "To Golos's surprise, not only did his employers not treat him any worse as a result, they treated him even better. From that time on, the family took special precautions to safeguard Golos's life and the neighbors demonstrated solidarity with the Pajewski family and did not inform on them to the Germans." See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 5, Part 2, 575. After escaping from a German camp, Margita (Miriam) Weiss-Löwy, a Czech Jew made her way to the farm of Józef and Maria Sadurski in Końskowola near Puławy. Although the neighbours were aware of her presence, she remained there safely until the end of the German occupation. See "Jak można podziękować za życie: Sprawiedliwi wśród narodów świata z Lublina i Końskowoli," *Dziennik Wschodni,* April 26, 2015. A Jewish man by the name of Duczy lived openly, without any problems, in his native village of Tarzymiechy near Zamość throughout the entire war. He had always been on good terms with the villagers and was so well liked that he lived there safely, without fear of being betrayed to the Germans.

He also arranged for several Jews to hide on the farm of a Catholic family in that village. See Philip "Fiszel" Bialowitz with Joseph Bialowitz, *A Promise at Sobibór: A Jewish Boy's Story of Revolt and Survival in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 141–42. The case of author Jerzy Kosiński and his parents, who lived openly in Dąbrowa Rzeczycka near Stalowa Wola, is another example. The Kosiński family attended church in nearby Wola Rzeczycka, obtained food from villagers in Kępa Rzeczycka, and were sheltered temporarily in Rzeczyca Okrągła. Other Jews were also assisted by the local villagers. See James Park Sloan, *Jerzy Kosinski: A Biography* (New York: Dutton/Penguin, 1996), 7–54. Faiga Rosenbluth, a penniless teenage Jewish girl from Kańczuga, roamed the countryside moving from one village to the next for some two years; she helped out by very many peasants and was not betrayed, even though she was readily recognized as a Jew. See Fay Walker and Leo Rosen (with Caren S. Neile), *Hidden: A Sister and Brother in Nazi Poland* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), passim. Menachem Superman, who survived in the Rzeszów area, wrote: "the entire village knew that I was Jewish, but [my rescuer] always said to me that I shouldn't be afraid, because no one will hand me over to the Germans." See Elżbieta Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945* (Rzeszów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), 128. The teenager Józef Leichter was hired as a farmhand by Jan Trojanowski, from Nowy Borek near Rzeszów. Although it was common knowledge in the surrounding villages that the boy was a Jew, the farmer allowed the boy to stay despite the danger. On the advice of the village headman, the boy did not venture out. Despite some threats, he was not denounced. See Maria Hochberg-Mariańska and Noe Grüss, eds., *The Children Accuse* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 1996), 68–72. Fifteen members of the extended family of Isaac and Leah Gamss were hidden from 1942 to 1944 in the attic of a farmhouse belonging to Stanisław and Maria Grocholski in the vicinity of Urzejowice near Przeworsk. The villagers knew the Grocholskis were hiding Jews because several members of the group called on a number of villagers to ask for food and it was the only house that in the winter did not have snow on the roof. Leslie Gilbert-Lurie, the daughter of one of the hidden Jews, states: "I would say it took a whole village of people for my mother's family to survive." See Leslie Gilbert-Lurie with Rita Lurie, *Bending Toward the Sun: A Mother and Daughter Memoir* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 46–47, 58, 293. The Kądziołka family of Więckowice near Jarosław took in two siblings, Mojżesz and Blima Katz, from the neighbouring village of Czelatyce. They were joined by a third person, Mejer Blau, and were visited occasionally by the brother, Icek, who was welcomed to eat with them. The neighbours suspected that the Kądziołkas were hiding Jews but said nothing. See Gutman, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, volume II, 567–68. Barbara Mikłasz, an elderly woman from Pruchnik near Jarosław, sheltered Elżbieta Roserman (born 1940) at the behest of her parents, who were deported by the Germans. The villagers were aware of this as the child lived there openly throughout the occupation, and remained with her adoptive family after the war. See *Sprawiedliwa wśród narodów świata—Barbara Mikłasz,* Gimnazjum Publiczne im. Ks. Bronisława Markiewicza w Pruchniku, Onternet: <http://www.gimnazjumpruchnik.pl/projekty/sprawiedliwa.pdf>. Marian Gołębiowski, who was awarded by Yad Vashem, placed Dr. Bernard Ryszard Hellreich (later Ingram) and his future wife Irena Szumska, who went by the names of Zbigniew and Irena Jakobiszyn, in the village of Czermna near Jasło, where their presence was known to all the villagers and they enjoyed the protection of the owners and manager of a local estate. See Piotr Zychowicz, "Ratowali Żydów i nie godzą sie na kłamstwa," *Rzeczpospolita,* October 30, 2009; The Polish Righteous: Internet: <http://www.sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/family/335,golebiowski-marian/>. Marcin and Maria Brykczyński had an estate in Skołyszyn, a village west of Jasło, where they lived with their four children. In 1940, they took in a Polish family who had been expelled by the Germans from Poznań. Feliks Sandauer, born in 1928, was brought there from Lwów by Maria Brykczyńska's sister in 1941, and ostensibly passed as their nephew, Feliks Sawicki. Although word of this spread among the villagers, no one betrayed them. See Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów,* 153; Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part Two, 214–18. Józef and Józefa Marć hid at least twelve Jews in the attic of their house in Jedlicze near Krosno, among them many members of the Fries family. They were assisted by their son and the Zub family, who lived in the neighbourhood. Many inhabitants of the village were aware of this but no one betrayed them. See Elżbieta Rączy and Igor Witowicz, *Polacy ratujący Żydów na Rzeszowszczyźnie w latach 1939–1945 / Poles Rescuing Jews in the Rzeszów Region in the Years 1939–1945* (Rzeszów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2011), 92. Zila Weinstein-Beer (later Cipora Re'em or Zippora Ram), born in 1939, was taken in Maria and Stanisław Dudek of the village of Odrzykoń near Krosno. She was able to pass with the assistance of the local pastor, who baptized her, and the solidarity of the Dudeks' neighbours. Most of the villagers knew where the little girl, the daughter of a local timber plant owner, had come from, but kept silent. See Stanisław & Maria Dudek, The Righteous Database, Yad Vashem, Internet: <http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=4211640>; The Dudek Family, The Polish Righteous, Internet: <http://www.sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/family/626,the-dudek-family/>. Five Polish families in the neaby villages of Przybówka and Niepla, lying between Jasło and Krosno—Obara, Zajchowski, Stefanik, Pomprowicz, and Faryniarz—sheltered the Abraham and Regina Bigajer and their daughters, who also hailed from Przybówka. See Gutman, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, volume II, 601; Rączy and Witowicz, *Polacy ratujący Żydów na Rzeszowszczyźnie w latach 1939–1945 / Poles Rescuing Jews in the Rzeszów Region in the Years 1939–1945,* 158. A network of Polish families was instrumental in rescuing the 8-member Krüger family, consisting of parents and six children, of Sowina, a village located north of Jasło, and Jacek Klec, a tailor from the Warsaw area. The rescuers

included two families from Sowina who were recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Gentiles, namely Stanisław and Anna Kopeć and Jan and Kunegunda Frączek, and their daughter Adela Liszka, as well the Stasiowski and Hendzel families and others. See "Anna Kopec," The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, Internet: <http://www.jfr.org/pages/rescuer-support/stories/poland-/-anna-kopec>; "The Kopeć Family," The Polish Righteous, Internet: <http://www.sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/family/647,the-kopec-family/>; Testimony of Anna Kopeć, Internet: <http://www.sprawiedliwi.org.pl/pl/media/1079/>. The entire village of Ciechania, located south of Jasło near the Slovak border, rescued a local Jew, who moved from one farmer to another. See Zuzanna Schnepf-Kołacz, "'In the Ciechania Presbytery': The Story of Saving Zofia Trembska: A Case Study," *Holocaust: Studies and Materials* (Warsaw: Polish Center for Holocaust Research), vol. 2 (2010), 367. Several dozen Polish families sheltered Jews in the villages of Ropa, Moszczenica and Rzepiennik Strzyżewski near Gorlice. See Michał Kalisz and Elżbieta Rączy, *Dzieje społeczności żydowskiej powiatu gorlickiego podczas okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1945* (Rzeszów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Oddział w Rzeszowie, 2015), 87–89. Henryk Schönker recalled that when he was fingered in Wieliczka by a boy who started to chase him, the passers-by ignored the boy's cry to "catch the Jew." No one made an effort to apprehend him. One of the onlookers seized the boy and admonished him. See Henryk Schönker, *Dotknięcie anioła* (Warsaw: Ośrodek Karta, 2005), 135–36. The case of Doctor Olga Lilien, a Holocaust survivor from Lwów with a very marked Jewish appearance, who lived with a Polish family near Tarnobrzeg, is another example of solidarity among the Polish villagers. A German came looking for a fugitive and summoned the villagers to a meeting to question them about his whereabouts. "Suddenly he looked at me and said, 'Oh, but this is a Jewess.' The head of the village said, 'Oh, no, she cooks at the school. She is a very good cook.' Nobody said, 'Oh, well, she is Jewish. Take her.' He let me go. The population of the village was about two thousand. They all knew there was something 'wrong' with me. Any one of them could have sold me to the Germans for two hundred deutsche marks, but out of two thousand people nobody did it. Everybody in the village protected me. I had very good relations with them." See Ellen Land-Weber, *To Save a Life: Stories of Holocaust Rescue* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 204–206, 246. The villagers of Czajków near Staszów were known for the support they gave to Jews who were hiding from the Germans: "it was something exceptional to see the humane way the villagers behaved. These simple people helped us of their own free will, and without receiving any money in return. From them we often heard some kind words, quite apart from the money, loaves of bread and boiled potatoes they gave us from time to time." See Gabriel Singer, "As Beasts in the Woods," in Elhanan Ehrlich, ed., *Sefer Staszow* (Tel Aviv: Organization of Staszowites in Israel with the Assistance of the Staszowite Organizations in the Diaspora, 1962), xviii (English section). More than a dozen villagers have been recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Gentiles. See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vols. 4 and 5: *Poland*, Part 1, 197; Part 2, 670. Two Polish families in the village of Rytwiany sheltered the Mandel family, consisting of parents and their four children, from nearby Staszów, even though people in the village suspected them of hiding Jews. See Gutman, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005),* volume II, 609–10. Many villagers in Głuchów near Łańcut were also engaged in sheltering Jews, and did so with the support of the entire community. See Mariusz Kamieniecki, "Ratowali Żydów przed zagładą," *Nasz Dziennik,* November 24, 2005; Institute of National Remembrance, Wystawa "Sprawiedliwi wśrod Narodów Świata"—15 czerwca 2004 r., Rzeszów, Internet: <http://www.ipn.gov.pl/portal/pl/359/913/>. An illiterate Jewish woman who survived in a village near Lublin acknowledged that "the entire village rescued me. They all wanted me to survive. And when the Germans were routed, I left the village and shall never return there." When asked why she didn't want to see the people who saved her life, she replied: "Because I would be beholden to the entire village. So I left and won't return." See Klara Mirska, *W cieniu wiecznego strachu: Wspomnienia* (Paris, n.p.: 1980), 455. Marianna Krasnodębska (née Jarosz), whose family was awarded by Yad Vashem for rescuing thirteen Jews in Piaski near Lublin, stated: "With absolute confidence and with a clear conscience," she states, "I can say that none of the residents of Piaski ever betrayed the Jews in hiding. They might have been too afraid to help, but would not sell one out. There were two informers, but they were executed by the Home Army." See *Poles Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust: Recalling Forgotten History* (Warsaw: Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland and Museum of the History of Polish Jews, 2008), 79. The villagers of Wola Przybysławska near Lublin took turns sheltering and caring for a young Jewish girl who survived a German raid on a forest bunker. She was passed from one home to another, thus ensuring there wouldn't be any informing. See Goldberg, *The Undefeated,* 166–67. A Jewish woman named Berkowa (née Zelman) was rescued by Jan Łoś in the village of Żabno near Żółkiewka; although this was widely known, no one betrayed her. The Wajc family, consisting of Mendel and Ryfka and their two young sons, Jankiel and Zygmunt, survived in the village of Różki near Żółkiewka, where they were known to the villagers. See Chaim Zylberklang, *Z Żółkiewki do Erec Israel: Przez Kotłas, Buzułuk, Ural, Polskę, Niemcy i Francję,* Second revised and expanded edition (Lublin: Akko, 2004), 169, 171–72. Moshe Frank, a teenager from Zamość, was taken in by a poor farmer in Dębowiec who lived in a one-room hut with his wife and sister-in-law. Upon learning he was Jewish, they consulted with relatives and friends about what to do, and decided to go on behaving as though Moshe were a Christian. See Nahum Bogner, *At the Mercy of Strangers: The Rescue of Jewish Children with Assumed Identities in Poland* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2009), 88–89, 97. Jakub Hersz Griner, an 11-year-old boy from Zamość, looking for a job as a farmhand, was taken in by a poor Polish family in Białowola. Although he posed as a Polish orphan named Grzegorz Pawłowski, his flawed Polish and behaviour gave him away. He had been wandering through the villages from one farmhouse to another. He

remained with this family for about a year, and then worked for another family in this same village. News that the boy was Jewish had long spread in the village, but no one openly mentioned this. The boy remained in the village until liberation. See Gutman, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005),* volume II, 530–31. A Jewish boy of seven or eight years named Abraham, who tended geese for a farmer near Sandomierz, was known to the peasants as "Żydek" (little Jew). See Eva Feldenkreiz-Grinbal, ed., *Eth Ezkera—Whenever I Remember: Memorial Book of the Jewish Community in Tzoymir (Sandomierz)* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Tsoizmir be-Yisra'l: Moreshet, bet iedut 'a. sh. Mordekhai Anilevits', 1993), 544. The Idasiak family took in a teenaged Jewish boy by the name of Dawid, whom they sheltered for almost two years. The neighbours were fully aware that he was Jewish and also helped him. He herded cows and played with the village children. See the account of B. Idasiak, "Jedwabne: Dlaczego kłamstwa?," *Nasz Dziennik,* February 26, 2001. A 9-year-old Jewish boy by the name of Wintluk (Wintel), who had lost his mother and three fingers when shot at by Germans while escaping, was taken in by a poor Polish family in Mulawicze near Bielsk Podlaski and then cared for and protected by the entire village who took pity on him: "The entire village, which was more aware of the danger, took responsibility for his survival. The village administrator gave warning of visits by the Germans, who were stationed in the village school. Thanks to this collective effort, the boy survived the war." See Alina Cała, *The Image of the Jew in Polish Folk Culture* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew Univeristy, 1995), 209–10. Alfreda and Bolesław Pietraszek sheltered several Jewish families consisting of 18 people on their farm in Czekanów near Sokołów Podlaski for a period of two years. Although they had to rely on the assistance of neighbours for food for their charges, no one betrayed them. See "Odznaczenia dla Sprawiedliwych," Internet: <http://www.forum-znak.org.pl/index.php?t=wydarzenia&id=6109>. Two young Jewish men were passed from farmer to farmer in the village of Zdziebórz near Wyszków and were eventually accepted into the Home Army. See Krystian Brodacki, "Musimy ich uszanować!" *Tygodnik Solidarność,* December 17, 2004. Yitzhak Kuniak from Kałuszyn hid among peasants for whom he was sewing secretly. He moved about in a few villages where he was fed and sheltered. See Layb Rochman, "With Kuniak in Hiding," in A. Shamri and Sh. Soroka, eds., *Sefer Kaluszyn: Geheylikt der khorev gevorener kehile* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Kaluszyn in Israel, 1961), 437ff., translated as *The Memorial Book of Kaluszyn,* Internet: <http://jewishgen.org/Yizkor/kaluszyn/Kaluszyn.html>. A teenaged boy and his mother, who lived in a damaged, abandoned house in Drzewica where he openly played with village boys, survived the war despite his Semitic appearance. See Sven Sonnenberg, *A Two Stop Journey to Hell* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, 2001). A poor Jewish tailor survived the war by being passed from home to home in the village of Dąbrowica near Ulanów. See Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny,* Part Two, 161–62. Jerzy and Irena Krępeć, who were awarded by Yad Vashem, sheltered and otherwise assisted a number of Jews on their farm in Gołąbki near Warsaw. Their son, a 14-year-old boy at the time, recalled: "the fact that they were hiding Jews was an open secret in the village. At times, there were 20 or 30 people living on the farm. Many of the visitors were urban Jews who spoke Polish with an accent. Their children attended underground schools that moved from house to house. 'The neighbors knew. It would have been impossible to manage this without people finding out. But everyone knew they had to keep quiet—it was a matter of life or death.'" In fact, many of the Krępeć's Polish neighbours helped, "if only to provide a meal." See Peggy Curran, "Decent people: Polish couple honored for saving Jews from Nazis," *Gazette* (Montreal), December 10, 1994; Janice Arnold, "Polish widow made Righteous Gentile," *The Canadian Jewish News* (Montreal edition), January 26, 1995; Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Zegota,* 141–42, *Żegota,* 2nd edition, 131–32; *Code Name: Żegota,* 3rd edition, 140–43. After living in Warsaw on Aryan papers passing as a Christian, Joseph Dattner moved to a village outside Warsaw in May 1944. Working as a tailor to earn food, he moved from house to house sewing clothes. Dattner recalls: "I survived, like my brothers, by pretending to be Christian. I took the name Poluk but I was well-known and most people knew I was Jewish." See the interview with Joseph Dattner, dated December 20, 1988, Phoenix Holocaust Survivors' Association in affiliation with the Cline Library of Northern Arizona University; Al Sokol, "Holocaust Theme Underscores Work of Artist," *Toronto Star*, November 7, 1996. After leaving the ghetto in Jeżów, Nathan Gold received extensive support from Poles in the nearby villages of Przybyszyce and Słupia: "Some ten families in the villages took turns hiding him, each one not knowing about the other's activities. They were poor people, many of the older ones illiterate, but all opened their hearts and their homes to him." See Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Code Name: Żegota,* 143. Ludwika Fiszer was one of three women who escaped naked from an execution pit where Jews from the Poniatowa labour camp were taken by Germans and their Ukrainian henchmen. Roaming from village to village, despite their dishevelled appearances, they received various forms of assistance, even though the peasants were clearly terrified of Ukrainian retaliation. Although most people were reluctant to keep them for any length of time, no one betrayed them, and several weeks later they met up with a Polish woman who took them safely to Warsaw. See the account of Ludwika Fiszer in the web site *Women and the Holocaust* (Personal Reflections—In Ghettos/Camps), Internet: <http://www.theverylongview.com/WATH/> and <http:/www.zchor.org/poniatowa/fiszer.htm>. (Ludwika Fiszer's account was recorded in early 1944; the account of Estera Rubinsztein, a fellow escapee, recorded in November 1945, neglects to mention many examples of assistance the women received from peasants, accentuates the negative experiences and even embellishes them. Even after making allowance for a variance in memory retention among survivors, these accounts shows not only how rapidly memory depreciates but also undermine the notion, advanced by sociologist Jan T. Gross, that many details of the more frequently bad than good contacts were very quickly suppressed. On the contrary, a comparison of these texts proves

just the opposite and underscores the influence of negative stereotypes on later accounts. See Andrzej Żbikowski, "Texts Buried in Oblivion: Testimonies of Two Refugees from the Mass Grave at Poniatowa," *Holocaust: Studies and Materials* (Journal of the Polish Center for Holocaust Research, Warsaw), vol. 1 (2008): 76–102.) In June 1943, Hary (Tzvi) Norich, born in Chorzów in 1928, left the ghetto in Będzin and found shelter with Andrzej and Maria Skop in the village of Woźniki, south of Częstochowa. He stayed with the Skops for eight months, despite the fact that quite a few people from Chorzów could have recognized him as Jewish, and did a few times, and many people in Woźniki knew his parents, who had lived there for a while after their marriage, and saw their likeness in him. He decided to look for a different hideout so as not to endager the Skops, and survived the war with the help of another Polisg family. See Skop Family, The Righteous Database, Yad Vashem, Internet: <http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=8033905>. David Danieli, a 9-year-old boy from Rybnik, was taken in by a Polish family who looked after him devotedly and saw to all his needs. He later discovered that many people had known he was Jewish but had not denounced his adoptive parents. See Bogner, *At the Mercy of Strangers*, 62–63. After escaping from the Sosnowiec ghetto, Adela Grünfeld and her son Leon took up residence in Bujaków near Bielsko-Biała, in the Beskid Mountains. She was recognized by Bolesław Blachura, a friend from before the war and underground member hiding in the same village with the Wawak and Porębski families. Adela Grünfeld brought many other Jews to the village, including her sister and brother-in-law. They stayed in the barn or in the attic, and only the boy Leon lived openly in the house. When asked about the danger of being denounced because of this large movement of people, Władysław Porębski answers: "I was only afraid of [being denounced by] Germans, not Poles, because one of them [the Poles] was in Auschwitz, another in forced labour, transported to Germany, another one was a partisan, yet another left in 1939 and never came back… These things united people." See *Poles Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust: Recalling Forgotten History* (Warsaw: Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland and Museum of the History of Polish Jews, August 2009), 115. See also Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, 634–35. Hania Gross was taken in by the Matlak family of Przeciszów, a village near Oświęcim, at the age of nine. She was passed off as a distant relative, but the neighbours soon began to suspect the child's true identity. Despite the danger posed to their lives, the Matlaks continued to care for Hania as if she were their own. "They were afraid they might get denounced. Fortunately, no one did." Hania lived a normal life, playing with other children, attending church—not in hiding at all. See *Poles Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust: Recalling Forgotten History* (Warsaw: Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland and Museum of the History of Polish Jews, November 2008), 97. A Jew from Kraków by the name of Gelbart settled in the nearby village of Wyciąże with his wife and child. They survived the occupation by moving from cottage to cottage, providing tailoring services in exchange for room and board. Their presence was known to hundreds of people, yet no one betrayed them. See Krystyna Samsonowska, "Pomoc dla Żydów krakowskich w okresie okupacja hitlerowskiej," in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 856. Bogusława Lifszyc was smuggled out of the Warsaw ghetto and brought to the village of Laskowa near Nowy Sącz, where she was taken in by the Kraśny family. Although posing as a Catholic, Halina Pisz, her dark features made her stand out and the villagers suspected she was Jewish. However, no one betrayed her. See Paweł Knap, *"Jak ci się uda uratować, pamiętaj": Relacje "Sprawiedliwych" i o "Sprawiedliwych" z województwa zachodniopomorskiego* (Szczecin: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Oddział w Szczecinie, 2010), 37–38. Alter Szymszynowicz made soap for villagers near Opoczno and Końskie in exchange for food and shelter. See Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień…,* 125–26. In the village of Dziurków near Radom, a local Jew lived openly throughout the war with two Polish families under an assumed identity furnished by the Home Army, and even took seasonal employment with the Germans, without being betrayed. See Tadeusz Kozłowski, "Spotkanie z żydowskim kolegą po 50 latach," *Gazeta* (Toronto), May 12–14, 1995. In the village of Tarłów, between Zwoleń and Sandomierz, Józef and Wiktoria Krawczyk agreed to shelter Ewa Górecka, the three-year-old daughter of a Jewish woman whom they did not know. They passed her off as their granddaughter, even though their two adult sons were childless and the neighbours knew she was not their granddaughter. They kept the child until 1949, when she was removed from them by deception. See Gutman, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, volume II, 579–80. When a Jew passing as a Christian became a driver and had to transport some German officials to his hometown of Wierzbnik, he wondered "How come no one recognized me? There are many gentiles who knew me in the town where I was born and raised and still I was not exposed." After the war he learned that many had indeed recognized him, but "kept their mouths shut." See Menachem Mincberg, "In the Jaws of Destiny," in Mark Schutzman, ed., *Wierzbnik-Starachowitz: A Memorial Book* (Tel Aviv: Wierzbnik-Starachowitz Relief Society in Israel and Abroad, 1973), 201ff, translated as *Wierzbnik-Starachowitz: A Memorial Book,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Wierzbnik/Wierzbnik.html>. The Konarski and Mermer families sheltered seven Jews who escaped from the Hassag labour camp in the attic of their house in the village of Komorniki, on the outskirts of Częstochowa, for a period of twenty-two months. Although their neighbours were aware of the rescue, no one betrayed them. See "Sprawiedliwy Wśród Narodów Świata," *Puls Regionu* (Częstochowa), May 2008 <http://region.czest.pl/cz50/sprawiedliwy.php>. In the village of Olsztyn near Częstochowa, four Jewish families passed as Polish Christians with the collusion of the villagers. See Frank Morgens, *Years at the Edge of Existence: War Memoirs, 1939–1945* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1996), 97, 99. After escaping from the ghetto in Częstochowa, Ignacy Jakobson and his colleagues joined a partisan unit near

Koniecpol where they were assisted by a priest and a number of farmers in Kościelna: "the farmers in that village were most favourably disposed to us." See Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations,* 588–89. Another eyewitness writes: "In Kielce Voivodship I know of cases where an entire village knew that a Jew or a Jewess were hiding out, disguised in peasant clothes, and no one betrayed them even though they were poor Jews who not only could not pay for their silence but had to be fed, clothed and housed." See Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations,* 361. A similar attitude in several villages near Łowicz is described by Joseph Szmekura. See Gedaliah Shaiak, ed., *Lowicz, A Town in Mazovia: Memorial Book* (Tel Aviv: Lowitcher Landsmanshaften in Melbourne and Sydney, Australia, 1966), xvi–xvii. Hanna Mesz, along with her mother, spent the period September 1944 to February 1945 in the village of Korzeniówka near Grójec, supporting themselves by working for various farmers who suspected they were Jewish. See Wiktoria Śliwowska, ed., *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 120–23. A similar case near Łaskarzew is recorded in Małgorzata Niezabitowska, *Remnants: The Last Jews of Poland* (New York: Friendly Press, 1986), 118–24: Zygmunt Srul Warszawer hid for 26 months moving from place to place among numerous villages, such as Wielki Las, in the triangle formed by Łaskarzew, Sobolew, and Wilga, "visiting every farm because he figured that if everyone helped him no one would turn him in—to do so would mean self-destruction." No one turned him away empty handed during those 26 months: "'No one ever refused to help you?' 'No, not food! In twenty-six months, not once. Sometimes they were afraid to let me into the house, or into the barn. It varied, but their food they shared." Jankiel Grynblatt found shelter with farmers he knew in villages southeast of Żelechów, for whom he worked as a tailor. His presence there was known to other villagers who treated him well. See Diatłowicki, *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945,* vol. 1, 140. The young sons of Janina Dulman, namely Jerzy and Władysław, whose mother had married a Jew and converted to Judaism before the war, were sheltered by her their aunt, Władysława Kaszubska of Żelechów, who was Janina's younger sister. She hid them with different people in the surrounding villages until the liberation. See Gutman, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005),* volume II, 569–70. Lea Starowiejska, a young girl from Warsaw with Semitic features, somehow managed to make her way to Żeliszew Podkościelny, a village lying between Mińsk Mazowiecki and Siedlce. She was taken in by Rev. Julian Borkowski, the local pastor, who taught her Catholic prayers so that she could play the part of a Polish orphan. The appeal for a Polish family to take her in was answered by the Górzyńskis, who cared for her like a daughter. They lived in the hamlet of Łęki. Everyone there was aware that the child was Jewish. No one betrayed them. See Gutman, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005),* volume II, 557; Bartoszewski and Lewinóna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej,* 2nd ed., 1021; Edward Kopówka and Paweł Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki: Polacy z okolic Treblinki ratujący Żydów* (Oxford and Treblinka: Drohiczyńskie Towarzystwo Naukowe and Kuria Diecezjalna w Drohiczynie, 2011), 304; *Polacy ratujący Żydów w czasie Zagłady: Przywracanie pamięci / Poles Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust: Recalling Forgotten History* (Warsaw: Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland and Museum of the History of Polish Jews, 2008), 53. The following examples can be found in Nechama Tec, *Resilience and Courage: Women, Men, and the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003). Eva Safszycka, not yet 20 at the time, left the ghetto in Siedlce, obtained false identity documents with the help of a Pole, a stranger she happened to encounter, and took a position as a domestic on an estate owned by a Pole. She recalled: "I met with so much kindness from the Poles, so many were decent and helpful that it is unbelievable. … They hid other Jews, one of them a girl of eleven." Ibid., 224. Tema Rotman-Weinstock from the Lublin area presents a similar story. Dressed as a peasant, during the last stage of the war she roamed the familiar countryside moving from employer to employer, most of whom were hungry themselves and found it hard to feed her. She met a cousin who lived with his wife in a bunker in the forest, but he refused to let her join them. Once when she was on the verge of collapse, kind peasants took her into their home. After a month, afraid to keep her, they directed her to a woman who lived on a farm with her daughter in the village of Kajetanówka. She remained there until the liberation, even though the word had spread that she was Jewish. "Fortunately, no bad consequences followed because she found a powerful protector in the local priest. He baptized Tema and defended her … 'The priest stood up for me, arguing that conversion was a wonderful Christian deed.'" Ibid., 227–29. Rina Eitani (11 years old at the time) and her mother and sister (10 years old) supported themselves by smuggling farm goods from the countryside to Warsaw. They worked separately to lessen the risk of discovery. While the Germans were ruthless toward smugglers, the natives treated them kindly: "One day I was buying something in a store. A little girl came in, warning me, 'The Gestapo are in the house where you live.' Right away, the owner of the store, a woman, put me in the cellar. She wouldn't let me go until the Gestapo left. … We stayed a lot in the villages where we bought the produce. The peasants were nice to us. They would feed us and sometimes, in exchange, we worked for them." Ibid., 231–32. Chava Grinberg-Brown, who hailed from the village of Wiskitki, roamed the countryside near Żyrardów for the final years of the German occupation: "…at the end of each day, I would beg people to let me come in and sleep. I remember that once someone gave me a place to stay and offered me chicken soup … In another home, one of the women gave me medication for my skin condition. They knew that I was Jewish … it was obvious. As I wandered from one little place to another, people fed me and let me sleep in their homes or close to them; in barns, pigstys, etc." When a Pole who recognized her wanted to turn her in, "Some peasants who realized what he was after threatened to give him a beating he would never forget. That stopped him from bothering me." Her story continues: "I went to the place I had worked before [the war]. I stayed there for a few days. After that, I kept moving

from one place to another. Some refused me work. Then a peasant offered me a more stable job. … I remained with this peasant for most of the summer. Then I left and went to another village. I went from one village to another. Even during the summer I would change places. When the Poles sent me away, I was not angry. I understood that they were afraid or had not enough food and could not share the little they had. I did not particularly feel their anti-Semitism. … Most people knew right away when I came in that I was Jewish, but they did not harm me. Only a few times did I have to run away. … When I entered a village I would go first to the head of the village, and he would send me to a peasant. Usually they were not afraid if they had a note from the head of the village. … I have no bad feelings toward the Christians. I survived the war thanks to them." Ibid., 225–27. A 31-year-old barber named Zimler, who wandered with his wife in the Wiskitki area near Żyrardów in 1941, cutting hair for farmers, wrote that "the attitude of the farmers to us was extremely good." The farmers in various villages such as Oryszew, Wyczółki and Janówka, allowed them to stay in their homes, gave them food, washed their laundry, and even invited them to a wedding. See Marta Markowska, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Dzień po dniu Zagłady* (Warsaw: Ośrodek Karta, Dom Spotkań z Historią, and Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2008), 100–1. After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto, the teenage brothers Zwi and Józef Ditman from Wisktiki wandered the villages in the area, looking for a place to stay, until they were taken in by a family in the village of Skrzelew. See Israel Gutman, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, volume II (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), 541–42. In an unspecified village outside Warsaw, "A Jew who had been starving in the woods turned up one day, asking for water. The farmer called the police, who shot the Jew on the spot. This had so outraged the village that the offender had to flee to Warsaw in fear of reprisal." See Natan Gross, *Who Are You, Mr Grymek?* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001), 248–49. A number of Jews were sheltered in another unnamed village outside Warsaw, with the knowledge of the entire village, and no one was betrayed. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej,* 2nd ed., 572–73. Józefa Grzegorek of the village of Nowa Wieś near Sochaczew took in a Jewish girl from Zwierzyniec by the name of Jadwiga (later Bekir), whom she sheltered from 1942 until 1945. The entire village was aware of this, but no one betrayed the girl. See Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów,* 210. Franciszka Aronson, from a village near Mińsk Mazowiecki, wandered about many villages, including villages where she was known, before she was taken in by nuns at a convent in Ignaców where several Jews and a Gypsy woman were sheltered. See Ewa Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach: Udział żeńskich zgromadzeń zakonnych w akcji ratowania dzieci żydowskich w Polsce a latach 1939–1945* (Lublin: Clio, 2001), 116. Brindla (Bronka) and Mojżesz Siekierka and their two sons were sheltered by the family of Bronisław Bylicki in the village of Żwirówka without compensation. Stanisława Roś, a friend of Brindla's, brought them food and money for fuel on a regular basis, and Brindla would make the rounds in surrounding villages begging for food. See Justyna Kowalska-Leder, "Pomaganie skazanym na Zagładę jako źródło destrukcji—na podstawie dokumentów osobistych Brandli Siekierkowej," *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały* (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, IFiS PAN, 2012), vol. 8, 176–87. Dr. Zofia Szymańska, who was sheltered by the Grey Ursulines in Ożarów, received material care and an abundance of spiritual comfort from many nuns and priests, without any effort on their part to convert her. News of her stay was widely known to the villagers but no one betrayed her, not even when a German military unit was, at one point, quartered in the convent. Her 10-year-old niece, who had a very Semitic appearance, was sheltered by the Sisters of the Immaculate Virgin Mary in Szymanów, along with more than a dozen Jewish girls. All of the nuns were aware that their young charges were Jews, as were the lay staff, the parents of non-Jewish children and many villagers. None of the Christian parents removed their children from the school despite the potential danger, and in fact many of them contributed to the upkeep of the Jewish children. Dr. Szymańska wrote: "The children were under the protection of the entire convent and village. Not one traitor was to be found among them." See Zofia Szymańska, *Byłam tylko lekarzem…* (Warsaw: Pax, 1979), 149–76. Another example is provided by Mary Rolicka, whose mother, one other Jewish woman and two Jewish men were sheltered by the Sisters of Charity, with the assistance of their chaplain, Rev. Albin Małysiak, in the Helcel Institute in Kraków and later at an old age home in Szczawnica. Rev. Małysiak recalled: "All of the charges of the institute as well as the personnel (nuns and lay staff) knew that there were Jews hidden among us. It was impossible to conceal that fact, even though it was known what danger faced those who were responsible for sheltering Jews. After the passage of weeks and months many of the residents of Szczawnica learned of the Jewish boarders. No one betrayed this to the Germans, who were stationed in the immediate vicinity." See Mary Rolicka, "A Memoir of Survival in Poland," *Midstream*, April 1988, 26–27. It was universally known that the young daughter of Reb Moshe of Grodzisko near Leżajsk was sheltered in an orphanage run by nuns in that village, yet no one betrayed her. See Bertha Ferderber-Salz, *And the Sun Kept Shining…* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1980), 199. Marian Małowist, 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," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 13 (2000): 338. Jewish partisan Gustaw Alef-Bolkowiak identifies the following villages in the Parczew-Ostrów Lubelski area as ones where "almost the entire population was actively engaged in helping fugitives from the ghettos": Rudka, Jedlanka, Makoszka, Tyśmienica and Bójki. He also states that in the village of Niedźwiada near Opole Lubleskie, the foresters sheltered several Jewish families with the knowledge of the entire village. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej,* 2nd ed., 533–34. The Pinkies family was rescued by the villagers of the hamlet of Czyżyczka of Gierczyce near

Bochnia. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej,* 2nd ed., 815. About one hundred and fifty Poles were killed in mass executions in the villages of Białka in the Parczew forest and Sterdyń near Sokołów Podlaski for extensive help given to Jews by those villages. See Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity,* Part One, 123–24, 228. More than a dozen villagers in Mętów near Głusk, outside of Lublin, sheltered Jews. See 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), 325. Survivors from Sokoły recall: "The village Landowa [Lendowo near Brańsk] had a good name among the Jews who were hiding in the area around Sokoly, and they regarded it as a paradise. Many Jews began to stream there. … there wasn't a house in Landowa where there weren't three or four Jews." (Luba Goldberg-Wrobel—see below) "Finally, we came to the village of Landowa [Lendowo]. … we knocked on the door of a house, not far from the forest. An old farmwoman brought us into the house. … I remained alone with the old farmwoman. … Over time, it became known to all of them that I was not related to her family and that I didn't even know Polish. The farmwoman did not hesitate to admit that she had adopted me, a Jewish girl, as her daughter. … The farmwoman began to teach me Christian prayers, and on Sundays I went with her to church. … The *goyim,* residents of the village who knew I was Jewish, did not hand me over to the Germans." (Tzipora Tabak-Burstein) See Shmuel Kalisher, ed., *Sokoly: B'maavak l'haim* (Tel Aviv: Organization of Sokoły Emigrés in Israel, 1975), 188–207, translated as *Sokoly: In the Fight for Life,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokoly/sokoly.html>. Another survivor writes: "This village Lendowo became a refuge for a lot of wandering Jews, they called this village the Garden of Eden. … here they opened wide the doors without having any fear. Soon there were Jews in every house." See Luba Wrobel Goldberg, *A Sparkle of Hope: An Autobiography* (Melbourne: n.p., 1998), 63. Several Jews, among them Ida Lewartowska and her daughter, were hidden in a forest bunker near the village of Leńce, just north of Białystok. The villagers in the area from Nowe Aleksandrowo, Dobrzyniewo Fabryczne and Letniki knew about these Jews, but no one denounced them. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej,* 2nd ed., 741–42. Szymon Datner recalls how his Jewish partisan group "Forojs," consisting of escapees from the Białystok ghetto, were assisted by many villagers in Dworzysk. Among those mentioned as offering food and shelter to the partisans were Alfons and Stefania Radziwanowski and the Sławiński and Kuklik families. The entire village was aware of this assistance, and no one betrayed the partisans or rescuers. See Szymon Datner, "Szkice do studiów nad dziejami żydowskiego ruchu partyzanckiego w Okręgu białostockim (1941–1944)," *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego,* no. 73 (1970): 45–46; Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945,* 348–50; Ewa Rogalewska, *Getto białostockie: Doświadczenie Zagłady—świadectwa literatury i życia* (Białystok: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej Oddział w Białymstoku, 2013), 196. Rywka Chus and her husband, a grain merchant from Ostrów Mazowiecka, were protected by the villagers of Króle Duże who respected and helped them survive the war. See Andrzej Żbikowski, *U genezy Jedwabnego: Żydzi na Kresach Północno-Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej. Wrzesień 1939–lipiec 1941* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2006), 69. Kalmen Wewryk describes the assistance he received, after his escape from Sobibór, from numerous peasants as he wandered from village to village in an area south of Chełm populated by decent but frightened Catholic Poles and some Ukrainian Baptists. A family of five Jews hid in Teresin near Chełm: "Everybody in the hamlet knew that this family was hiding, but nobody knew where and they didn't want to know. Moishe told me how they were loved in that hamlet—there were decent people there." See Kalmen Wawryk, *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), 66–68, 71. A teenager, Marian Finkielman wandered the villages in the vicinity of Dubeczno where he was employed as a farmhand by various farmers: "In 1941 and 1942 many young Jews wandered from village to village, offering their services in exchange for room and board. The peasant farmers knew who they were, and for some time took advantage of their help, just as the farmer in the village of Kozaki benefited from my situation." In Kozaki, "Luckily, during my stay there from April through July 1942, … none of the inhabitants of the village, Ukrainians or Poles, informed of Jurek's [a Jewish boy from Warsaw who also worked as a herdsman] or my existence. It seemed that there were no informants in this village …" See Marian Finkielman, *Out of the Ghetto: A Young Jewish Orphan Boy's Struggle for Survival* (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 2000), 34–36; Marian (Finkielman) Domanski, *Fleeing from the Hunter* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2010), 34–35. Cypora Frydman, the daughter of a mill owner in Nowy Orzechów near Ostrów Lubelski, hid in a hut near a lake. She recalled: "All the peasants in the village knew me because all of them used to come to our mill, but not one of them denounced me even though everyone knew I was hiding near the lake. Sometimes they gave me bread for free, sometimes a little milk … I used to return from the village late at night and hid in my hut." See Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień…,* 89. The villagers of Kubra near Radziłów (in the Białystok District) did not betray the family of Helena Chilewicz when the Gestapo came looking for them in July 1942, and she and her mother survived the war penniless moving from village to village. See Danuta and Aleksander Wroniszewski, "…aby żyć," *Kontakty–Łomżyński Tygodnik Społeczny,* July 10, 1988. Mirla Frydrich (Szternzys), from Żółkiewka, was shot in the thigh when she jumped from a train headed for the Bełżec death camp. A Pole who happened to be driving by took her in his carriage and nursed her back to health with the help of another Pole. When Mirla returned to Żółkiewka she received assistance from a number of Poles in several nearby villages. See Zylberklang, *Z Żółkiewki do Erec Israel,* 181–84. About 12 miles outside Lwów, Abraham Trasawucki, dressed only in rags, jumped from a death train headed for

Bełżec in the middle of winter. Although he was easily identifiable as a Jew on the run, the villagers did not betray him, rather he was offered temporary shelter, food, clothing and money at two random Polish farmsteads, and given rides in the wagons of other Poles. He was sold a train ticket by an official, allowed on the train by a guard who checked his ticket, and not denounced by the passengers, even though everyone recognized him as a Jew. See Abraham Tracy, *To Speak For the Silenced* (Jerusalem and New York: Devora, 2007), 165–72. Ryfka Goldiner, a Jewish infant, was rescued by Stanisław and Helena Wiśliński in Bełżyce near Lublin. Although the villagers were aware of the child's origin, no one betrayed them. The local priest did not agree to formally baptize the child in the event her parents survived the war. In fact, they did return for her after liberation. See Anna Dąbrowska, ed., *Światła w ciemności: Sprawiedliwi Wśród Narodów Świata. Relacje* (Lublin: Ośrodek "Brama Grodzka–Teatr NN," 2008), 56–61. Luba Hochlerer, ten years of age, lived openly with Józef and Bronisława Zając in the hamlet of Witoldów near Wojsławice, where she attended village school, yet no one betrayed her. Ibid., 106–7. Hershel Mostyzer and Sara Fuks were directed by a mailman to the home of his mother, Franciszka Rybak, in the village of Rogalin near Hrubiszów. Mostysser, a tailor by profession, did odd sewing jobs for his rescuer's tenants and her neighbours in order to help support themselves. Despite some opposition because of the danger this created for the village, no one betrayed them. See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, 684. Julia Pępiak of Bełżec agreed to shelter Bronia Helman, the young daughter of her former neighbour and friend, Salomea Helman, something that became widely known in the village. The child remained with Pępiak and was reclaimed by her mother after liberation. See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, 597; Zuzanna Schnepf-Kolacz, "Pomoc Polaków dla Żydów na wsi w czasie okupacji niemieckiej: Próba opisu na przykładzie Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata," in Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski, eds., *Zarys krajobrazu: Wieś polska wobec zagłady Żydów 1942–1945* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2011), 236. Irena Sznycer, a Jewish girl with strikingly Semitic features, who was sheltered by a Polish woman in the village of Bełżec, recalled shortly after the war: "I was well cared for by that lady and was not afraid of anything. Although the neighbours knew I was Jewish, this lady had no enemies so nothing [bad] could happen." See Teresa Prekerowa, "Stosunek ludności polskiej do żydowskich uciekinierów z obozów zagłady w Treblince, Sobiborze i Bełżcu w świetle relacji żydowskich i polskich," *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu–Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* vol. 35 (1993): 104. According to three separate testimonies of Jewish escapees from the Treblinka and Sobibór death camps, the fugitives "walked about the villages" and were "known to everybody," including the farm-hands and school children, without being betrayed. Ibid., 108. Mieczysław Grajewski, who escaped from the Treblinka death camp, recalled the help he received from peasants: "I was free. I walked to a village. … I knocked to ask for bread. The peasants looked at me in silence. 'Bread, bread.' They saw my red hands, torn jacket, worn-out slippers, and handed me some hard, gray crusts. A peasant woman, huddled in shawls, gave me a bowl of hot milk and a bag. We didn't talk: my body had turned red and blue from the blows and the cold, and my clothes, everything proclaimed *Jew!* But they gave me bread. Thank you Polish peasants. I slept in a stable near the animals, taking a little warm milk from the cow in the morning. My bag filled with bread." See Martin Gray with Max Gallo, *For Those I Loved* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1972), 178. A Jew from Serock (north of Warsaw) who escaped from a German execution site badly wounded, was cared for by many villagers where he sought refuge. See Michał Grynberg, *Żydzi w rejencji ciechanowskiej 1939–1942* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1984), 134. Izaak Zemelman of Płock recalled the assistance provided by a large number of Polish families in the nearby village of Sikórz where he and his family took shelter: Stawiski, Romanowski, Górski, Danielak, Adamski, Kłosiński, and others. See Janusz Szczepański, *Społeczność żydowska Mazowsza w XIX–XX wieku* (Pułtusk: Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna imienia Aleksandra Gieysztora w Pułtusku, 2005), 492. Some Jews came to realize that their guise as Christian Poles was not as foolproof as they had believed, but this had not caused them to be betrayed. A Jew who called on farmhouses in the Urzędów area, pretending to be a Christian, recalled: "I would cross myself, bless Jesus Christ, and ask for something to eat. I had made up a story in case questions were asked. Most farmers were not talkative. Viewed suspiciously, sometimes I would be given soup or bread and asked to leave quickly: sometimes I was just told to go. Later it dawned on me that I was crossing myself incorrectly, touching my chin rather than the chest." See David Makow, *Dangerous Luck: Memories of a Hunted Life* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 2000), 28. In 1942, Jerzy Mirewicz, a Jesuit priest, escorted a Jewish fugitive by train from Biłgoraj to Milanówek near Warsaw, so that he could join members of his family who were being hidden by a Christian family. Even though the priest had permission to travel, officials were constantly checking the papers of passengers. When the train reached Dęblin, a policeman came into the car and demanded to know if his companion was a Jew. Fortunately for the priest and the fugitive, the whole compartment came to their rescue by insisting that priest was escorting a "lunatic" to a hospital asylum. See Vincent A. Lapomarda, *The Jesuits and the Third Reich* (Lewiston/Queenston and Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989), 130. A Jewish lawyer was able to continue his practice in Mielec, in defiance of a Nazi ban, with the collusion of the town's entire legal profession, until he was denounced by a fellow Jew, first to the Gestapo and then to the Justice Department. See Mark Verstandig, *I Rest My Case* (Melbourne: Saga Press, 1995), viii, 109–13, 130–32. In the village of Czajkowa near Mielec, where the brothers Zygie and Sol Allweiss were sheltered by the family of Maciej and Zofia Dudzik, neighbours who lived around the Dudzik farm were aware that Jewish boys were hiding there but chose not to betray the family: "In the village, if one knows something, everyone knows. They were our neighbors and they were good people." See Bill Tammeus and Jacques Cukierkorn, eds., *They Were Just People: Stories of Rescue in Poland During*

the Holocaust (Columbia, Missouri and London: University of Missouri Press, 2009), 22. Menachem Kuperman, then a young teenage boy, wandered into the village of Borki Nizińskie, north of the town of Mielec, without any documents. He entered the home of Eugeniusz Pieróg, a farmer whom he had never met before, and introduced himself as a Polish boy looking for farm work. Pieróg agreed to take him on as a farmhand. One day, when they were collecting wood in the forest, they came across German soldiers. Pieróg warned Kuperman not to approach them and on the way home said to the boy, "Did you think I didn't know you were Jewish?" In time, Kuperman learned that not only did Pieróg know that he was Jewish but that there were others in the village who suspected his true identity. Whenever Kuperman became frightened that someone in the village would inform on him, Pieróg cheered him up, telling him not to fear because he had no enemies who would harm him in the village. Kuperman remained with Pieróg unharmed until the war ended. See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 5: *Poland,* Part 2, 605. The Jewish Social Self-Help organization in the town of Proszowice near Miechów, in November 1941, solicited food supplies from 20 Polish estates in the vicinity fot the soup kitchen in the ghetto; 19 owners promptly responded, promising produce free of charge. See Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945,* vol. 2, Part A, 552. In the village of Goszcza near Miechów, everyone was aware that Jews, some of them with a marked Semitic appearance, were being sheltered yet no one betrayed them. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej,* 2nd ed., 643–44. After fleeing the Szczucin ghetto during its liquidation, Shiyer Mutzenmacher ran to the farm of Anna and Stanisław Jaje in nearby village of Lubasz. Everyone in the village knew that a young man of Jewish descent was hiding in the Jajes' house, but nobody denounced him. He did tailoring jobs for the neighbours and other villagers, which contributed to the household expenses. See Jaje Family, The Righteous Database, Yad Vashem, Internet: <http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=4411153>; Adam Kazimierz Musiał, *Lata w ukryciu* (Gliwice: n.p., 2002), 344–49. Similar reports come from the villages of Gałuszowice and Chrząstów near Mielec. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej,* 2nd ed., 721–22. In the latter village, it was widely known among the villagers that the Markowski family was sheltering the Verstandig family, and several other Polish families were also hiding Jews. See Andrzej Krempa, *Zagłada Żydów mieleckich,* Second revised edition (Mielec: Muzeum Regionalne w Mielcu, 2013), 98. In Majdan Nepryski, west of Tomaszów Lubelski, several families sheltered a young Jewish girl thrown from a train headed for Bełżec. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej,* 2nd ed., 709–10. A teenage boy with a Semitic appearance, the son of a Jewish beggar woman, lived openly in the village of Głowaczowa near Dębica, with the Polish farmer who had taken him in, without being betrayed. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej,* 2nd ed., 640. In Grodzisk, a small community just outside Warsaw, an elderly Jewish teacher married to a Polish Catholic woman was able to live openly with his wife throughout the war: "Everybody knew my uncle was Jewish but no one reported him to the Gestapo." This family took in other Jews, also without incident. See Sylvia Rothchild, ed., *Voices from the Holocaust* (New York: Nal Books/New American Library, 1981), 225. A foundry in Wołomin, outside of Warsaw, engaged a Jew whose appearance and manner of speaking readily gave him away, yet no one betrayed him. See Antoni Marianowicz, *Życie surowo wzbronione* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1995), 159–60; Antoni Marianowicz, *Life Strictly Forbidden* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004). After receiving a great deal of sporadic help from Poles as he wandered in the countryside around Garwolin, Meir Herc was introduced, through a Jewish friend and his Christian intermediary, to a farmer in the village of Jagodne who agreed to shelter him for payment. Herc was one of six Jews the farmer hid in his pigsty. Herc was able to pay for his upkeep with the money he received from various Poles to whom he had entrusted his property. The money was collected by an intermediary and delivered to Herc. The entire group of six Jews survived this way for 23 months. Meir Herc writes: "I only survived thanks to more than a dozen Poles who sold our goods and would send the money to me. They even knew the village in which I was hiding but did not betray me." See Meir Herc, "My Experience in September," in Moshe Zaltsman and Baruch Shein, eds., *Garwolin yisker-bukh* (Tel Aviv, New York and Paris: Garwolin Societies, 1972), 187–93. Another resident of Garwolin, Chana Karpman-Rozenberg, recalled that when she travelled by train to Warsaw pretending to be a smuggler, she encountered many Poles from Garwolin whom she knew but none of them denounced her. While passing as a Pole in Warsaw she met many Poles from Garwolin, among them Home Army members, who were glad to see her. See Chana Karpman-Rozenberg, "On the Aryan Side," in Zaltsman and Shein, *Garwolin yisker-bukh,* 208–15. The most frequent for of assistance was, however, casual assistance for short periods of time offered by many fearful but courageous Poles whose names will never be remembered and whose deeds are largely forgotten. A Jew from Zabłudów made an effort to recall the numerous Poles who helped him to survive the German occupation in the Białystok District: "We heard the shooting and immediately went to the path leading to the village we knew very well. Some farmers gave us flour, barley, and butter … Early in the morning they took us through the path where we could go to Bialystok [Białystok] … [The Nazis] kept hitting me until I fainted. … I dragged myself to the road; some Christians that stood there and saw me started crying. … Other [Jewish families] went through back ways to the village to get some food. I managed to get a job from Vintzig Volnetzvick, the Christian … His son-in-law, Chashick [Czesiek], promised me that if I stayed with him I wouldn't have to work for the Germans … One day Vinchick, the Christian that I lived with drove me to Bialystok … Zabludow's Jewish women went to the Christian's field to get some potatoes for the winter. … We hid in Vinchik Velosoviches barn deep in the hay … The helpful Christian's wife came to the barn begging me to leave. "There were whispers in the city that you were not seen among the people in the wagons, saying that you are probably hiding." She asked that I pity her, because if I would be caught her family will be held responsible, and they will be punished

severely. I was able to convince her to let me stay until Sunday. … I came to Novosad [Nowosady] village, I knew a good Christian there. My appearance scared him, and immediately he told me about the order that they have to bring any Jews without delay to the Nazi headquarters. "I have to be very careful," he said. He gave me some food and took me to a place behind the barn where I could escape. When evening came I arrived at a new village. I had a friend there … He too took me in courteously and brought me food, but refused to let me stay. Fearfully he gave me food quickly and begged me to leave, I continued my wandering … later on I had the opportunity to find shelter in an agriculture farm of Christian people I knew. I left the place when they told me that the Germans were hunting the area and were planning to sleep in their house. I wandered all night through fields and forests until I got to Baranke [Baranki] village, where my father used to live. A farmer, a good acquaintance that we knew from the past took me in nicely. I shaved and bathed; they even provided me with clean clothes. I hid in the side section of the house where no one lived. … I stayed in the forest until the evening, and then I came back to the Christians. The Germans were not in the village anymore, but the farmer didn't let me stay and take the risk. I wandered again, and soon I got to another agriculture farm and stayed there a couple of days. The farmer didn't allow for me to stay with him; he was afraid the children might talk and risk giving me away. From there I moved to a farm near Araje. … The farm's owners gave me shelter. I knew his son from the old days where we were both captured by the Germans. For a while I was able to rest. When the Christians' holiday came I took part in the ceremonies, and I acted like them. … In the forests there were a lot of Russian partisans … When I realized that the Nazis raided around the farm where I was staying I decided to escape. … I got to a big village by the name of Zavick [Zawyki]. I slipped away secretly to the barn and laid there until the morning. The barn's owner found me, but he was a good man who was ready to help. He took me to his house, fed me, and helped me hide. It was a secret basement under the dining room. … the Nazis searched the village and came to the farmer's house. … They were looking for Jews and partisans. … I stayed in the hiding place for a few days. I was asked to leave by his wife who had started to cry, saying that I was putting her family in danger. "I'm a mother of six children," she said. "If they'll find out that I am hiding you they will kill us. I'll give you food and drink and be on your way. Have pity on us, and save your soul." I promised that I would leave that night. … I got to the previous farm from which I had escaped. The frightened Christian told me that the night I escaped the Nazis searched the house and barn. … It was dangerous to stay in the village, where to go? I decided to go toward Bialystok. On the way I stopped at different villages. … The Christian who told me the news was ready to leave the next morning with his wagon to bring food to Bialystok. I asked him to take me with him in his wagon. His wife gave me bread and fat. We left early in the morning so that nobody would see me. … When we approached Bialystok the farmer got scared and asked me to get off the wagon. I got off, raised my collar and continued by foot …" See the account of Phinia Korovski in Nechama Shmueli-Schmusch, ed., *Zabludow: Dapim mi-tokh yisker-bukh* (Tel Aviv: The Zabludow Community in Israel, 1987), an English translation of which is posted on the Internet at: <www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/zabludow/>. Other examples of communal assistance by Poles in central Poland are recorded in Stanisław Wroński and Maria Zwolakowa, eds., *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1971), 269 (Niedźwiada near Opole Lubleskie), 307 (an entire street in the city of Przemyśl was aware of a Jewish hideout), 322 (Runów near Grójec), 343 (Janina Tarnowska, a school teacher in Gorzyce near Dąbrowa Tarnowska, sheltered a Jew from Tarnów by the name of Birkam, whom she held out to be her cousin; the villagers were aware that he was a Jew but no one betrayed him), 349 (Przydonica, Ubiad, Klimkówka, Jelna, Słowikowa, and Librantowa), 353 (Rakszawa near Łańcut); Kowalski, *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance, 1939–1945,* vol. 3 (1986), 308 (two villages near Parczew); Thomas Toivi Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor: A Story of Survival* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 207ff. (Mchy near Krasnystaw); Diane Armstrong, *Mosaic: A Chronicle of Five Generations* (Milsons Point, New South Wales: Random House, 1998), 576–81 (Piszczac near Biała Podlaska); Roman Soszyński, *Piszczac: Miasto ongiś królewskie* (N.p., n.p., 1993), 95 (Kolonia Dworska near Piszczac), 97 (Piszczac); Andrzej W. Kaczorowski, "Danusia z miasteczka Piszczac," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 8 (March 2009): 69–73 (Piszczac and Kolonia Dworska near Piszczac); Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vols. 4 and 5: *Poland,* Part 1, 95 (villages near Lublin), 317 (villages near Lublin), 326 (villages near Lublin), 343–44 (villages near Skierniewice), 452 (Rożki near Krasnystaw), Part 2, 647 (villages near Zamość), 673 (villages near Radzymin), 692 (villages near Radzymin), 927 (villages near Otwock). Several Polish families in the villages of Bobrowa, Wola Bobrowska, and Nagoszyn near Dębica sheltered various members of the Knie family. Among the rescuers from Nagoszyn recognized by Yad Vashem are Michał Dygdoń and Józef Cholewa. Although a number of villagers became aware of the Jews' presence, no one betrayed them. See Adam Kazimierz Musiał, *Lata w ukryciu* (Gliwice: n.p., 2002), vol. 2, 535–37; Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 5: *Poland,* Part 2, 719–20. Public executions of Polish rescuers did not bring rescue activity to a hault. See, for example, Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny,* Part One, 21 (Mariampol).

Even in large cities like Warsaw, Jews passing as Christians have acknowledged that they unexpectedly ran into many Poles whom they knew without being betrayed: "I often met people I knew who either looked at me without greeting me, or greeted me with open sympathy. … Occasionally, I did not even realize that the person I met knew me." See Stefan Chaskielewicz, *Ukrywałem się w Warszawie: Styczeń 1943–styczeń 1945* (Kraków: Znak, 1988), 35–36. Marcus David Leuchter, who lived in "Aryan" Warsaw for more than two years, attested: "Having escaped from the Ghetto [in Kraków], I assumed a Polish gentile identity. While everybody around me knew, or at least suspected, that I was a Jew, nobody betrayed me." See his "Reflections on the Holocaust," *The Sarmatian Review* (Houston,

Texas), vol. 20, no. 3 (September 2000). Henryk Grabowski, the famed liaison officer between the Polish and Jewish underground who smuggled scores of Jews out of the Warsaw ghetto, often used his small, crowded home in Warsaw to hide Jews, a fact widely known among the neighbours. See Barbara Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twardych* (Warsaw: ABC, 1997), 91. Edward Reicher, who resided with a group of Jews on Waliców Street in Warsaw, recalled: "Petty incidents led us to quarrel constantly and without dignity. We fought not just with words but also with our fists." He continues: "It was obvious that we were living there, but days, weeks, and months went by and nobody denounced us, even though the entire apartment complex, which was home to several hundred people, knew of our presence. Even the Polish prostitutes who received German clients in the same building did not betray us." See Reicher, *Country of Ash*, 198, 201. An entire apartment building in the working-class district of Mokotów in Warsaw was aware that an extended Jewish family, some of them Semitic-looking and speaking Polish poorly, resided in their midst. See Marek Halter, "Tzedek," *Wprost*, June 13, 1993. The journalist Rafał Praga and his wife were sheltered by Franciszek and Klementyna Olbrychski in their apartment on Nowogrodzka Street in Warsaw. Rafał Praga, who had a distinctly Jewish appearance, used to frequent a nearby café, yet no one betrayed them even though their Jewish origin was common knowledge. See Justyna Kobus, "Wykołysał mnie Drohiczyn," *Magazyn Sukces*, March 28, 2008; Ewa Bagłaj, *Słoneczna dziewczyna: Opowieść o Klementynie Sołonowicz-Olbrychskiej* (Warsaw: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie Muza, 2007). Fryderyka Godlewska (Szulemit Karmi), then a 6-year-old child with obvious Semitic features, was taken in by the Domański family of Warsaw and passed off as their daughter. Their entire tenement house in Mokotów knew of this but no one betrayed them. See Piotr Zychowicz, "Są nowi sprawiedliwi," *Rzeczpospolita*, December 21, 2011. Another such tenement house was located at 11 Wielka Street, in Warsaw, as well as the boarding house on 45 Morszyńska Street. See Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych,* 533; Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations,* 93; Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej,* 2nd ed., 208–9. Feliks Tych, a historian at the Jewish Historical Museum in Warsaw, who survived the war as a teenager, recalls: "I lived with my adopted family for some time until liberation in the Warsaw suburb of Miedzeszyn. There the neighbours could not have not known that in our house several Jews were sheltered. And nothing happened to any of them. No one was denounced." See "O ukrywaniu się po 'aryjskiej stronie': Z profesorem Feliksem Tychem rozmawia Barbara Engelking," *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały,* vol. 1 (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów IFiS PAN, 2005): 234; Barbara Engeling, "Rozmowa z prof. Feliksem Tychem," *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materały,* no. 2 (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów IFiS PAN, 2006): 340. A Jewish woman who had to find new lodgings in Warsaw for herself and a friend with a Jewish appearance recalled: "Maria's physician paid a house call, bringing some medication and an injection. It was only one of several visits for which he never asked payment or information of any kind. … We combed the neighborhood, asking in the storefronts if there might be a room to let. We gave many in those streets occasion to wonder about the two forlorn young women, one with a black-and-blue face. But no one denounced us a Jews or escapees from the ghetto. In fact, one morning the owner of a barber shop on Rakowiecka Street offered Maria his shop to stay in. All he asked was that she come late and leave early, before his help arrived." See Blanca Rosenberg, *To Tell at Last: Survival under False Identity, 1941–45* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 122. Fanny Gothajner and her teenaged son lived with the Słowakiewicz family on Powsińska Street in the Czerniaków district. Many of the residents of the apartment buiding were aware she was Jewish, but no one betrayed her; in fact, they were favourably disposed. See the testimony of Fanny Gothajner, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/ 2011. Employees of the Warsaw Department of Social Services were heavily involved in the rescue of Jewish children, placing hundreds of them in Catholic convents. "Once we were informed that two boys were hidden in a cubbyhole in [the suburb of] Praga. One of them was running a high fever and it was imperative to move them. A nun took the sick boy on a streetcar and he started to scream out something in Yiddish. The driver was astute enough to sense the danger and yelled out: 'This streetcar is going to the depot. Everyone out.' At the same time he signalled to the nun that she and the boy should remain." See "Traktowałem to jako obowiązek chrześcijański i polski" (an interview with Jan Dobraczyński), *Słowo–Dziennik Katolicki* (Warsaw), no. 67, 1993. A Jewish woman who was being pursued by a blackmailer in Warsaw turned to the conductor of the streetcar she had boarded with a plea, "'Sir, that man is an extortionist and he's persecuting me.' Without hesitating, the conductor went over to the intruder and slapped him twice across the face." In the ensuing confusion, she managed to jump off. See Gross, *Who Are You Mr Grymek?*, 249–50. Tomasz Prot, who was accepted into the Stefan Czarnecki Boarding School for Boys in Warsaw run by the Central Welfare Council, wrote: "At that time my looks were very characteristic. I was a dark-haired boy, the features of my face were clearly Semite. … seeing my looks … would hardly have any doubts on me being a hiding Jewish boy. Nevertheless, during my stay at the school, … none of the teachers, nor even my schoolmates made me feel that they knew I was Jewish." See *Righteous Among the Nations,* Warsaw, June 14, 2010. A network of Poles in the Warsaw suburb of Żoliborz was engaged in finding rooms among trusted persons for Jews passing as Poles. See Marian Turski, ed., *Losy żydowskie: Świadectwo żywych,* vol. 2 (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Żydów Kombatantów i Poszkodowanych w II Wojnie Światowej, 1999), vol. 2, 150. As another Jew remarked, "in the small houses in Warsaw's Żoliborz district inhabited mostly by the Polish intelligentsia there were hidden many Jews who had escaped from the ghetto. I was in such a home which belonged to a known prewar Endek [nationalist]. Having learned that he was sheltering two Jewesses I asked with surprise: 'You who before the war were an anti-Semite are now harbouring Jews in his home???' He replied: 'We have a common enemy and I am fighting in my way. They are Polish citizens and I have to help them." See Zdzisław Przygoda, *Niezwykłe przygody w zwyczajnym życiu* (Warszawa: Ypsylon, 1994), 49. Barbara

Abramow-Newerly did not abide by the order to relocate to the ghetto but continued to reside in her housing estate in the Warsaw suburb of Żoliborz, even though her Jewish background was widely known. The only *szmalcownik* she encountered was a Jew by the name of Saul, whom she knew. Saul worked for the Gestapo ferreting out Jews in hiding on the "Aryan" side. He was also engaged in extorting money and visited Barbara weekly until she was penniless. Facing denunciation, she turned to the Home Army for assistance. Witold Pilecki, the famed escapee from Auschwitz, extricated her by providing money for the *szmalcownik* and told her not to worry. The Jewish *szmalcownik* did not return, and she continued to live in the safety of her home. See Jarosław Abramow-Newerly, *Lwy mojego podwórka* (Warsaw: Twój Styl, 2000), 143–52. Jews hiding in larger cities outside Warsaw also reported favourable experiences. Henryk Meller hid for a time on the Aryan side of Kraków, where he was one of the street children who sold cigarettes for a living. According to his testimony, he made enough money to allow himself to dress properly and eat well and even attend the cinema in the evening. The local Polish youths viewed him as an equal, and if they were short of stocks they would shout to him, "Jew-boy, give us a Sport" (the brand of cigarettes). They knew he was a Jew but respected him and did not inform on him. See Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, *The Children Accuse*, 66. Helena Ziemba, one of several Jews rescued in Kalinowszczyzna, a suburb of Lublin, stated that many Poles knew she was being hidden and some even brought food to her hideout. A Polish housekeeper who had an illegitimate son by her Jewish employer was not betrayed by anyone. See Jerzy Jacek Bojarski, ed., *Ścieżki pamięci: Żydowskie miasto w Lublinie—losy, miejsca, historia* (Lublin and Rishon LeZion: Norbertinum, Ośrodek "Brama Grodzka–Teatr NN," Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko-Izraelskiej w Lublinie, Stowarzyszenie Środkowoeuropejskie "Dziedzictwo i Współczesność," 2002), 35. A Jew who was stopped by a German official on a streetcar in Kraków and accused of being a Jew, reported that he gained the support of all the passengers in the streetcar. See Stanisław Taubenschlag (Stanley Townsend), *To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland: Cracow, Auschwitz, Buchenwald* (Oświęcim: Frap Books, 1998), 32. Nine Jews lived behind a false wall in an attic of a flour mill in Tarnów for two years, among them Israel Unger, then abyoung boy. Some of the Jewish men used to leave the hideout at night to forage for food. It is unclear how many Poles knew about the Jews in hiding, yet not one of them denounced the Jews to the Germans. Unger at first estimates about ten: "Who knew about the Jews in the attic? I am not sure even to this day. Probably the Dagnans, and the Skorupas, and the Drozds. Likely about ten non-Jewish people knew about the Jews in hiding and no one told on us." Later he learns that the existence of the hidden Jews was an open secret among the Poles working at the mill. See Carolyn Gammon and Israel Unger, *The Unwritten Diary of Israel Unger* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013), 14–15, 199. Mordecai Peleg, who was passing as a Pole, remained in his native Tarnów for a time and then returned on several occasions. He was not betrayed by anyone even though he was well known: "Among the Poles, as it turned out, I had no enemies and no-one bothered me." See Miriam Peleg-Mariańska and and Mordecai Peleg, *Witnesses: Life in Occupied Kraków* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 4. In Poznań, a stronghold of the anti-Semitic National Democratic (Endek) Party, relations with the Jews imprisoned in the Stadion labour camp in 1941–1943 were amicable. Samuel Bronowski, who appeared as a witness in the trial of Arthur Greiser, Gauleiter of the so-called Wartheland, made the following deposition before the Supreme National Tribunal: "The only help possible was aid in kind by supplying food. In the camp we received 200 grams of bread and one litre of turnip soup per day. Obviously, those who had no help from outside were bound to die within a short time. A committee was formed in Poznań for the collection of food. This was no easy matter since everything was rationed under the food coupon system. Many a time, we received bigger parcels which reached us secretly at the construction sites where we worked and met the Polish people. Parcels were also thrown into the camp by night. It is not easy to describe the attitude of the civilian population outside the camp—to say that it was friendly, would be too little. There was marked compassion. There has not been a single case in Poznań of a Pole who would betray a Jew escaping the camp. There has not been a single case on the construction site of a foreman striking a Jew without immediate reaction on the part of the Polish co-workers. Those Jews who survived did so only thanks to the help from the Polish population of Poznań." Maks Moszkowicz, another inmate of the Stadion labour camp, stated in his deposition for Yad Vashem: "I wish to stress that the behaviour of the Polish population in Poznań towards us, the Jewish prisoners, was very friendly and when our labour battalions were coming out of the camp, people—mostly women—waited for us in the street in order to throw us food in spite of severe interdictions and punishment." See Bartoszewski, *The Blood Shed Unites Us*, 225. People who were readily recognizable as Jews and spoke poor Polish were able to survive in the Western Polish countryside, without being betrayed: "[Alexander] said that he had gone through the war with a false identity. It sounds like a joke with his Yiddish accented Polish, with his looks. 'I presented myself as a Lithuanian, I had no papers, I had no money, but I was young and strong. … I escaped westward, to the Poznan [Poznań] region where Jews were hardly known. I worked in the village, at the farm of somebody … He didn't pay me anything. … What matters is that he fed me, gave me some rags to wear, and I lived like a king.'" See Ephraim F. Sten, *1111 Days In My Life Plus Four* (Takoma Park, Maryland: Dryad Press, in association with the University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 66–67. Even when neighbours were displeased with the fact that they were put at risk because of the Jews sheltered in their midst, and justifiably fearful of German retaliation, this did not necessarily result in denunciations, as is shown by several cases cited in Joanna Beata Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 192–93.

Friendly relations between Jewish and Polish inmates also prevailed in German camps and prisons. In Radogoszcz outside of Łódź, "The Poles' attitude to the Jews, with the exception of particular individuals, was generally good. It

should be pointed out that there were a few dozen priests in the camp. Most of the Poles were from the intelligentsia. … The Jewish prisoners and the Poles made an agreement that on Christmas Day [1939], the Jews would all the work in the camp. The next two days, however, the Jews were not called on to do any work at all. … The Polish prisoners, knowing that we wouldn't get any meal, had left us their bread and had hidden coffee for us." See the testimony of Józef (Josef) Saks, Atchive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/1023. Szejndla Gutkowicz, an inmate of a camp in Pomiechówek near Modlin, recalled: "The Polish population gathered behind the fence of the camp with bread and fruit, but the guards did not allow us to get too close to them. Those prisoners who were sent for water also collected gifts of bread, milk and whatever was available from the peasants." See Grynberg, *Żydzi w rejencji ciechanowskiej 1939–1942*, 134. Mosze Gildenman, one of 600 Jews employed in a sugar refinery in Korzec, in Volhynia, reported that all the Polish supervisors treated the Jews well and helped them as much as they could. See his account in Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 571–72. Noach Zabludowicz, who was imprisoned in Ciechanów, recalled: "In the prison where I was confined there were fifty-five people, Poles. All of them related to me properly and treated me like a brother. I was all beaten up and in a terrible state. Wounds and sores covered my body. There wasn't an unharmed spot anywhere. For fourteen days my prison-mates applied compresses on my wounded body. For this they used the water that was sparingly given for drinking." See Noach Zabludowicz, "My Experiences in World War II," in A.W. Yassini, *Yisker-bukh fun der Tshekhanover yidisher kehile* (Tel Aviv: Fomer Residents of Ciechanow in Israel and in the Diaspora, 1962), 335; translated into English as *Memorial Book for the Community of Ciechanow*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Ciechanow/Ciechanow.html>. Paul Trepman wrote: "On the third day we Jews were put to work in a high vegetable garden [in Falenty], where we found a number of Polish civilians already on the job. These Poles—all Gentiles—were very kind to us… In the course of our work we became very friendly with the Poles." See Paul Trepman, *Among Men and Beasts* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1978), 71. Martin Zaidenstadt, a Jewish soldier in the Polish army, recalls that when he was captured at the beginning of the war and transferred from a prisoner-of-war camp to Dachau: "When the Nazi guards said: all Jews step forward, my Polish comrades held me back and protected me." See Alan Cowell, "A Dachau survivor who won't forget," *Gazette* (Montreal), October 27, 1997 (reprinted from the *New York Times*). See also Timothy W. Ryback, *The Last Survivor: In Search of Martin Zaidenstadt* (New York: Pantheon Books/Random House, 1999), 123; this book provides a further example at p. 161. Lea Kalin, a young Jewish woman deported to a German munitions factory at Telgte, stated that although her Polish fellow forced labourers in her barrack knew that she was Jewish, they kept her identity secret. See Martin Gilbert, *The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust* (Toronto: Key Porter, 2003), 410 (see also illustration no. 42). Henryk Arnold, who was deported to Brockwitz together with about fifty other Polish insurgents from Warsaw, stated that all of the Poles knew there were five Jews in the group and most of them behaved very decently. See Jakub Gutenbaum and Agnieszka Latała, eds., *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak*, vol. 2 (Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 2005), 23. Sol Pluda recalls the help he received from Poles in the final months of the war after his transfer from Auschwitz to other German camps: "From there the trains continued to concentration camp Sachsenhausen. I was unable to walk, and so some Poles and Jews carried me to the large airplane hangers [sic] used to house the prisoners. … In Flossenburg, the Nazis no longer had their prison records from Auschwitz. A Polish administrator from Birkenau recognized me and … insisted I was a Christian Pole and registered me [and my friend Shmulik] as such." See Carole Garbuny Vogel, *We Shall Not Forget!: Memories of the Holocaust*, Second edition (Lexington, Massachusetts: Temple Isaiah, 1995), 386. Like a number of other Polish Jews in Buchenwald, Leo Bach (Leon Silberbach) exchanged his Jewish insignia (triangle) for one indicating he was a (non-Jewish) Pole which was provided by a Polish prisoner. When someone from his hometown (Kraków) identified him as a Jew, all of the other Polish prisoners affirmed that Bach was Polish and he was allowed to stay in the barrack. The Polish inmates confronted the culprit angrily, "Are you helping the Germans?" and threatened him. From that time he kept his mouth shut. See Leo Bach, *Coming of Age during the Holocaust*, Internet: <http://www.cheme.cornell.edu/cheme/people/profile/moreinfo/dlk15-leobach.cfm>, 299 (Chapter 6). Aleksander Biberstein, who authored an important chronicle of the Kraków ghetto, describes how Polish labourers smuggled goods destined for Jewish inmates into the Płaszów concentration camp, and various other forms of assistance rendered by Poles inside that camp. See Aleksander Biberstein, *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1985), 31, 95, 134–36. 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 in this bleak and infamous factory of death. Nelken relates similar displays of solidarity she was shown by Polish women inmates at Ravensbrück. See her wartime memoirs, *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. See Patricia Treece, *A Man for Others: Maximilian Kolbe, Saint of Auschwitz* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982; reissued by Our Sunday Visitor, Hutington, Indiana), 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 fellow 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>. Judy Weissenberg Cohen, "'The Kol Nidre I always remember,'" *The Canadian Jewish News,* September 24, 1998, 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. Another Jewish inmate of Auschwitz 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>. Yet another inmate praises her block commander, Ludwik, who protected her during her illness. See Shavti Perelmuter, "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-Modjitz [Dęblin-Modrzyc]* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Residents of Demblin-Modzjitz, 1969), 501ff. Assistance of Polish inmates at Auschwitz has been documented by Yad Vashem: See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 4 and 5: *Poland,* Part 1, 256 (Stanisława Sierzputowska); Part 2, 638 (Jerzy Pozimski), 658 (Jerzy Radwanek). Two Jewish survivors from Ciechanów recalled that Polish prisoners in Auschwitz who received food parcels from home gave their camp portions away to Jews and other prisoners. See Noach Zabludowicz, "My Experiences in World War II," and Moshe Kolko, "Ciechanow Jews in the Uprising in Auschwitz," in A.W. Yassini, ed., *Memorial Book for the Community of Ciechanow,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Ciechanow/Ciechanow.html>, translation of *Yisker-bukh fun der Tshekhanover yidisher kehile* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Ciechanow in Israel and in the Diaspora, 1962), 337, 382. Other accounts mention kind deeds by Polish kapos and block elders in various camps—see Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds,* 15, 205, 210 (Auschwitz), 218 (Majdanek); 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 (Auschwitz). Another tribute to Polish prisoners, among them doctors, in various concentration camps was authored by Zofia Hauswirt—see Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945,* 311–12. In the camp in Radogoszcz outside of Łódź. "The Poles' attitude to the Jews, with the exception of particular individuals, was generally good. It should be pointed out that there were a few dozen priests in the camp. Most of the Poles were from the intelligentsia. … The Polish prisoners, knowing that we wouldn't get any meal, had left us their bread and had hidden coffee for us." See the testimony of Józef (Josef) Saks, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/1023. Even in the hostile and hardened environment of a reformatory in Bronowice near Kraków ("They were the worst sort of louts, they would beat each other up"), when the identity of a Jewish boy was disclosed, that did not lead to his betrayal to the German authorities: "Unfortunately, a boy who knew me from Prądnik recognized me and told all the boys I was Jewish. They began teasing me terribly, called me names and I did not know what to do. The hygienist from our ward asked the boys not to tease me and gave them candy and advised me to run away. But I was scared to run away and I stayed there. Two months later, my period of punishment in the reformatory was over and I reported back to the Central Welfare Council again. I asked them to assign me to a better institution, because I am an orphan. They sent me to Kochanów to an orphanage. They took care of us very well there." See the testimony of Jerzy Andrzej Hoffman, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/1520. Two Jewish sisters from Mielec who volunteered for labour in Germany posing as Poles were "quickly recognized … as Jews" by their Polish co-workers, "which was very easy because they looked emaciated. To make matters worse, the element of Polish youth was very low, mostly adventurers and the like. … these Poles did not betray the two girls to the German administration. They spent two fearful years in the labor camps. They survived." Testimony of 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>.

Assistance by Polish villagers in Eastern Galicia and in Volhynia was also plentiful. Jewish historians Tatiana Berenstein and Adam Rutkowski list several examples of help extended by entire rural communities. In Kretowce near Zbaraż, Tarnopol voivodship, "several dozen Jews were able to move about almost freely because the whole village shielded them from the Nazis." In Woronówka near Ludwipol, Volhynia, "the collusion of the peasants was cemented by blood ties: every villager was either a Kuriata or a Torgoń. The peasants in Kościejów, in the vicinity of which ran the railway line leading to the extermination camp at Bełżec, tended to Jews who jumped out of the 'death trains.' They not only brought them food and clothing but also sent word to Jews in the nearby village of Kulików to come and fetch the heavily injured immediately; the rest were taken by the peasants themselves to Kulików under cover of darkness. In Bar [near Gródek Jagielloński] villagers supplied a group of 18 Jews hiding in the neighbouring woods with food; they came into the village at night for their provisions and thanks to this help were able to hold out until the area was liberated by the Soviet Army." See Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland 1939–1945,* 27, 45–46; Michał Czajka, Marta Janczewska, and Apolonia Umińska-Keff, eds., *Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz: Archiwum ŻIH IN-B, zespół 301, Nr. 2001–3000/Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue: Jewish Historical Institute Archives, Record Group 301, No. 2001–3000* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny Instytut Naukowo-Badawczy, 2002), vol. 3, 233–34 (Kretowce). Several Jews were sheltered by Polish villagers in Święty Stanisław near Stanisławów. No one betrayed them. See Paweł Knap, ed., *"Jak ci się uda uratować, pamiętaj": Relacje "Sprawiedliwych" i o "Sprawiedliwych" z województwa zachodniopomorskiego* (Szczecin: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania

Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Oddział w Szczecinie, 2010), 101–3. One of the rescued Jews praises the "noble attitude of the entire population, without exception, of the Polish village of Bar" (near Gródek Jagielloński) who helped more than twenty people hiding in nearby forests to survive. See Gerszon Taffet, *Zagłada Żydów żółkiewskich* (Łódź: Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna, 1946), 62; Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations,* 444; Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny,* Part Two, 115–16. In the Polish village of Czukiew near Sambor, a farmer hid 18 Jews, who were not betrayed although most of the village knew about them. See Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945,* vol. 2, Part A, 825, based on the testimony of Meyer Lamet, dated July 15, 1945, Archive of the Jewish Historical Museum (Warsaw), no. 301/4967. Almost every Polish family in the hamlet of Zawołocze near Ludwipol, in Volhynia, sheltered or helped Jews. None of the Jews were betrayed. See Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny,* Part Two, 77–78. Jews hiding in the forests in the vicinity of Berezne (Bereźne) near Kostopol, Volhynia, received extensive assistance from Polish villagers and partisans. See the account of Seweryn Dobroszklanka, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/1222; Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945,* 324–25. A number of Jews lived openly in the Polish colony of Święte Jezioro near Olesk, or in the forests nearby and were fed by the villagers. See Suzanne Ginsburg, *Noike: A Memoir of Leon Ginsburg* (San Francisco: Avenger Books, 2012), 94–99, 120–23, 129–37, 141–54. (This book refers to the Polish colony as "Podswientne" and mentions several helpful families by name.) Polish villages in the vicinity of Korzec, Volhynia, helped Jews hiding in the forests. See Nyuma Anapolsky, "We survived thanks to the kind people—Ukrainians and Poles,' in Boris Zabarko, ed., *Holocaust in the Ukraine* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005), 10–11. After leaving the home of a Ukrainain Baptist family in the village of Charałuh, Haya Tessler, her brother Israel and their nephew Mordechai Tennenbaum, all from Międzyrzecz Korecki, "got to a village where Poles lived … we stayed in their midst for a while, and when they decided to abandon the village for the safety of the dense forests, … we joined them." See Mordechai Tennenbaum, "The Life History of a Holocaust Survivor from Mezirich," in Israel Zinman, ed., *Memorial for Greater Mezirich: In Construction and Destruction* (Haifa: n.p., 1999), Internet: <http://jewishgen.org/yizkor/Mezhirichi/Mezirich.html>. A report about the village of Stara Huta near Szumsk, in Volhynia, states: "The people of a small Polish village named Stara Hota welcomed a group of Jews to stay and hide in their homes. The Ukrainians found out about the Jewish presence in the village. They informed the Germans right away. The Poles had managed to help the Jews run into the fields, but they were all caught and killed during their escape." See Ruth Sztejnman Halperin, "The Last Days of Shumsk," in H. Rabin, ed., *Szumsk: Memorial Book of the Martyrs of Szumsk,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/szumsk/szumsk.html>, translation of *Shumsk: Sefer zikaron le-kedoshei Shumsk* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Szumsk in Israel, 1968), 29ff. Dawid Sasower recalls: "near Zaturne [near Łuck], there was a Polish village in which about twenty Jews lived. In the daytime they worked in the fields and at night the Poles gave them rifles so that they could protect themselves from the banderovtsy [Ukrainian nationalist partisans]." See Rima Dulkinienė and Kerry Keys, eds., *Su adata širdyje: Getų ir koncentracijos stovyklų kalinių atsiminimai; With a Needle in the Heart: Memoirs of Former Prisoners of Ghettos and Concentraion Camps* (Vilnius: Garnelis and Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, 2003), 319–20. Regarding conditions in Kozowa, a predominantly Polish town near Brzeżany, Bronia Beker states: "My aunt didn't have to hide. She was so well loved and respected by all because she always helped the poorest of the poor, that while she was walking around freely, living among the ruins nobody gave her away. … The people in the town also made sure she had food at all times." See her account in "Women of Valor: Partisans and Resistance Fighters," www.interlog.com/~mighty/personal/bronia.htm, originally published in the *Journal of the Center for Holocaust Studies,* vol. 6, no. 4 (spring 1990). Samuel Eisen, a teenager who survived in the forest near Tłuste, recalled: "We had no money, but in the village nearby lived a lot of Poles who knew us and were good to us. They were afraid to hide us but they gave us food." See Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, *The Children Accuse,* 206. Maria Fischer Zahn, who hid near Zborów, stated: "Everybody in the neighborhood knew we were hiding, but nobody told the Germans. The people in Jezierna were good people. They didn't give us away. They helped us with food. We couldn't have survived without them." See Vogel, *We Shall Not Forget!,* 280, and also 276. Shlomo Berger, who passed as a Pole in a small town near Czortków, working for Tadeusz Duchowski, the Polish director of a company, recalled: "I rented a room in Niźniów with one of the Polish workers. I learned from him that the man who was in charge of the office was the son of a judge who was a Jew who had converted to Catholicism. The son was probably raised as a Christian, but by German criteria he was still Jewish. The people at the office knew who he was, but nobody said anything." See Ronald J. Berger, *Constructing a Collective Memory of the Holocaust: A Life History of Two Brothers' Survival* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1995), 55. A number of Jews were sheltered by Polish villagers in Ułaszkowce near Czortków. See Abraham Morgenstern, *Chortkov Remembered: The Annihilation of a Jewish Community* (Dumont, New Jersey: n.p., 1990), 83–84, 98. Markus Lecker, who joined up with a large group of Jews living in a forest bunker in the vicinity of Borszczów, describes their relations with a Polish settlement that provided them with food: "The colony … consisted of six houses with six Polish families living there. … These 6 Polish families were the main support for us Jewish outcasts who lived in the bunker. We used to go to the Polish colony at night and exchange whatever we had left for food … But I must say these Polish colonists did supply us with some food … even if we didn't have what to give them in return …" See Marcus Lecker, *I Remember: Odyssey of a Jewish Teenager in Eastern Europe* (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies, and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 1999), 56. Hundreds of Jews were helped by Polish villagers in Biłka Szlachecka, about 20 kilometres east of

Lwów, and in Hanaczów and Świrz, about 40 kilometres east of Lwów. The remarkable story of the help extended to more than 200 Jews in Hanaczów is described in Joshua D. Zimmerman, *The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 314–17. See also Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów,* 483 (Biłka Szlachecka); Jerzy Węgierski, *W lwowskiej Armii Krajowej* (Warsaw: Pax, 1989), 77–78; Eliyahu Yones, *Smoke in the Sand: The Jews of Lvov in the War Years 1939–1944* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2004), 227–28; Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny,* Part Two, 204–207; Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 5: *Poland,* Part 2, 886–87; Testimony of Edmund Adler, Archive of Jewish Historical Institute and Yad Vashem Archives, file O.62/143; Testimony of Feiga Pfeffer, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/1356. Further north, in Polesia, Kopel Kolpanitzky describes the helpfulness of the residents of Zahorie [Zahorze], a small village of Polish Catholics three kilometers from Łachwa, which the Germans later burned to the ground. See Kolpanitzky, *Sentenced To Life: The Story of a Survivor of the Lahwah Ghetto* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), 89–96. Michael Zipper and his cousins, Maria Goldhirsh and her daughter Ruzia (later Rose Slutzky), and Fella Sieler were among the thirteen Jews, including five children, hidden in a forest bunker near the predominantly Polish village of Zabojki near Tarnopol, for a period of eight months. According to Rose Slutzky, "The whole village kept us a secret, and when they could, they shared some food with us. … good Polish people who gave us a bit of food, when they themselves were hungry." See Testimony of Rose Slutzky in Belle Millo, ed., *Voices of Winnipeg Holocaust Survivors* (Winnipeg: Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada, 2010), 364; Testiomony of Rose Slutsky, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Interview Code 23960. A group of 28 Jews took refuge in the forests near their hometown of Skała Podolska, on the River Zbrucz, in Tarnopol voivodship. They turned for food and other supplies to a Polish colony known as Mazury: "There was a small village at the edge of the Skala [Skała] forest, called Mazury. … I vividly remember the late June of 1943, when my two cousins and I, along with a handful of other young men and women, escaped to the forest during a week-long rainy weather spell. We were cold, wet and starving for days. Our first 'meal' in the forest, was a slice of cold corn pudding we all shared, that my cousin, Nechamia Stock of blessed memory, brought from the Mazury colony after sneaking out of the forest and knocking at the door of a Polish colonist, a total stranger. Later that summer, my cousin Malcia Rothststein (nee Stock) made a deal with a woman colonist to knit sweaters with wool provided by her in exchange for bottles of milk, a rare luxury at the time. In the fall of 1943, after German troops raided our section of the forest, killing scores of Jews, we decided to build underground bunkers for the winter. The Mazury colonists were those who lent us the necessary construction tools—saws, picks, shovels and hammers—no questions asked. Those tools eventually made our survival possible! Regretfully, the names of those individual Polish colonists lie buried in the graves of the survivors who dealt with them at the time, but their deeds are still remembered with gratitude." See Max Mermelstein (Weidenfeld) and Tony Hausner, eds. *Skala on the River Zbrucz: A History of the Former Skala Jewish Community* (United States: Skala Research Group and Skala Benevolent Society, 2009), 397–98, also 183–90. Of Ostra Mogiła near Skałat Jewish survivors wrote: "The people in this village were friendly to the Jews and provided them with whatever they could. … Twenty-nine Jews survived in Ostra-Mogila." One of the Jews stated that of the ten houses on the street where his rescuers, the Firuta family lived, almost everyone had sheltered Jews and that the entire street merited recognition. See Abraham Weissbord, *Death of a Shtetl,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Skalat1/Skalat.html>, translation of *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), 65; Firuta Family, The Righteous Database, Yad Vashem, Internet: <http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=4288027>. Other examples of communal assistance by Poles are recorded in the following publications: Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej,* 2nd ed., 1027 (Władysławówka near Swojczów); Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945,* 263 (Konińsk near Sarny), 265 (Pańska Dolina near Dubno), 266 (Świnarzyn near Dominopol), 307 (an entire street in the city of Przemyśl was aware of a Jewish hideout), 324–25 (in the vicinity of Bereźne near Kostopol), 327 (Woronówka near Ludwipol), 361 and 389 (Obórki), 386 (Wólka Kotowska near Łuck), 392 (Przebraże); Edward Prus, *Holocaust po banderowsku: Czy Żydzi byli w UPA?* (Wrocław: Nortom, 1995), 82 (Zdołbunów), 144 (Adamy near Busk), 167 (Huta Brodzka); Bronisław Szeremeta, "Zagłada wsi Adamy—rok 1943," *Semper Fidelis* (Wrocław), no. 1 (14), 1993: 19 (Adamy near Busk); Asher Tarmon, ed., *Memorial Book: The Jewish Communities of Manyevitz, Horodok, Lishnivka, Troyanuvka, Povursk, and Kolki (Wolyn Region)* (Tel-Aviv: Organization of Survivors of Manyevitz, Horodok, Lishnivka, Troyanuvka, Povursk, Kolki and Surroundings Living in Israel and Overseas, 2004), 39–40, 67–68, 74, 85 (Konińsk near Sarny); E. Leoni, ed., *Rokitno (Volin) ve-ha-sevivah: Sefer edut ve-zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Rokitno in Israel, 1967), translated as *Rokitno-Wolyn and Surroundings: Memorial Book and Testimony,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/rokitnoye/Rokitnoye.html>, 293ff. (Blizhov—"I must say that these peasants treated us fairly well. In the area of Blizhov there were no attacks or denunciations of Jews."); 317ff. (Netreba and Okopy near Kisorycze), 327ff. (Netreba), 334ff. (Netreba, Borowskie Budki, and Okopy—"in the village of Netrebe [sic], tens of Jews from Rokitno and the area found shelter. They were helped by the villagers who not only did not harm them but also hid them near the village during the day. At night they took them to their homes. Many Jews survived there until the liberation by the Red Army. In the Polish village of Budki some Jews survived ... In the same area, in the Polish village of Okopi [sic], some tens of Jews were saved thanks to two special individuals… the Catholic priest [Rev. Ludwik Wrodarczyk] and the village teacher. The priest used to give sermons to his followers telling them not to be

involved in the extermination of Jews. He asked them to help the Jews to survive … The village teacher also had compassion for the unfortunate Jews. Their suffering touched her heart and she helped in any way possible. She was killed by a Ukrainian gang on the way from the village of Rokitno where she was helping a Jewish family. The priest was burned alive in his church."), 342ff. (Netreba), 351 ("in a Polish village near Snodovich [Snodowicze], we found a few Jewish families working in the houses and fields of the villagers"); Engelking, *Był taki piękny słoneczny dzień…,* 125 (after escaping from the ghetto in Rokitno, Rachela Sznuler moved from village to village surviving by sewing for farmers); Yehuda Bauer, "Sarny and Rokitno in the Holocaust: A Case Study of Two Townships in Wolyn (Volhynia)," in Katz, *The Shtetl,* 273 (Okopy, Budki Borowskie, Dołhań, and Netreba); Reuben Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Poland (with a historical survey of the Jew as fighter and soldier in the Diaspora)* (London: Paul Elek, 1974), 450–53 (Dzwonica, Huta Pieniacka, Huta Werchobuska near Złoczów); Shlomo Blond, et al., eds., *Memorial Book of Tlumacz: The Life and Destruction of a Jewish Community* (Tel Aviv: Tlumacz Societies in Israel and the U.S.A., 1976), column clxxiv (Horyhlady or Horyglady near Tłumacz, and Wojciechówka near Skałat); Alicia Appleman-Jurman, *Alicia: My Story* (New York: Bantam, 1988), 149, 157 (Horyhlady or Horyglady near Tłumacz, and Wojciechówka near Buczacz); Etunia Bauer Katz, *Our Tomorrows Never Came* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 98–99 (Matuszówka near Buczacz); Elżbieta Isakiewicz, *Harmonica: Jews Relate How Poles Saved Them from the Holocaust* (Warsaw: Polska Agencja Informacyjna, 2001), 106–108 (Dźwinogród near Buczacz); Yehuda Bauer, "Buczacz and Krzemieniec: The Story of Two Towns During the Holocaust," *Yad Vashem Studies,* vol. 33 (2005), 298 (Nowosiółka Koropiecka near Buczacz); David Ravid (Shmukler), ed., *The Cieszanow Memorial Book* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 2006), 190–91 (Wojciechówka near Buczacz); Oral History Interview with Pepa (Sternberg) Gold, Kean College of New Jersey Holocaust Resource Center, March 26, 1987 (an unnamed village near Buczacz); Denise Nevo and Mira Berger, eds., *We Remember: Testimonies of Twenty-four Members of Kibbutz Megiddo who Survived the Holocaust* (New York: Shengold, 1994), 209 (Huta Sopaczewska near Sarny), 257 (Polish villages near the village of Berezołupy near Rożyszcze: "When I arrived in the Polish village, someone told me that five kilometers from there, here was another Polish village where I might find my brother … I went there and asked the farmers about him. They told me where to go, and I found him in a forest, with a group of six other Jews. … They too had spent the winter in the forest, and at night they had brought potatoes and bread from the Polish village. … I was accepted by an older couple … My brother also got a job with another Polish farmer, about four kilometers from the village where I was. … I stayed with that farmer for almost a year, until the Russians freed our area in April 1944."); Yitzhak Ganuz, ed., *Our Town Stepan,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/stepan/Stepan.html>, translation of *Ayaratenu Stepan* (Tel Aviv: Stepan Society, 1977), 213ff. (Karaczun near Kostopol, where both the Polish underground and Polish villagers were extremely helpful to Jews who hid in the forest), 287 (Huta Stepańska); 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), 121 (Karaczun near Kostpol); Andrzej Leja, "Urodzona w ZSRS," Polis: Miasto Pans Cogito, Internet: <http://www.polis2008.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=601&joscclean=1&comment_id=843> (Karaczun near Kostopol); Sonya Tesler-Gyraph, "Memories from the Nazi Period," in Yosef Kariv, ed., *Horchiv Memorial Book* (Tel Aviv: Horchiv Committee in Israel, 1966), 63 (a village near Horochów, Volhynia); Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds,* 164 (Hucisko Oleskie or Huta Olejska near Olesko: "It is a Polish village … The gentiles were also very kind. We were there. We slept in barns. We slept here a day, here a day, here a night."); Isaiah Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution: Collective and Individual Behavior in Extremis* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), 250–52 (Kurdybań Warkowicki, Bortnica, Pańska Dolina, Żeniówka, all in Volhynia); Account of Mordechai Tennenbaum in Israel Zinman, ed., *Memorial for Greater Mezirich: In Construction and Destruction* (Haifa: Organization of Meziritsh Association, 1999), Internet: <www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/mezhirichi/> (a Polish village in the vicinity of Międzyrzec near Równe, Volhynia); Daniel Kac, *Koncert grany żywym* (Warsaw: Tu, 1998), 183 (Przebraże and Huta Stepańska, in Volhynia); Stepan Makarczuk, "Straty ludności w Galicji Wschodniej w latach II wojny światowej (1939–1945)," in *Polska–Ukraina: Trudne pytania,* vol. 6 (Warsaw: Światowy Związek Żołnierzy Armii Krajowej, Związek Ukraińców w Polsce, and Karta, 2000), 240 (Rakowiec and Hołosko Wielkie, both near Lwów); "Letter of Chayeh Kanner," *Khurbn* Glinyane (New York: New York: Emergency Relief Committee for Gliniany and Vicinity, 1946), translated as *The Tragic End of Our Gliniany,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/glinyany1/Glinyany1.html> ("The few Jews of Gliniany who saved their lives were hiding in the woods near Zeniow [Żeniów]. The Polish peasants of that village supplied their food."); Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945,* 309 (Tresteniec, a Polish settlement near Aleksandria in Volhynia where all the villagers knew about and assisted the sisters Cypa and Rywa Szparberg and their father); Hersch Altman, *One the Fields of Loneliness* (New York and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and The Holocaust Survivors' Memors Project, 2006), 139ff. (the Polish village of Hucisko near Brzeżany, a Home Army base). Spontaneous assistance was much more frequent than is often assumed, as illustrated by the following examples. In October 1942, after the liquidation of the ghetto in Zdołbunów, the Germans and Ukrainian militiamen combed the town to locate any signs of survivors: "[Fritz] Germ would point to a certain house, always one occupied by Polish citizens, and the guards would crash through the door or a window, emerging with a family and the Jews whom they had hidden. The fate was the same for the rescuers as it was for the Jews. This occurred at four or five different homes." See Douglas K. Huneke, *The Moses*

Notwithstanding an abundance of evidence regarding conditions in the countryside, many Holocaust historians are unable to shed their ethno-nationalist biases or simply haven't done their homework. Despite adamant denials by historians such as Shmuel Krakowski,[107] it is an undeniable fact that Jewish partisans

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of Rovno: The Stirring Story of Fritz Graebe, a German Christian Who Risked His Life to Lead Hundreds of Jews to Safety During the Holocaust (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1985), 84. Irene Gut Opdyke, a Polish rescuer recalled: "There was a priest in Janówka [near Tarnopol]. He knew about the Jews' escape—many of the Polish people knew about it. … Many people brought food and other things—not right to the forest, but to the edge—from the village. The priest could not say directly 'help the Jews,' but he would say in church, 'not one of you should take the blood of your brother.' … During the next couple of weeks there were posters on every street corner saying, 'This is a Jew-free town, and if any one should help an escaped Jew, the sentence is death.'" See Carol Rittner and Sondra Myers, eds., *The Courage to Care: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 47–48. The warning soon became a terrifying reality when the town square in Tarnopol "was choked with a milling, bewildered crowd. SS men abruptly pushed me into the middle of the square, just as they had the others, with a command not to leave. A scaffold had been erected in the center of the square, and what appeared to be two separate families were slowly escorted through the crowd to the block. A Polish couple, holding two small children, were brought up first, followed by a Jewish couple with one child, all three wearing the yellow Star of David. Both groups were lined up in front of dangling nooses. They were going to hang the children as well! Why didn't somebody do something? What could be done? Finally, their 'crimes' were announced—the Polish family had been caught harboring the Jewish family! Thus we were forced to witness the punishment for helping or befriending a Jew." See Irene Gut Opdyke with Jeffrey M. Elliot, *Into the Flames: The Life Story of a Righteous Gentile* (San Bernardino, California: The Borgo Press, 1992), 139. Public executions of Poles who had helped Jews became commonplace in an effort to instil fear into the population. See Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity,* Part One, Entry 482 (Stryj). About twenty residents of Berecz, in Volhynia, were killed during a pacification of that Polish settlement by Ukrainian police in November 1942 for assisting Jews who had escaped from the ghetto in Powursk (Powórsk). See Władyslaw Siemaszko and Ewa Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na ludności polskiej Wołynia, 1939–1945* (Warsaw: von borowiecky, 2000), vol. 1, 363. In Huta Werchobuska or Werchobudzka (near Złoczów) and Huta Pieniacka (near Brody), the Polish villagers were simply annihilated and their homes and farmsteads burned down in German pacifications (the primary perpetrators were the SS Galizien forces) brought on in part by long-standing assistance provided to Jews. See Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity,* Part One, 154–55; Tsvi Weigler, "Two Polish Villages Razed for Extending Help to Jews," *Yad Washem Bulletin,* no. 1 (April 1957): 19–20; Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe,* 450–53; *Na Rubieży* (Wrocław), no. 10 (1994): 10–11 (Huta Werchodudzka); *Na Rubieży,* no. 12 (1995): 7–20 (Huta Pieniacka); *Na Rubieży,* no. 54 (2001): 18–29. Feiwel Auerbach, a Jew from Sasów, made the following deposition shortly after the war: "There were 30 of us [Jews] in the forest. We hid in Huta Werchobuska and Huta Pieniacka. The Polish inhabitants of those villages helped us. The peasants were very poor and were themselves hungry but they shared with us their last bits of food. We stayed there from July 1943 until March 1944. Thanks to them we are alive. When there were manhunts, the village reeve warned us. Once 500 Germans encircled the forest, but since they were afraid to enter deep into the forest they set their dogs on us. We were saved because our Polish friends warned us of the impending danger. Because of a denunciation [by the Ukrainian police] all of the villagers of Huta Pieniacka and Huta Werchobuska were killed. Some of them were burned alive in a barn. The village was burned to the ground." Auerbach's account can be found in the Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/1200.

A Jewish woman from Butrimonys (Butrymańce) recalled the widespread assistance of the local Polish minority in interwar Lithuanian territories: "Parankova [Parankowa] became known among us unfortunate Jews as a Polish hamlet where nobody would hand you over to the murderers; 'to me Parankova is truly the Jerusalem of Lithuania'." See Rivka Lozansky Bogomolnaya, *Wartime Experiences in Lithuania* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2000), 75. See also *If I Forget The…: The Destruction of the Shtetl Butrimantz. Testimony by Riva Lozansky and Other Witnesses* (Washington, DC: Remembrance Books, 1998), passim; and the testimony of Sarah Epstein (Sara Epshteyn) in Joshua Rubenstein and Ilya Altman, *The Unkown Black Book: The Holocaust in the German-Occupied Soviet Territories* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2008), 297 (villages near Stakliškės or Stokliszki).

[107] Yad Vashem historian Shmuel Krakowski contends: "Neither the armed Jewish units nor the individual Jews hiding or fighting in the forests had anything in common with such ordinary criminals." See Gutman and Krakowski, *Unequal Victims,* 125. See also Krakowski, *The War of the Doomed,* 15. Shmuel Krakowski, formerly a political officer in the Polish Army and Communist historian known as Stefan Krakowski, continued to maintain the same position in the year 2003: "those Jewish escapees hiding in the forests … I cannot find any justification for labeling these fighting Jews as bandits." See Shmuel Krakowski, "The Attitude of the Polish Underground to the Jewish Question during the Second World War," in Zimmerman, *Contested Memories,* 103. While certainly not all Jews hiding in forests could be considered ordinary bandits, from the point of view of the peasants they robbed, they posed the same danger as robbers.

and many Jews hiding in the forests did engage in banditry and other misdeeds which, from the perspective of the peasants, were indistinguishable from other forms of violent crime that plagued the countryside. Such activities were not, of course, the exclusive or even main domain of the Jews. Common banditry by individuals and various groups of diverse nationalities, sometimes partisans but often just masquerading as partisans (usually as Home Army or National Armed Forces members), abounded and constituted a serious problem for the impoverished civilian population.[108] The Communist underground—both Soviet and

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Ben Shedletzky, a not untypical fugitive who took cover in villages near Warsaw, "makes no apologies for salvaging and rebuilding a discarded rifle and stealing bullets to force scared Polish farm wives into giving him food." See Ben Rose, "Discarded rifle kept family alive during war," *The Canadian Jewish News,* August 24, 1995. During the war the Bund was well aware of the fact that "wild bands" of Jews resorted to banditry to survive in the forests. See Chodakiewicz, *Tajne oblicze GL-AL i PPR,* vol. 2, 24. Shmuel Krakowski's lack of objectivity in other areas has been noted by several historians. His claim that the Polish underground press ignored the fate of the Jews and relegated them to the margins of its pages was proven inaccurate by Daniel Blatman, who concluded: "In no way can one state that the entire Polish underground press was tainted with anti-Semitic arguments." See Daniel Blatman, "'The Polish Street Fell Short in Its Relations with the Jews:' Polish Clandestine Press and the Jews (1940–1942)," in Beate Kosmala and Feliks Tych, eds., *Facing the Nazi Genocide: Non-Jews and Jews in Europe* (Berlin: Metropol, 2004), 107–16. John Sack notes that Shmuel Krakowski dismissed, "as a Jewish fantasy," the story of Solomon Morel, who, as a commandant of postwar Communist prison camps in Poland, killed prisoners out of revenge. See John Sack, *An Eye for an Eye* (New York: Basic Books/HarperCollins, 1993), 210. Notwithstanding these obvious shortcomings, Shmuel Krakowski continues to be cited an an eminent and unbiased authority on Polish-Jewish relations.

[108] Examples of banditry by Soviet and Jewish partisans in the Wilno and Nowogródek areas have been provided earlier. Ordinary bandits were also known to pose as Soviet partisans and rob peasants. See Wołkonowski, *Okręg Wileński Związku Walki Zbrojnej Armii Krajowej w latach 1939–1945,* 158. Additional examples of Jewish banditry can be found in Chodakiewicz, *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne,* 79–86, 321 n.209; Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918–1955,* 262–65, 327–31. Partisans sometimes posed as partisans from other formations, and forest bands as partisans. In the Szczuczyn region, a group of Poles posed as Soviet partisans when they took supplies from villagers. See the account of Zbigniew Koźliński, "Moja Czarnowszczyzna," in Jasiewicz, *Europa nieprowincjonalna,* 154–55. There are many Jewish accounts describing the activities of Belorussians. A young Jewish girl who managed to leave the Baranowicze ghetto and, with the assistance of Poles, joined up with an armed group of Jews (led by Moshe Zalmanowicz) in the vicinity of Świecie-Załuże (some 50 miles from Baranowicze), describes attacks by Belorussian bandit gangs known as "Zorkince." See Bender, *Glimpses Through Holocaust and Liberation,* 97, 99. However, another Jewish witness refers to "Zhorkintsy" as a Soviet-based partisan unit of some 25 men which included at least one Jew, Erszek Mendelbojm; that unit was later transformed into a large detachment called "Captain Chornovo." See the account of Mendel Szczupak, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/49. One account refers to "vigilantes" active in the vicinity of Lipiczany forest already in January 1943, who "were terrorizing the local people and forbidding them any contact with the [Soviet] Partisans. … because of the vigilantes, it was almost impossible for our scouts to enter villages or farm settlements to gather information. … They brought our operations almost to a halt, and many Partisans and their contacts lost their lives after being discovered by them. The vigilantes … were a threat especially to the Jewish Partisans." See Zissman, *The Warriors,* 127. Many Jewish sources mention the "samookhova" (*samaakhova* is Belorussian for "self-defence"), which is often confused with the local night watch that every village was required by the Germans to form to fend off partisan intrusions. The Free Corps of Belorussian Self-Defence (*Volny Korpus Belaruskai Samaakhovy*), also known as the Belorussian Self-Defence (*Belaruskaia Samaakhova*), was a volunteer force established in June 1942 for the purpose of fighting partisans. See Rein, *The Kings and the Pawns,* 295. One Jewish source refers to attacks on a Jewish family camp in January and July 1943, by groups of as many as 80 "Samokhovtses," members of Belorussian "self-defence" groups from Byteń and Iwacewicze, led by the Belorussian nationalist Zmitruchenko. The first of these raids was to secure the release of three Belorussian "collaborators" captured and executed by Jewish partisans. See Alpert, *The Destruction of Slonim Jewry,* 355–57. A memorial book speaks of "a nest of Samachowcy"—"local youth who organised themselves into units in order to help the Germans fight partisans and Jews"—in the Belorussian village of Korsunki near Jody, against whom a Jewish unit launched an attack. See Machnes and Klinov, *Darkness and Desolation,* 581–82. Attacks on Belorussian self-defence groups by Jewish partisans (this one in the early part of 1943) are noted in other Jewish sources: "We were at a strength of 250 men in the attack on the village of Khatzivka, which harbored the "Samokhovsky" force, farmers who fought against the partisans as an auxiliary army (sic) to the Germans. We attacked from all sides, and our enemies fell by the sword, and afterwards we took what remained of their guns and ammunition. In the end, we put the village to the torch, and left it in ruins." See Moorstein, *Zelva Memorial Book,* 73.

native—was notorious for their robberies in the countryside. The association of Jews with these formations, who were understandably not welcomed by the population, only complicated matters for Jewish refugees hiding in the forests.

As Jewish survivors recall, Soviet marauders and partisans preyed on both Jewish fugitives and Polish villagers:

> … a group of comrades, who had left the ghetto [in Zambrów], in order to join the partisans in the forests, came back home. This matter was kept in extreme secrecy, so that, God forbid, the news not pass to the Germans by way of an informer. One of the group was Yitzhak Prawda. The group went out of the ghetto well-dressed, shod, and provisioned with a sum of money. In the fields, they encountered remnants of the Russian army, mostly Ukrainians. The Russians and Ukrainians bat them, took away their money, stripped them naked, and barefoot, and drove them away in shame, back to the Germans.[109]

> Wanka [Vanka Smirnov] described for us the group [of Soviet partisans], some were real robbers and killers. The two worst bandits were "Grishka", who carried the heavy machine gun, and "Nicholai". Those two robbed, raped and killed all around the area of Treblinka and the rest just followed. Although some of these men were killers, others were not bad considering the circumstances. … Wanka thought that it would be best if we went to the Jews in Bransker [Brańsk] forest because some of the men from this group were real killers. When farmers would not open doors for them, refuse to give them food or inform the Germans of their whereabouts, they would kill whole families and set fire to the farm. …
>
> They [i.e., some of the Soviet partisans] told us what happened after we left the group in Hodiszewer [Hodyszewo] forest, that same night was a lot of drinking and killings. Nicholai the kolhaznik [kolkhoz labourer] saw how Grishka took from Haika her jewelry, a necklace, watch and wedding ring and then shot her and others. They then went to a polish [sic] farmer and killed the whole family. The killers were again Grishka and Nicolai the bandit and after the killings the group went to a forest near Dominowo. Polish people followed their footsteps and informed the Germans of their whereabouts. The Germans surrounded the forest and killed were the worst bandits from the group, Grishka with his machine gun, Nicholai the bandit, Nichodem and more, the rest ran away in different directions.[110]

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[109] Yitzhak Golombeck, "Blood, Fire, and Columns of Smoke," in Yom-Tov Levinsky, ed., *The Zambrow Memorial Book: In Memory of a Martyred Community That Was Exterminated* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 2010), 72, Internet:<http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/z/zyb-01.htm>.

[110] Goldberg, *A Sparkle of Hope,* 87–88, 91. Luba Wrobel Goldberg's comments about the Belorussians living in the vicinity of Brańsk are not favourable: "Around Bransk, the villages were populated with white russian [sic] farmers. The white russian farmers completed the german [sic] orderd even more thoroughly than the polish farmers. When jews [sic] came begging for a piece of bread, they would tie them up and take them to the Germans to be killed. … the white russian villages were so unfriendly." Ibid., 88, 129. Understandably, the Home Army was not pleased with the behaviour of the Soviet partisans and came to the protection of the farmers. Ibid., 91–92.

A teenaged Jewish boy from the Warsaw ghetto who joined up with some Soviet partisans after escaping from a train headed for Treblinka recalled:

> One night we came upon a group of Jewish women hiding in a barn. The Russians ordered the Polish peasant to lay out plenty of hot, mashed potatoes, melted lard, sausages and vodka. The Jewish women, crouching with cold and fear, were invited to share in the feast. There were about eight of them who had escaped from nearby small-town ghettos; some came from Bransk [Brańsk], others from Bielsk Podlaski. A few wore their best fur coats. They were silent and distrustful, but they soon warmed up after glasses of vodka which the Soviets insisted they down with them.
>
> "Let's have some fun," the soldiers repeated. "Death to the Germans."
>
> Later, everyone buried himself in the fluffy hay in the large barn.
>
> Food and drink filled my body and I fell asleep.
>
> But during the night I half woke. I thought that I heard frantic whispers, accelerated breathing coming from several directions, deep moans and laughter. I even thought that I heard some Jewish voices praying and invoking God's mercy. But I was not sure.
>
> Next morning one of the women approached me. She had deep shadows under her eyes.
>
> "*Nu*," she said, "what's a nice Jewish boy doing with a bunch of animals—you *are* Jewish, no?"
>
> "What do you mean, 'animals'?" I retorted. "Listen, lady,"—I tried to take on the recalcitrance of a Gentile boy addressing a second-class citizen—"better watch what you are saying; these are my friends."
>
> "Friends? A *choliere* [cholera] should strike them," she swore in Yiddish. "You and your friends, *takie*, so now what's gonna happen when half these women get pregnant when they're on the run? *Goteniu, Goteniu*! [Dear God, my God!] Ha."
>
> She shook her head, her sad eyes looking at me with tragic contempt. … I walked away quickly.
>
> The Soviets left soon after that, first entering the forest in their customary *tiralliere*: each man walking several feet apart. Some two hours later, Petya and Alex, a pudgy partisan, stopped in the deep snow to relieve themselves. As Alex pulled his trousers down, he revealed his bloodstained long underwear.
>
> "Look, brother, got laid with a Jewess. Some great fucking, those Jewish women! Son of a bitch! You got laid all right?" he asked, showing off his underthings.
>
> "*Da*, got fucked all right," smiled Petya.
>
> "Look at me," gloated Alex, "son of a bitch! I got to fuck three of them. Two virgins. A real doubleheader. Yippee!"
>
> I looked away. I felt guilty and ashamed yet stirred with excitement and desire.[111]

When the Soviet partisans learned that the teenaged boy was a Jew, they ejected him from their group.

Gangs of common criminals and oulaws also victimized the population indiscriminately. Michael (Mordechai or Mordka) Goldfarb, who escaped from Sobibór, joined up with just such a gang in the vicinity of Włodawa and began to rob with them in the vicinity. The gang was led by Misha Piontek, likely

[111] Joseph S. Kutrzeba, *The Contract: A Life for a Life* (New York: iUniverse, 2009), 74–75.

a Russian or Ukrainian, given his Russian-sounding first name, but described by Goldfarb as a Pole. The gang eventually turned on its Jewish members, killing seven of the ten escapees from Sobibór in its ranks.

> Our group consisted of fourteen people, ten of whom were escapees from Sobibor [Sobibór] and four Georgians who had escaped from the prison in Radom. After wandering in the forest we reached the village of Hola. We thought in this area there should be partisans and, indeed, after a short time we met a group of sixteen armed men under the leadership of a Pole, Miszka Piatek [spelled Piątek in Polish and pronounced Piontek—*M.P.*].
>
> They took us into their group and we remained together for about two weeks. However, we didn't feel comfortable as they were common thieves and we sought a way to be rid of them. … One night Miszka told us that we had to procure food and vodka. Five of us went out on the mission: three men from Sobibor—Yehuda [Leon] Lerner, Boris [Tarabinski], and I—one Georgian and one of the men from the local group. We reached the village of Kolacze [Kołacze] and there we confiscated the food and liquor. … We returned to the forest, and at the first guard post of our camp we saw no one. We were surprised, especially when we saw that the second guard position was empty as well. We reached the camp. The fire was still burning and the people looked as if they were sleeping. We drew closer and saw that everyone had been killed. Six Jews and three Georgians were killed. Another Jew, Mendel the tailor, was wounded and asked that we kill him. We got away from the place quickly. We were afraid that Miszka was nearby and would shoot us. The local fellow who was with us disappeared immediately, and the Georgian also left us. We remained three wanderers. In the village of Kamien [Kamień], a farmer told us that nearby there was a group of Jewish partisans. … These were the people from the Jewish partisan unit of Yechiel Grynszpan. We fought there until the arrival of the Soviet army.[112]

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[112] Yitzhak Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka: The Operation of the Reinhard Death Camps* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 346–47. After the revolt in the Sobibór death camp, the Germans undertook a large-scale search and pursuit action utilizing substantial forces numbering almost 1,000 men, as well as air force patrols, to capture the several hundred Jewish prisoners who managed to escape. The village heads were ordered to inform the residents that anyone helping the Jews would be killed. Ibid., 337, 342; Muzeum Byłego Obozu Hitlerowskiego Zagłady w Sobiborze, "Pościg," Internet: <http://www.muzeum.wlodawa.metronet.pl/index_sobibor.htm>. Although Holocaust sources refer to Jewish escapees being turned in by Poles, according to prewar censuses, the population of the immediate vicinity of Sobibór was overwhelmingly ethnic Ukrainian and of the Orthodox faith. Apart from the former Soviet POWs led by Aleksandr ("Sasha") Pechersky, who headed eastward to join up with the Communist partisans (after taking money, gold, and jewels from the non-Soviet escapees and then abandoning them), the other escapees headed westward to areas populated by Poles where most of them originated. Apart from those mentioned in the text, other escapees from Sobibór who survived with the help of Poles include: Fiszel Białowicz (later Philip Bialowitz), Symcha Białowicz (later Bialowitz), Leon Cymiel, Hersz Cukierman and his son, Chaim Engel, Leib Leon Feldhendler, Rywka Feldman (later Regina Zieliński), Mosze Hochman, Cathy Hooks (who died as a partisan), Abram (Avrum) Kohn, Josef Kopf, Salomea Leiner, Shmul (Samuel) Lerer, Eda Lichtman, Chaskiel Menche, Moszek Merenstein, Zelda Metz (Kelberman), Lejb Pochlebny and his brother-in-law, Heniek, Chaim Powroznik, Shlomo (Salomon) Podchlebnik, Lea Reisner (later Bialowitz), Hanel Salomea, Ursula Stern (Ilana Safran), Józef Szerman, Shlomo (Stanisław) Szmajzner and two companions Yankiel and Majer (all three found shelter with a farmer in Tarnawa Duża), Ester Terner (Esther Raab), Kurt Ticho (Thomas), Adam Walk (formerly Avraham), Kalmen Wewryk, Selma Wijnberg, Meir Ziss. See Novitch, *Sobibor*, 102 (Lea Reisner-Bialowitz); Teresa Prekerowa, "Stosunek ludności polskiej do żydowskich uciekinierów z obozów zagłady w Treblince, Sobiborze i Bełżcu w świetle relacji żydowskich i polskich," *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu–Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* vol. 35 (1993): 110–14, translated as "The Attitude of the Polish Population Towards Jewish Escapees from the Treblinka, Sobibór, and Bełżec Death Camps in Light of Jewish and Polish Testimonies," in Chodakiewicz, Muszyński, and Styrna, *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold?*, 97–116; Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 4: *Poland*, Part 1, 491–92, 503, vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, 551, 691; *Relacje z czasów*

After escaping from the ghetto in Włodawa, Jakob Friedmann (then Rotenberg) ran into that same gang of criminals. Misha Piontek (Piątek), who was known as an arms' dealer, invited Friedmann to join his "partisan" group. Friedmann recalls:

> I agreed to join him; I had no alternative. There were five Poles, and I was the only Jew. Piontek [Piątek] gave me a Polish military gun which had had the barrel and stock sawn off …
>
> I lived in the woods for a while with this group of Poles who were robbers rather than partisans. We began to rob people. About two weeks later when I saw a horse-drawn carriage approaching, I said, 'Let's go and hold them up.' I knew that people travelling must have some money or valuables with them.[113]

Fearful for his own life, Friedmann eventually left these ruffians and joined up with a Jewish unit affiliated with the Communist People's Guard. Friedmann learned that bandits such as Piontek (Piątek) did not discriminate among their victims. The partisans Freidman joined took action to eliminate this gang.

Zagłady Inwentarz / Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue, vol. 1, 10 (no. 301/10, Salomon Podchlebnik, Josef Kopf), 15 (no. 301/14, Hersz Cukierman and his son), 164 (no. 301/458, Zelda Metz), vol. 3, 307 (no. 301/2785, Moszek Merenstein); Stanislaw Szmajzner, *Inferno em Sobibor: A tragédia de um adolscente judeu* (Rio de Janeiro: Edições Bloch, 1968), 296–301; Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 345–46; Arnon Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today,* volume II: *District Lublin* (Tel Aviv: Tel-Aviv University Press, 2007), 371, 379; Andrzej Potocki, *Bieszczadzkie losy: Bojkowie i Żydzi* (Rzeszów and Krosno: Apla, 2000), 171–72; Andrew Zielinski, *Conversations with Regina* (Brighton, South Australia: n.p., 2003; Kent Town, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 2003); Małgorzata Szlachetka, "Wywalczyli sobie wolność," *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Lublin), April 18, 2008; Adam Kopciowski, "Anti-Jewish Incidents in the Lublin Region in the Early Years after World War II," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials*, vol. 1 (2008): 190; Diatłowicki and Roszkowski, *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945*, vol. 1, 89–90 (Moszek Merenstein), 210 (Zelda Metz), vol. 2, 263 (assistance from Poles in Chełm); Gutman, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, volume II, 609 (Avraham, later Adam Walk, Lejb Pochlebny and his brother-in-law, Heniek); Testimony of Eda Lichtman, Yad Vashem Archives, file 03/1291, as cited in Wojciech Łukaszun, "Ratunek czy niebezpieczeństwo? Obszary leśne w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie jako miejsce schronienia ludności żydowskiej," in Waldemar Grabowski, ed., *Okupowana Europa: Podobieństwa i różnice* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2014), 126–27; Maria Ciesielska, "Ocaleni z Sobiboru," Internet: <http://www.informacja.wlodawa.pl/pliki/informator_dni_holokaustu_wlodawa.pdf>; Muzeum Byłego Obozu Hitlerowskiego Zagłady w Sobiborze, "Ocaleni," Internet: <http://www.muzeum.wlodawa.metronet.pl/index_sobibor.htm>; "From Mielec to Sobibór: The Testimony of Eda Lichtman," Internet: <http://www.theverylongview.com/WATH/testimonies/lichtman.htm>; Interviews with Samuel Lerer, Chaskiel Menche, Esther Raab, Stanislaw Szmajzner, Kurt Thomas, Selma Wijnberg, and Regina Zielinski, Internet: <http://www.sobiborinterviews.nl/en/interviews>. Kalmen Wewryk describes the assistance he received, after his escape from Sobibór, from numerous peasants as he wandered from village to village in an area south of Chełm populated by decent but frightened Catholic Poles and some Ukrainian Baptists. A family of five Jews hid in Teresin near Chełm: "Everybody in the hamlet knew that this family was hiding, but nobody knew where and they didn't want to know. Moishe told me how they were loved in that hamlet—there were decent people there." See Kalmen Wawryk, *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), 66–68, 71.

[113] Jakob Friedmann, *Reluctant Soldier: A Jewish Partisan's Story* (Caulfield South, Victoria: Makor Jewish Community Library, 2005), 30.

> We heard that this Michal Piontek [Michał Piątek], who had made a lot of money from the Jews, was giving refuge to the Russian officers who had run away, providing them with food and vodka, and then he shot them all and stole any goods they had on them.
>
> When I found this out I went with a small group of ten or twelve men to where Piontek was living. We surrounded the house and while he and his family were asleep we used bullets with phosphor tips, a kind of ammunition which would set fire to whatever it hit. We had machine guns all around the house and began firing. We heard screams but nobody could get out. No one survived.[114]

Criminal elements also posed a serious hazard for Jews hiding in the forests, but even they generally targeted Jewish fugitives for their possessions, and not because of their race or religion. These same criminal elements often preyed on Poles as well. As the following Jewish account from the vicinity of Brańsk illustrates, the conduct of those who preyed on Jews was by no means sanctioned by the local community:

> When I was working in the village of Lendowo, the people talked about Janka, that she was the village whore. She was greedy and for money she would do anything. For many years Janka had a boy friend Karik [Kazik?], who was the leader from a group of bandits who robbed and killed Jews who were hiding from the Germans. … When there were no more Jews, he organized the bandits to rob Polish farmers who were riding back with money from markets. He robbed them with a gun pretending to be Russian Partisans. Farmers recognized him …
>
> In a certain night he went to the barn of the man from Skludy [Skłody Borowe] and hung him and then he married his widow … One evening Karik's brother, Stasiec [Stasiek], came distressed to Pickutowska where Feigale was staying and he told her what he saw. He was riding back from the market in the dark, when he noticed a light was shining from the grave where the Jews were buried last week. He stopped and in the dark he quietly walked up to this place and he saw his brother Karik with Janka holding a lantern. They dug out the dead and were pulling out their teeth because they had gold fillings in them. Stasick Dombrowski [Stasiek Dąbrowski] was devastated to see how low his own brother had fallen. Stasick didn't like to upset his parents by telling them about his brother's deplorable behavior and his greed. He rather came to Pickutowska who was religious and highly respected to tell her what weighed heavy on his mind.[115]

The Polish underground was sometimes called on to take measures against those who engaged in banditry regardless of their nationality. While wandering in the Chełm area with fellow escapees from the Sobibór death camp, Dov Freiberg (also known as Ber, Berl, Berek and Bolek Fraiberg) encountered acts of kindness from poor farmers, and sometimes hostility. (Holocaust literature stresses the hostility, and pays scant attention to the extensive assistance provided by many Poles.) The sporadic violence he witnessed

[114] Friedmann, *Reluctant Soldier*, 50.

[115] Luba Wrobel Goldberg, *A Sparkle of Hope: An Autobiography* (Melbourne: n.p., 1998), 80–81.

was generally the work of gangs of criminals lurking in the forests. Freiberg and Semen Rosenfeld (Semyon Rozenfeld) met up with two brothers from Chełm, Yozhik and Monyek Serchuk, who had built a bunker for themselves in the forest. Reluctant to part with the gold coins they had taken with them from Sobibór, the fugitives resorted to stealing from local farmers and eventually joined a gang of violent Polish criminals who robbed the peasants mercilessly. In desperation, and quite understandably, some of the victims turned to the Polish underground and, separately, to the German authorities for protection. The leaders of this gang of robbers eventually met their well-deserved demise:

> Some of the people in the group had prepared supplies. I had a little bag of gold coins in one pocket and a few bullets in the other. …
>
> The four fellows bearing arms approached one of the houses. The farmer refused to open the door, but after they threatened to blow up his house, he obeyed. He gave them two big loaves of bread, some butter and some onions …
>
> The next evening, our lads returned to the farmer's house and again got more food by threatening him. …
>
> When we got to the house, we found a large-boned, middle-aged woman. When she saw us, she paled. She looked at us in shock … "You are the ones who escaped from Sobibor [Sobibór] … Good God, the Germans are searching for you everywhere. Get away from here, quickly!" … After a few minutes, three men appeared, two adults and a younger man, with pitchforks and an ax in their hands, and from a distance they cursed us and threatened to kill us if we didn't leave at once. We started to back off. … The villagers ran after us a bit, then stopped after they made sure that we were going. Semmen cursed those Poles and told us how he had gone with two of his friends a few days ago, with weapons, to ask for food, and how the farmer and his wife had given them bread and butter and even wished them luck. "If I had a gun, I would have killed all of the people who just chased us away [but did not harm us—*M.P.*]," he said. …
>
> We went down toward the valley and we neared the edge of the forest, where we saw a farmer plowing his field … Suddenly I saw a sack lying under a tree. The three of us walked over to it, opened it and found a big loaf of bread … It weighed about three kilos. There was also a big chunk of cheese, and next to the sack, there was a jug of milk. …We grabbed the sack and ran off as fast as we could. …
>
> At twilight we got up and walked to the house. As we approached, we heard the farmer working in the granary. … The old man looked at us, and without asking who we were and where we had come from, said: "Don't worry. You won't leave my house hungry." He called to his wife and said, "Mother, prepare a lot of food for supper. We have three guests and they are hungry."
>
> The farmer finished preparing food for his single cow and told us to stay in the granary until he called us. "You understand," he said, "we have to be very careful these days." After about an hour, the farmer came out of the house, strode back and forth, looking and listening, and then came over to us and invited us into the hut. It was very old and small, only one room, which was a living room, bedroom and kitchen. The roof was made of straw. We could see signs of poverty by the light of the oil lamp, which was standing on the table and lit the room …We sat down unceremoniously at the table and the woman brought us bowls of hot soup—a milk-based soup with potatoes, pieces of

dough and onion. … The bowls were big and they were full, but we ate everything quickly and the woman refilled our bowls … We stayed seated and told our hosts about Sobibor, about the revolt, and about what had happened to us since we left the camp. The farmer listened closely, sat for a few moments absorbed in thought, then finally said: "The war will be over soon. The Germans are being defeated and in retreat. We have to hold out until then. I will hide you. We'll build a bunker inside the granary and you can be there during the day. I'll bring you bread. Whatever we eat, you will eat!" …

Suddenly there was a knock at the door. The three of us hid. One of the neighbors had come to announce that on the following day, the Germans would come to the village to take *das Kontigent*—the tax allocation that the Germans had imposed on the farmers. Afterward the farmer looked embarrassed and apologized, but said that he could not hide us if the Germans were coming. …

We got up to leave, but the old man asked us to stay a while longer, because they had no bread in the house at the moment and he wanted to send his wife out to borrow bread. He also sent his son out on an errand. The woman came back with two big loaves of bread, and his son brought bottles of milk. … When we were about to part, I took out some gold coins that I wanted to give the old farmer, but he refused to take them. …

The time we spent with the old farmer encouraged us, and the following days were lucky as well. We were able to get food, usually at a high price …

One day, we passed a solitary house, which appeared to be empty. When we approached it, an old couple came toward us and invited us to come in and eat. Our hosts, who seemed to be poor, didn't look like farmers. … It turned out that they were Polish refugees from Poznan [Poznań]. We stayed with them until late at night. The man taught us how to find our way at night. …

[Later they ran into another group of Jewish who had escaped from Sobibór.] At the beginning, they were a large group, but then they split up. Most of them had gone eastward, planning to cross the Bug River, and these men had gone in the direction of Chelm [Chełm], led by Shaya the gardener, who had known the area, where he hoped they could find a hiding place in one of the villages whose farmers they knew in exchange for the abundance of money they had. On the way, they had been joined by two Dutch Jews, and by two brothers, Yozhik and Monyek Serchuk, who had been in the forest for more than a year. … Their whole family had hidden in the village with a farmer, but another farmer had informed on them and the Germans had come and taken them away. Only Yozhik and Monyek were left. Their parents had had a shop selling chicken in Chelm. …

Yozhik and Monyek had built a bunker for themselves in the woods where they could live through the winter. … When the first group from Sobibor arrived, the two brothers had given them the bunker … At night, Yozhik would buy food from the farmers for the whole group. The people from Sobibor had money, and Chaim, the jeweller, had taken a large amount of gold. Yozhik would usually go alone, but occasionally Monyek would go with him; very infrequently, they would take someone from the group to help them carry sacks of food from the villages. …

Yozhik had good connections in all of the villages. He knew every farmer and he knew who was trustworthy. He also had contacts with Jews who were hiding with farmers, including his uncle, aunt and their child, and another uncle who had been alone since the Germans had killed his family. …

Finally, we stopped not far from a large, isolated farm, a short distance from the town. Yozhik said: “I knew this farmer well before the war. He’s a good man. His name is Karpiuk. You wait here I'll check out the area and quiet the dog. I'll hide you in the granary, and in the morning I'll speak to the farmer – maybe we can find a place to hide with him.”

When I awoke in the morning … the farmer soon entered. He was surprised to see Yozhik and Monyek, but immediately embraced and kissed them, speaking to them warmly. …

In the meantime, Yozhik had begun to attempt to convince the farmer to let us stay under his roof until winter had passed. He suggested that we hide in the cellar under the house, but the farmer didn’t agree to that. When Yozhik suggested that we build a bunker under the granary, the farmer refused that, as well. He then proposed that we build a bunker outside the limits of his farm. Finally, it was decided that we would build a bunker in the corner of the yard, near the pigpen. …

The digging of the bunker presented difficulties from the outset. It was hard to dig in the frozen ground, and after we had overcome that obstacle, we reached an upper layer of groundwater, which put an end to our attempts. Karpiuk called us together and reiterated that he would like to help us, but he couldn’t keep us in his home, as he would be endangering his whole family. He suggested we find a place to hide, and from time to time we could come to his house to get food and anything else we might need. … Karpiuk brought us some food, and we took leave of him and his family on good terms and went out into the night. …

We kept walking we could distinguish a small house. … [Yozhik announced;] “Two women and a small child are living in the house. They are very poor and they have nothing to eat. I promised them that, if I stayed with them, they would eat like queens, and that from now on, they would lack for nothing. They are willing to do anything.” …

As night was falling, we heard a knock on the door. … It was her brother, who had come to visit. … a tall young man in his twenties, wearing a faded leather coat and high boots, and his shoulder he carried a rifle with a short barrel and butt, which could be hidden under a coat. Yula hurried to introduce her brother, Stashek, and we shook hands …After a few glasses of vodka had been drunk … the atmosphere became lighter and conversation flowed until, at a certain moment, the guest asked us if we would be ready to join him in a small burglary that he and his friend Vladek were planning to carry out. Yozhik answered without hesitation that we would be ready to participate in any burglary—and glasses were raised to celebrate the new partnership. … Stashek said that we would soon meet his friends, Pan Folka and Bronek, who were “great guys.” The guest then told us that he had his eye on a small farm belonging to two old people and their daughter. “There isn’t too much to take, but they have a pig that’s not bad, and geese, and that’s what we need right now. Their hut is some distance from the village, and the work will be easy, but we need a few men to carry it out—two or three can catch the pig, kill it and cur it up into pieces, and two will keep a lookout for unwanted visitors. And then, they will help us carry the pig, as it’s quite a long way.”

“We will be there,” said Yozhik …It was agreed that on one of the following evenings, Stashek would come, accompanied by his friend Vladek, and the whole group would go together to carry out the small robbery. … After Yula’s brother left, we continued to sit and drink with the two women. … Yanka and Yula were surprised that we had never heard of Pan Folka. “He’s famous. He’s the greatest burglar in the whole area. Even before the war, the authorities offered a large prize

for anyone who could lead to his capture. He's always the commander," said Yanka enthusiastically. …

"I'll tell you about Bronek," said Yula. "That bastard was once a respected man, but he has hot blood, and when the blood rises to his head, he gets involved in brawls. Once, during the wedding in the village, a quarrel broke out. Bronek, was involved, as usual. One of the young men insulted Bronek, and Bronek doesn't like being insulted. He grabbed the young man and cut off his finger with a knife, in front of everyone. The young man who was cut belonged to a rich and powerful family, and Bronek had to leave the area for a long time. After more than half a year, when it seemed as though the incident of the finger had been forgotten, there was another wedding in the village. Bronek arrived …The young man whose finger had been cut off and his family were at the wedding, too. … But during the dancing the family of the young man whose finger had been cut off got up an attacked Bronek … they cut off three fingers of his hand. That night Bronek swore to have his revenge in the family. He waited a long time, until his wounds healed, and then bought a gun and practiced shooting … When he was ready, he set a trap in the forest, near the path leading from the village to Chelm. In the evening, by the light of a full moon, when he saw the family returning from the fair in Chelm, he killed them all—the father, the mother, two sons and the wife of one of them, and two horses. From that day, Bronek has been wanted by the police throughout the area, living in hiding … He became friendly with Folka and now, he is a thief, as well."

We weren't told very much about Vladek, the third in the group or burglars. Yula just said that the guy had been born unlucky and had never succeeded in anything he tried. When he tried to steal chickens, he was caught, beaten, and sent to prison. When he managed to rob a farmer and leave his house with the haul, he had been shot by the farmer and his leg wounded. …

… we had never dreamed that their home was a hideout for burglars and murderers. …

One evening. Stashek and his friend Vladek, who was an older man of about forty with a terrible limp, came to the house, and Yozhik, Monyek and Semmen went out with them to commit the robbery. …

The five arrived back late that night, laden with sacks on their backs … "We have geese in the sacks," said Yozhik to the women. … As it turned out, everything had gone well. They reached the farm but decided not to enter the house. Two of the guarded the house and the others entered the pigpen to kill the pig. But the pig got away from them and ran outside. … So they went into the poultry enclosure where the geese were, slaughtered them and put them into the sacks. At this point, the farmer had awakened—perhaps from the honking of the geese—and came outside to see what was going on. Monyek and Vladek, who had been guarding the house, caught him, went into the house with him, ordered his wife and daughter out of bed and made them all lie down on the floor. The farmer was not rich. There weren't many objects of value in his house that had been worth taking. Nevertheless, Vladek and Stashek took everything they could carry—clothing, the farmer's boots, the top of a sewing machine. Stashek suggested that we divide up what they had taken, but Yozhik replied that we could do without the clothes; we would be satisfied with the geese.

The late-night feast that was served was wonderful. The organ meats of the geese were delicious. During the meal, Stashek remarked, "It doesn't matter that tonight wasn't a total success. What is important is that we are a good team and that together we cab do great things. We'll plan the next job, to steal a pig, soon, and this time he won't get away from me." Before a week had passed,

Stashek and Vladek appeared again, ready for action. “Boys, we’re going out on a job,” said Stashek. “And this time, I picked a good farm. There are a few pigs there. One minus is that the farm is inside the village, but the village is close to the forest, and we have an easy walk.” He seemed excited and added, “This time we’ll need the boy.” …

We reached the forest and walked along the outskirts. Stashek stopped, explained that we were close to the village and that this would be our meeting place after the job, whether we had succeeded or failed. He divided up the tasks among us: he, Vladek and Yozhik would go into the pigpen and slaughter the pig; Monyek, Semmen ans I would keep guard on the house. We moved on and passed a few farms that stood at some distance from each other. Although it was still early in the evening, the village was completely silent and we didn’t see the gleam of a light in any of the houses. We stopped by the house which that had been targeted, and Stashek went on ahead to calm the dog—he had a way with them—and after a few minutes he returned and sent Monyek to guard at the back of the house, placed Semmen at the door, and I was to stand at the window. Stashek, Yozhik and Vladek, armed with two rifles, entered the pigpen and we stood guard, holding only sacks in our hands. …

Suddenly I heard steps. I turned and saw someone walking toward the door, where Semmen was standing, his back up against the wall. Semmen jumped on the man with a quick movement, put the sack he had been holding over the man’s head and struggled with him, grasping with both hands. … The man had freed himself, taken out a knife and stabbed Semmen in the back, luckily a superficial wound, and began shouting, “Robbers! Robbers!”

From inside the house, someone had gone up to the attic and was shouting, “Help! Robbers!” At that moment, we heard the chimes of the church. Stashek shot twice in the direction of the attic and the calls for help ceased. He told us to get away, abd we ran in the direction of the forest; behind us was the sound of bells, the shouts of people and the squealing of the pigs that had escaped the pen. …

Twice we had gone out on an important mission and twice we had failed. Getting our hands on a pig was imperative, as it would supply us with meat and oil for the rest of the winter. … All of a sudden Yozhik said, “It’s not too late. I know of a rich farm, isolated, far away from the village, and there are pigs there. We could go there now. We’ve learned from our mistakes. I’m sure that we’ll be able to get hold of a pig; we can’t go home without one.”

Stashek agreed without a moment’s hesitation. We walked for a few more kilometers until we reached the farm. It really did appear to be prosperous. There was a family home, two stories high, its tin roof galvanized, which was a rarity in the area. The yard was very large and contained a granary, shelter for the poultry, and barns. This Vladek and Semmen guarded the house, armed with rifles, and Monyek was with them, unarmed. I had no special job so I went back and forth between them. In the pigpen, there were five medium-sized pigs. This time, Stashek and Yozhik were able to kill a pig quickly and I was sent to bring sacks. I went into the granary, where sacks of grain were piled. I emptied the contents of one of the sacks, and I brought it to the pen, but after everything had been cut up and packed, Stashek and Yozhik decided to kill another pig. I took everything that was packed and ready to a spot some distance from the house, and I was left to stand guard while the four others returned to slaughter another pig. Unlike the first robbery, during which I had been trembling with fear, for some reason I was now calm and relaxed; even though I was guarding

alone, I was not afraid. … When I heard the sudden squeal of a pig and then a return to silence, I knew that the second pig had been killed. A short time later, I saw the others coming toward me.

It was late and we still had fifteen kilometers to walk—with the heavy burden of two slaughtered pigs and a sack full of geese, we couldn't hope to get home by morning. …

We spent the next day eating until we were completely satiated. We were all happy and in good spirits. The night, which had begun as a complete failure, had ended in complete success. Stashek could not stop praising Yozhik, saying again and again that we were his best friends, and he spoke of our operations to come. … Now they decided to find me a purely Polish name … it was unanimous that I be renamed "Bolek." …

… who could have imagined that we would join a band of thieves? Robbery had always seemed to me such an act of cruelty and thieves were monsters, but I had participated in a burglary with no feeling of wrongdoing. In fact, everything had seemed simple and had even given me pleasure. …

And then, late one evening, after we had gone to bed, we heard people outside … Folka, Bronek, with his cut fingers, and Stashek had arrived by surprise … I knew who Bronek was immediately when I saw his right hand, which was missing a finger. He was in his twenties, short, with a constant smile. Pan Folka appeared to be over forty, of medium height, chubby with a small potbelly. He was dressed in a short leather coat and fine quality boots, and, in addition to a rifle, he carried a pistol under his coat. He looked serious and boastful and he gave the impression of complete authority—Bronek and Stashek looked like messenger boys next to him.

… Yozhik quickly became friendly with Folka, and the two sat together in a corner of the room and decided to go out on several robbery jobs in the coming days. …

A few days later after the meeting with Folka and Bronek, the enlarged gang, under the direction of Folka, began to go out on jobs at least once, and sometimes twice a week. The robberies were committed in a wide area … At first I was embarrassed just sitting at home and waiting for my friends to return late at night, relating their experiences and what they had taken in the robbery. Although I wasn't too enthusiastic about stealing, any my health was still bad—my leg hadn't healed, I found it hard to walk, and the scabies were al over my body—I wanted to be an equal partner with my friends in everything they did, good or bad, and not be a child who had everything done for him. So I begged Yozhik to convince Folka to let me join the band, and, in the end, he agreed.

From the first job I took part in with Folka, I could clearly see the difference in the quality of command. You could feel that an experienced man with leadership ability was directing the operation. From the moment we set out, no one felt the need to say anything. Folka led us calmly and with self-confidence. When we reached the house, he quietly gave directions to each of us; his orders were clear and unequivocal, and everything was done quickly. Folka had checked on all the details and, after surrounding the house with guards, he and Yozhik knocked at the door and ordered the people inside to open it. This wasn't done immediately, and Folka gave a signal to Bronek and Stashek, who broke a window with the barrel of a rifle and jumped in, opening the door from the inside and hitting anyone who got in their way. The members of the family were gathered into one corner, and Bronek and Yozhik went through the rooms, checked whether anyone was hiding, returned and reported to Folka that the house was secured.

I looked at the family—a husband, wife, and four children of various ages, and one old man, huddling in the corner and trembling with fear, and a scene passed through my mind: the first days of the war. We were standing in the corner of the room—my mother, my sister, my little brother Yankele and I—huddling together; a German in a brown uniform had his pistol aimed at us, guarding us, and I was trembling with fear …

The job proceeded. The door of the cellar, which was in the floor of the room, was removed and the members of the family were forced down, one by one. Bronek took a gold ring off of the wife's finger and she burst into tears, but wordlessly went down into the cellar. Folka took the farmer aside, spoke to him quietly and abruptly slapped him twice. The farmer led Folka to the next room and the two of them returned with a package of animal skins, and Folka forced him down into the cellar, as well. Everything was done in a few minutes, with perfect organization, like well-oiled machinery. Stashek bridled the horse and hitched it to the wagon, bringing it to the door of the house, and we wandered through the house, taking everything of value, clothes, boots, processed skins, pork steaks, a sack of flour, a few chickens that we managed to catch—and we loaded everything on the farmer's wagon and left as quietly as we had come. The farmer and his family were left in the cellar. We put heavy furniture over the door in the floor. Who knew when the neighbors would discover what had happened and would discover what had happened and would free them from the cellar?

… On the way back, we stopped and Folka asked us what we wanted as our take from the haul. He knew, of course, that we had no need for the family's possessions, and we were satisfied with presents for Yanka and Yula, and with some of the pork. We parted as friends and went home.

Our band carried out one robbery after another among the area farmers. On market days, we used to set up an ambush along the road, close to the forest; when a wagon passed by, coming home from the market, we would jump out, make the people get out and take the wagon with everything in it.

One robbery that horrified me in particular was carried out against one of the richest of the farmers two days before his daughter's wedding. The house was very far and we reached it late at night, but the family in the house had not yet gone to bed. There was light in the house and we could hear the voices of people through the window. The door wasn't locked and we entered the house easily. The house was warm, with odors of freshly baked goods that had just come out of the oven. The whole family was awake, and as we burst in, their ruddy faces paled. As usual, Folka took swift control of everything. After some perfunctory blows, the family was herded into the cellar. Bronek and Stashek were in good humor. Bronek grabbed the bride, pulled her against him and tried to kiss her. The girl resisted and was slapped. The groom tried to defend her, but was also struck and then thrown into the cellar. Pan Folka stood like a proud father watching the antics of his children. Bronek dragged the bride over to a bed that stood in the corner of the room. The girl struggled and shouted, "Take everything, just leave me alone!" But Bronek hit her again, and raped her. Then Stashek raped her, as well.

Sometimes I found justification for the robberies we carried out—why should only the Jews suffer? Let these non-Jews get a taste of our suffering. I saw our deeds as a kind of retribution for the "Polacks" who had helped to destroy the Jews [emphasis added], but I couldn't stomach the cruelty of Bronek and his friend, Stashek, and the suffering of the girl. … I began taking things out of the house, running to and fro insanely.

We emptied the house of everything that had been prepared for the wedding. We loaded crates of excellent vodka onto the wagon, along with sides of smoked meat, baked goods and sweets of all kinds, and we left in a wagon that was filled to capacity. For a long while, I kept hearing the creams and sobs of the bride and reliving the scene of Bronek with his pants pulled down.

We came home laden down with treats, but our heats were burdened with terrible feelings. We didn't exchange a word on the way home. We had shamed ourselves. We had seen our partners in the robbery at their cruellest, and we had cooperated in their horrible deeds. With what speed we had passed from one side to the other, from the robbed to the robbers! But we could think of no way to end this partnership before the summer, when we could go back to living in the forests. And, on the other hand, we were living comfortably in our present situation; we had gotten through the hard winter peacefully, in a warm house, eating our fill. And Folka, Bronek and Stashek had treated us as equals—we never heard them use the word "Jew."

The next evening Folka, Bronek and Stashek came to visit, and a party began which went on all night. …

One day, Bronek came to visit and asked Yozhik to come with him to a party he had been invited to. … Yozhik returned that night and said that when they had arrived, they had been received warmly and given drinks, but there was something suspicious in the way the guests were behaving—he noticed that they were waiting for other guests. "And my heart told me," he related, "that something was going to happen. I warned Bronek and we left. The others tried to block our way, but he threatened them with Bronek's rifle and with the knife I had, and we managed to get away."

Some time later, we found out that the Polish *Armia Krajowa*—right-wing partisans who were operating against the Germans … had had a unit operating in our area that had issued a death sentence for Bronek, and a few days later, they trapped him. They had given him a short field trial and hanged him on a tree along the main road … and posted a sign on his body announcing that he was being punished for "treason to the homeland." When we heard that Bronek had been killed, we fled into the forest. We were afraid that his murderers had managed to force him into giving information about us before he was hanged.

Two days passed—and then Stashek burst into the house and told us with tears in his eyes that Pan Folka had been killed. … he said that he had gone to meet Folka at the home of one of his mistresses, but when he had reached her village, he had been told that at dawn, policemen from the neighboring towns had arrived and had surrounded the house, calling on him to come out and give himself up. Folka opened fire on the police. There was a long battle, and at some point Folka jumped from the back window of the house and tried to get away, but the house was completely surrounded. As he ran, he was was shot, wounded and fell to the ground. He continued to fight, wounded, until he had used up his bullets—but he reserved the last bullet for himself. He shot himself in the head, and died. Four policemen had been killed. It was later said that one of his mistresses had informed on him in retribution for having left her.

We were in shock. Folka had been killed! It had only been a week since Bronek had been killed! Stashek was miserable. Folka and Bronek had been his only friends on earth. He was on bad terms with everyone in his village—everyone hated him—and now he didn't have anywhere to go. He went from village to village, took part in every brawl and got himself into every dangerous situation

> he could. … in the end, the Ukrainians caught him and threw him alive into a burning house. He was burned to death and no one cared. After Folka and Bronek had dies, Stashek had become superfluous and we, who had wanted to be rid of them all and to sever our relationship with the thieves, were freed from them all within a month. Our feeling toward them were mixed. On the one hand, they had always been fair with us … and we had even felt friendly toward them; but on the other hand, their merciless cruelty had greatly troubled us—they treated human life as if it were worthless.[116]

Kalmen Wewryk provides a fascinating description of his travails as he roamed the countryside in the vicinity of his home town of Chełm after his escape from the Sobibór death camp. His account gives us considerable insight into the mentality of the peasants, their generosity, their reaction to violent robberies, and the turmoil, suspicion, and fear that permeated everyday life under the German occupation.

> My running brought me to a Polish hamlet. A Polish-speaking man with a gun accosted me. I started to cry. He turned out to be a decent man, however. He took pity on me, and told me where to hide. I followed his directions, went into a forest and made a hide-out. … I was there for about 2 weeks …
>
> I was, however, tormented by my intense desire to find and join the partisans, and this desire pushed me to leave that forest. … So, hiding in ditches, I left that forest refuge … I saw a farmer in a wagon driving down a dirt road, so I approached him. … I asked this farmer, "Do you know where I can find partisans?" … He said, "Go ahead over there. The hamlet is called Teryesheen [Teresin]. An old woman living in the first house will help you. Some Jews are hiding in the hamlet. …
>
> When I found the house I noticed an old woman sitting by the fire. She asked me who I was. I told her, "I'm a Jew. I've been told you can help me find the partisans. I want to join them." The house was a very primitive one and the interior reeked of poverty. The old woman asked me all about my background, my experiences. … A 16 or 17 year old girl came over to me and started to talk to me. She seemed to be a typical peasant girl, but I figured out after a while that she was Jewish. I spoke to her in Yiddish, but she answered only in Polish. She evidently refused to believe my story and, as she told me later, she thought I was a provocateur, an agent sent to ferret her out. I still had my family photos in my pocket … She now believed me. She gave me some potatoes to eat and told me that I must not be seen in that house. She led me to another area of the hamlet and hid me in an abandoned stable. She said that she would, that very night, contact her father Moishe and tell him about me.
>
> Late that night Moishe and his brother came to the stable. They told me that they were part of a family of 5 Jews in hiding. … Everybody in the hamlet knew that this family was hiding, but nobody knew where and they didn't want to know where. Moishe told me how they were loved in

[116] Freiberg, *To Survive Sobibor*, 301–77. Tellingly, after the arrival of the Soviet army, Monyek Serchuk enlisted in the Soviet-backed Polish army in order "to fight right-wing nationalist underground forces," i.e., the independentist anti-Soviet underground loyal to the government in exile, and was killed in action, while other Jewish survivors in Chełm entered the ranks of the security police. Ibid., 392, 415, 416, 426.

that hamlet—there were decent people there. Moishe gave me a roll of bread to eat and told me directly that I couldn't hide with them. They had problems enough of their own without a "*Sobiboru*" [the nickname given by the peasants to Wewryk, an escapee from Sobibór] attracting more attention to them. … Moishe wished me good luck and slipped out. … I learned that they remained alive by stealing at night, "visiting" neighboring hamlets. …

I reached a nearby hamlet and approached a house to beg for food. This was a hamlet inhabited by Baptists … So every day I went to a different peasant and begged for food. They gave me small amounts of food and begged me not tell the neighbors. Every single one of them was living in terror … Their terror was contagious—I was afraid to stay in that hamlet so I returned to Teryesheen and hid in another ruined Jewish house. At night, when I went to beg for food, I ran into somebody from Moishe's family. … He said that the peasants were only out to scare me and chase me away … They were afraid that Germans would come and burn the whole hamlet to the ground. …

As I plodded along I heard wood being cut far off in the forest. … I saw a young boy, dressed like a typical peasant lad. He looked to be around 13 or 14 years old. He became very, very frightened when I drew near. … I started to speak to him in Polish, and as I spoke I saw him becoming more and more uneasy. Then, on impulse, I switched to Yiddish; the color returned to his face and he smiled. …

The boy returned a short while later and led me to a deep hidden bunker made of wood. … There were 2 small children with her in the bunker. The boy I had found, Mendele, carried a rifle as did his 16 year old brother who was away at the time. There was ham and pork in that bunker; it was full of food. The mother told me to take whatever food I wanted; she was obviously afraid of me. She asked me very nervously how I had managed to find her son. She wanted to know if somebody had told me about this family in the woods. …

As if to show me that she was not a vulnerable woman, she told me that she had a husband nearby, named Isack. When she said that it rang a bell. He went around with a 10 or 12 man band to rob food, clothing, etc., from the area peasants. I had heard of him because many of the peasants spoke of "*Nasha Isack*" (our Isack). He used to rob the peasants white. He had a horrible reputation among them. They used to tell me: "*Sobiboru*, let Isack ask us for food—we'll give him! But why does he come with his gang and rob us like that? He's a bloody thief!" Others had told me: "Our Isack, our friend from the pre-war years—how could he come and rob us at gunpoint like that?" Isack came from that area and he was well-known to all. Whatever his gang could steal they stole. His wife, as if to justify her husband and her sons, told me that from time to time they went on punitive expeditions to area peasants who had betrayed Jews. Her older son had returned to the bunker by now, so I told him and his brother that I wanted to join them. They told me straight off that they didn't want me. … The woman told me to take as much food as I wanted. They had enough to spare, she said. I took some food from her but I didn't want to overload myself. ... So I said goodbye to all of them, thanked them for the food and left. …

I found a hut in the woods. … When the food was finished I went out at night to return to the bunker. I found it easily, but it was completely deserted. … The bunker had obviously been abandoned. …

So I resumed wandering, searching for food. …

After five or six days I ran into Isack's sons in the woods. They were well armed. I told them that I had gone to look for them in their bunker and had found it abandoned and deserted. I begged them to let me come to them from time to time, I promised that I would not abuse their hospitality … However, they absolutely refused to tell me where their new bunker was. They told me that they had abandoned the old bunker the night after I had come to it. They hadn't trusted me. This is how it was then—everybody looked out for his or her own skin. … This is what the war did to ordinary people—turned them into egotistical and suspicious animals. I begged the two boys for a gun but they laughed at me. Finally, one said that, for gold, he would give me a gun. I still had a few pieces of my wife's jewelry, so I gave them the jewelry and they sold me a rifle. When they got up to leave I wanted to accompany them but they refused to allow it.

I returned to the straw hut, spent several days there, and started to make the rounds of the hamlets where I had previously been given bread. Now that I had the rifle I even went to a hamlet where I had been refused bread. I smeared my face with black dust, as a disguise. And yet some peasants recognized me immediately. They called me "*Sobiboru*." I would point the rifle through the window but it didn't seem to bring me success. Some of the peasants laughed at me, even though the rifle was pointed straight at them. One said: "Ah, *Sobiboru,* we know you! What are you pointing a gun at us for? You wouldn't shoot us—you know that." I returned, hungry, to my hiding place.

The next night I returned, without the rifle, to that same hamlet. That peasant who had spoken to me the previous night, said: "*Sobiboru,* you're lucky! If you would have returned with that damn rifle, I'd kill you!" Here's a chunk of bread. Eat in peace. We are Baptists here and we have sympathy for a fellow human being in distress. If you come with a gun we won't give you a thing and we'll defend ourselves. But if you beg us for bread we'll give you. Even with your smeared face we knew it was you! And we know you're not a murderer. But bandit robbers we don't like. We know how to handle them." He even gave me a big glass of milk. I was very bedraggled and weak, so he had pity on me. I thanked him profusely and left.

About a week later I had a particularly settling experience. I was holed up in the straw hut, fast asleep, when I felt myself being prodded awake by a rifle butt. I looked up and saw Isack's two sons glaring down at me. The 16 year old said to me: "OK, *Sobiboru*, where's the rifle?" I told him that I had bought it from them fair and square, and I had paid for it with my wife's precious jewelry. … The two boys laughed at my pleading. I then told them that I had left the rifle with a peasant for safekeeping. They didn't believe me, and the 16 year-old said: "Mendele, search the place." It took Mendele less than 5 minutes to find the rifle while his brother kept me covered with his own rifle. They laughed when they found the gun and dashed out of the straw hut. I was once again defenseless. And the way I had been treated like that by fellow Jews pained me greatly. … Besides, I had heard that, to be accepted by partisans, one had to have one's own rifle. So that rifle represented my passport to the partisans … And now I had lost that passport. This incident left me deeply depressed. …

I saw a *Kolonia* house [loosely grouped houses] near a forest and went over to an elderly peasant standing near it. When I told him that I had come from the death camp Sobibor he became very frightened … He was a poor man but he brought some bread and water … He told me that his son-in-law was a shoemaker so I showed him my ripped shoes. The old peasant took my shoes and said

> he would take them to his son-in-law, who lived nearby. He left and returned some hours later with my shoes repaired. I kissed him from gratitude. … [Wewryk stayed with the peasant in the attic of his cottage but looked for food to supplement his diet.]
>
> Every night, when I went hunting for food, I asked the peasants if they knew anything of partisans in the area. I once came into a house and there were some armed Jews there who had come for food. These armed Jews didn't want to tell me where they were hiding out. They didn't want to have anything to do with me. … I begged these armed Jews to allow me to join them; I asked for their mercy, but it was all to no avail.
>
> The peasants of the next hamlet I went to, Aleezoof [Alojzów] … gave me milk to drink and a large loaf of bread. …
>
> I moved on to a hamlet I had visited before, Aleezoof. … The inhabitants of the first house I approached told me they had no food to spare. I went to a house that was 3 houses removed from that one and a woman there gave me a piece of bread and a big glass of milk. … I asked her if she knew of partisans in the vicinity. She replied that she'd heard of a partisan band either in that hamlet or the next one—she wasn't sure, she didn't know exactly where they were.
>
> My spirits were high when I left that woman. I was close now! Revenge was near! … as I left the hamlet and made my way to a nearby forest, far away, a group of people, a mass of men. … suddenly a figure shot up in front of me and barked out: "Halt or I shoot!" …
>
> The partisans were occupying a whole house there. Some men came for me and shoved me into a small room which was heavily guarded. I was continuously interrogated and had to repeat everything … my later accounts were checked against my earlier ones for inconsistencies. All the while guns were pointed at me. After a while I learned that I had stumbled into a group of "official" Soviet partisans, under the leadership of Dadia Pyetcha [Diadia Petia].
>
> After several days a doctor came to see me. He was Jewish and spoke Yiddish. … When he "examined" me, he conversed in Yiddish with me. He was checking on the authenticity of my story. … People were very suspicious of each other at that time and these partisans were particularly wary of infiltrators.[117]

As Kalmen Wewryk's account demonstrates, it would be erroneous to think that fugitive Jews resorted to robbing Poles, mostly impoverished farmers, at gunpoint only when they had no other means of getting provisions. Stanisław (Shlomo) Szmajzner's group of escapees from Sobibór entered into their first farmhouse by force brandishing a gun and pretending to be partisans.[118] Other escapees also resorted to force to obtain food from farmers.[119] A few days after their escape from Sobibór, Esther Terner (later

[117] Wewryk, *To Sobibor and Back*, 70–71, 72–73, 76–79, 81, 83, 88–89.

[118] Szmajzner, *Inferno em Sobibor,* 286. After a run in with some bandits, Szmajzner and his two companions, Jankiel and Majer, found refuge with Józef Albiniak, a Polish farmer in the village of Tarnawa Duża near Turobin. Ibid., 296–301.

[119] Teresa Prekerowa mentions the following testimonies: Icchak Lichtman, Salomon (Shlomo) Podchlebnik, Michał Knopfmacher, Hela Felenbaum, and Yehuda (Leon) Lerner. See Prekerowa, "Stosunek ludności polskiej do żydowskich uciekinierów z obozów zagłady w Treblince, Sobiborze i Bełżcu w świetle relacji żydowskich i polskich,"

Raab), Samuel (Shmul) Lerer and Avrum (Abram) Kohn chanced on a farmhouse near the forest, and approached it to ask for food. This was the first time they had done something like this. They did so with trepidation and did not let their guard down even for a minute. As they discovered, these were not prosperous farms (like those in Western Europe), and the inhabitants lived in a state of constant fear. Yet despite their initial succcess, the Jewish fugitives soon changed their ways. They simply did not trust the "primitive" peasants and did not want to take any unnecessary risks, so they resorted to terror tactics.

> The two men waited at the side of hut, while Esther knocked on the door. It was soon opened by an old farmer. "Can you help us, please?" Esther pleaded desperately.
>
> "How many are you?" the farmer asked.
>
> "Three. Two men and myself."
>
> "Did anyone see you coming here?"
>
> "No," Esther said. "We just came out of the woods nearby."
>
> The farmer looked around to see if anyone was watching. "Okay. Come inside," he said quickly. "There's no one here, but my son and I."
>
> Esther walked in and looked around the small, one-room hut. A cow stood at one end of the kitchen, and behind some curtains in the corner were the beds where the man and his son slept. The farmer led them to the table and invited the three to sit down.
>
> "You must be from Sobibor [Sobibór]," he guessed. When Esther nodded, he added, "It's incredible what you people did there. You did well. Very well."
>
> Esther, Samuel, and Avrum exchanged glances. They were surprised to discover that their host approved of their actions.
>
> "Can we have some water?" Esther asked.
>
> "Certainly." The farmer hurriedly brought a bucket full of water to the table. Esther gulped down several cups one after the other, trying to quench her overwhelming thirst.
>
> "I'd love to serve you a regular meal," the farmer said, "bur I can't right now. Today is Sunday, and my son and I always go to church. If we don't show up, there will be many questions. Let me give you some bread and milk, and my son will take you to the barn outside. When we come back, we'll bring you in here again. I'll try my best to help you then."
>
> The three could hardly believe their good fortune. Not only had they happened upon a farmer who was trul decent and kind, nut he was even offering to serve them an entire meal!
>
> The farmer gave them two loaves of bread and a bottle of milk. His son led them outside to the barn, and they sat down on a pile of straw. They quickly divided the food that the gracious farmer had provided and wolfed it down hungrily. As they munched on the bread, they heard the farmer and his son leave the farm with a horse and wagon.
>
> By midday, the two men had still not returned. The three didn't know how far the nearest church was, and they realized that the trip to the church and back could last almost an entire day. Still, as the hours passed, they couldn't help having some doubts.

Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu–Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej, vol. 35 (1993): 109.

"Who knows if they really went to church?" Samuel said. "They may have gone to summon the Gestapo."

"You're probably right," Avrum agreed. "They'll be here before long and arrest us."

Although Esther realized that they might indeed be in danger, she was too tired to move. It was such a relief to lie on the dry straw after spending several days on the wet forest ground.

"What will happen, will happen," she announced. "All the muscles in my body are aching, and I must rest. Besides, there *is* a slight possibility that the farmer was being truthful, and if so, I want to wait for that meal that he promised to serve. Do whatever you like, but I'm not moving anywhere. I'm staying right here."

"Perhaps you're right," Samuel said skeptically. "I'm not so sure, but I think I'll stay, too."

It was late afternoon when they finally spotted the farmer's wagon in the distance. As it came closer, the three let out a sigh of relief when they saw that it was not accompanied by any other vehicles. There were no Gestapo or Nazi soldiers following the farmer back to his house.

When they reached the farm, the two men went into their little hut. Only after it was completely dark outside did the farmer's son finally come out to fetch them. "Come on," he said amiably. "We've prepared some food for you."

When Esther, Samuel, and Avrum walked in, their mouths watered at the sight of the food that lay on the table. There was bread, milk, and a thick *borscht* that had cabbage and other vegetables in it.

"Sit down. Eat," the farmer said with a smile.

They did not need a second invitation. After the months in Sobibor and the last few days in the forest, it seemed almost incredible to be sitting down at a table and eating a meal like regular human beings. …

"Thank you. You are very kind," Esther said. "Before we go, though, I must take care of my injury." [Her face had been wounded by a German bullet during her escape from Sobibór—*M.P.*]

The farmer gave Esther a bucket of water. …

"You must put something on that gash," the farmer said to Esther … "You can't just leave it untreated. I don't have any medication, but I can give you some lard from a pig that was recently slaughtered."

"Lard? From a pig?" asked Esther, trying to hide her disgust. It was obviously used as a primitive form of treatment, but Esther was repulsed at the idea of putting some on her face.

"We use it to treat lacerations," the farmer explained. "It always works wonders."

Esther realized that she had to do something to help the cut heal. She couldn't risk letting it become infected. So stifling any words of protest, she let the farmer apply some to her would. Surprisingly, it did work remarkably well and the area never became infected.

When they were ready to leave, the farmer packed up some cheese, a couple of onions, a bottle of milk, and several loaves of bread. He gave it to the three grateful runaways and ordered his son to take them into the woods. …

The farmer's son took them some distance into the forest and wished them good luck before turning back. The three walked on for a little while, but soon they had to stop and find a hiding place to spend the day. They resumed their trek on Monday night and then again on Tuesday.

By Wednesday night they had depleted their food supply, and they decided to knock on another farmer's door and ask for food. They waited until they found a secluded farmhouse that was not

surrounded by other huts. They agreed to present themselves as partisans, hoping that the farmer would be too afraid to argue with them.

Esther had a large flashlight in her pocket that she had taken with her from Sobibor. A short chain was attached to the flashlight, and it had to be pulled repeatedly for the bulb to light up. Much like a lawnmower, it made a grinding noise as it started up.

With the two men beside her, Esther knocked loudly at the door. Although her heart was racing in fear, she tried to put a ruthless, self-assured expression on her face. She kept her hand in her pocket, and when the farmer opened the door, she moved the flashlight around to make the bulge obvious. She pulled on the chain several times, frightening the man with its loud sound.

"Please, don't shoot! Don't shoot!" the farmer begged.

"We need some food," Esther said gruffly.

"Yes, yes. Just a moment."

As he handed them some bread and vegetables, Esther asked for directions, again giving the name of a village …

Esther and the two men continued on their journey, trying to move as quickly as they could. …

Because Esther wanted to be absolutely certain that she had come to the right place, she decided to knock on the tenant's door.

Esther rapped loudly several times until a man opened it. Like before, she put her hand in her pocket and starting up the flashlight. "I'm with a big partisan group," she said harshly. "We won't hurt you. We just have something to settle with your landlord. Where is the owner? Is he at the farm across the street?"

"N-No," the man stuttered. "His old mother lives there. Sh-She's senile. He comes here every two weeks to visit and bring her provisions."

"Is that so?" Esther asked suspiciously. "Are you telling the truth?"

"Yes, yes. I am not lying. Please believe me." He looked at her fearfully. "Wait one moment," he said, trying to placate her. "Let me bring you some bread."

"When he returned with the promised food, Esther eagerly grabbed it out of his hands. The man closed the door, and she rejoined Samuel and Avrum. …

After dark, Esther and the men agreed to leave the farm and scavenge for food.

They left the barn and walked down the dirt road to one of the neighboring farmhouses. When they knocked at the door, it was opened by a small, elderly woman.

"Please, do not hurt me," she pleaded fearfully. "Here, let me give you some bread and a bottle of milk."

Esther took the food and thanked the woman. The three made their way back to the barn and again climbed up to the loft. Their mouths watered in expectation as they sat down and prepared to eat their humble meal.[120]

Shlomo Alster, who joined up with Soviet partisans after escaping from Sobibór, recalled that there was no shortage of food while he was with the partisans. The armed partisans would descend on villages and

[120] Shaindy Perl, *Tell the World: The Story of the Sobibor Revolt* (Lakewood, New Jersey: Israel Bookshop, 2004), 167–72, 176.

take from the farmers whatever food and possessions they required, and took in great quantities.[121] Itzhak Lichtman, who joined up with some Jewish fugitives and partisans after escape from Sobibór, clearly identified the sequence of events, and cause of retaliation by Ukrainian and Polish "bandits," in the vicinity of the Parczew forests:

> Life in the underground was not easy. We succeeded in buying some rifles, but we used them to frighten peasants and force them to give us food. We were always assailed by Ukrainian and Polish bandits.[122]

Not just a few, but hundreds of farmers were robbed, often repeatedly, in any given area of the countryside. Jewish gangs could be equally ruthless in pursuit of supplies. Shiye Golderg described the escapades of a young Jew from Majdan Tatarski, in the Lublin district, who met his end at the hands of some desperate local peasants:

> This Srulik was very adventurous. He thought that, with his pistol, he would conquer the world. I couldn't go along with him. He was reckless, else he didn't know that by taking things from the farmers at gunpoint caused them to hate the Jews … The farmers, if left alone, would give you a crust of bread or at least a drink of water. They might drive you away, but not hurt you … Srulik committed so many evil acts against the farmers that they finally waylaid and killed him.[123]

A Polish account from the village of Janowice, just east of Lublin, reports that in the summer of 1942, a married couple en route to Janów by horse cart were stopped by a band of Jews who shot the husband, raped the wife (she was left unconscious in the forest), and stole their horse.[124] A nun from a displaced convent located in Łążek Zaklikowski near Zaklików recalled the arrival of a group of Jewish partisans who abused the nuns and priest.[125] Is it little wonder that partisans and forest dwellers developed a reputation as robbers and that the local population lived in fear of their nocturnal visits?

Rather than ask for food, which Jewish memoirs show to have been a viable option,[126] a group of Jewish escapees from Treblinka variously pretended to be, somewhat transparently, both "Polish partisans" and

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[121] Testimony of Schlomo Alster, Internet: <http://www.sobiborinterviews.nl/en/interviewees/2-profielen/15-schlomo-alster>.

[122] Novitch, *Sobibor*, 85.

[123] Goldberg, *The Undefeated*, 145.

[124] Account of Piotr N., dated January 18, 2008 (in the author's possession).

[125] Ewa Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach: Udział żeńskich zgromadzeń zakonnych w akcji ratowania dzieci żydowskich w Polsce w latach 1939–1945* (Lublin: Clio, 2001; Lublin: Gaudium, 2004), 190.

[126] Examples of assistance received from farmers and railway guards by escapees from Treblinka and from trains headed there are plentiful, despite the manhunts carried out by the Germans and Ukrainian guards looking for Jews and the death penalty facing those Poles who extended any form of assistance to Jews. Short-term help was particularly

frequent. Of the approximately 200 prisoners who managed to break out of the death camp during the revolt on August 2, 1943, about 100 were still alive at the end of the war thanks to assistance received from Poles. According to three separate testimonies by Jewish escapees from the death camps of Treblinka and Sobibór, they "walked about the villages" where they were "known to everybody," including the farm-hands and school children, without being denounced. See Teresa Prekerowa, "Stosunek ludności polskiej do żydowskich uciekinierów z obozów zagłady w Treblince, Sobiborze i Bełżcu w świetle relacji żydowskich i polskich," *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu–Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* vol. 35 (1993): 100–14, translated as 110–14, translated as "The Attitude of the Polish Population Towards Jewish Escapees from the Treblinka, Sobibór, and Bełżec Death Camps in Light of Jewish and Polish Testimonies," in Chodakiewicz, Muszyński, and Styrna, *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold?,* 97–116. See also Mark Paul, "The Rescue of Jewish Escapees from the Treblinka Death Camp," in ibid., 117–37. In spite of the death penalty for the slightest Polish assistance to Jews, local Polish peasants helped Samuel Willenberg on no less than nine separate occasions in the first days after his escape from Treblinka. See Samuel Willenberg, *Surviving Treblinka* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell in association with the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, 1989), 143–48. Another Jewish escapee from the Treblinka death camp recalled the help he received from peasants: "I was free. I walked to a village. … I knocked to ask for bread. The peasants looked at me in silence. 'Bread, bread.' They saw my red hands, torn jacket, worn-out slippers, and handed me some hard, gray crusts. A peasant woman, huddled in shawls, gave me a bowl of hot milk and a bag. We didn't talk: my body had turned red and blue from the blows and the cold, and my clothes, everything proclaimed *Jew!* But they gave me bread. Thank you Polish peasants. I slept in a stable near the animals, taking a little warm milk from the cow in the morning. My bag filled with bread." See Martin Gray, with Max Gallo, *For Those I Loved* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1972), 178. Abraham Bomba and his colleagues, Yankel Eyzner (Jacob Eisner), Moshe Rapaport (Rappaport), Yechiel Berkovitsh (Berkowicz), and Yechezkal Kofman (Cooperman), were assisted by several peasants in the area after their escape from Treblinka: "Lying in the field, we saw a peasant in a wagon go by. We called him over and told him that we had escaped from Treblinka and, perhaps, it would be possible if he could take us into his barn. … In the end, we convinced him and he showed us his barn in the distance and we went inside. But he doesn't know of anything. And if they would ask, we should say that we sneaked in. That is what we did. We were there the entire day. At night, the head of the village came and told us that he would lead us out of the village and show us the way to go. He indeed took us to the main road, and we traveled all night until the morning. In the morning, we came to a village. We saw, in front of a house, that a woman opens the door. We went over to the house and the woman told us to come in. We were there for a week. The second week, we were at the friend of the peasant in the same village. I remember this peasant's name: Piotr Supel. … This was in the village Zagradniki [Zagrodniki] near Ostrovek Vengravski [Ostrówek Węgrowski]. The peasant traveled with us to Warsaw." See A.L. Bombe, "My Escape from Treblinka," *Czentochov: 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), 57ff. After his escape from Treblinka, Chil Rajchman was assisted by a several farmers in the vicinity of the camp before making his way back to Warsaw, where he received help from Poles in and near the city. See Chil Rajchman, *Treblinka: A Survivor's Memory, 1942–1943* (London: MacLehose/Quercos, 2011), 106–11; oral history interview with Chiel Rajchman, December 7, 1988, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C. oral history interview with Chiel Rajchman, December 7, 1988, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C. Hershl Sperling was part of a group of three or four Jews who succeeded in getting about twelve kilometres away from the camp. They turned to a family of Polish farmers who fed them and helped them escape towards Warsaw. See Mark S. Smith, *Treblinka Survivor: The Life and Death of Hershl Sperling* (Stroud, United Kingdom: The History Press, 2010), 251–52. Viliam Fried, a native of Czechoslovakia, escaped with some other Jews as their train was pulling into Treblinka. He and a Jew from Poland ran together and took shelter in a stable where they were discovered by the proprietor's son, who fed them and allowed them to stay for a day. They were then directed to a person in the next village, a railroad worker who was in the underground and helped escapees. Fried went alone and was allowed to stay in this man's stable and was given food. When he left he was given a shovel to allow him to pass as a worker. He went from village to village until he arrived in Międzyrzec Podlaski. On the way, a village woman, who gave him food, warned him of the presence of German gendarmes who were looking for escapees, and pointed him in a different direction. See the oral history interview with Viliam Fried, April 10, 1992, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., Internet: <http://collections.ushmm.org/artifact/image/h00/00/h0000072.pdf>. David Lieberman, from Częstochowa, managed to escape from Treblinka by cutting a hole in the fence with pliers which he had stolen. He and his friend ran all night until they stopped in a field where they encountered a woman who recognized them as escapees and warned them to go farther away because the Germans were making their rounds to requisition milk and eggs from the farmers. They walked farther and arrived at a farmhouse: "the woman was very nice to me. She came out and walked with me and my friend almost for an hour, showed us to go to another road. Closed road where the police is not there. She was very nice. She came with a little baby on her back and walked and then she left us … she took her cross out and made a prayer, God should be with you. And we went on our way." They walked another mile or two and entered another farmhouse. "We told the farmer we want to go to a railroad station. He says he's going to take us, but he's not going to walk with us … [but] a distance away. And he opened a barn. He says, 'In case the SS comes, you just walked in

yourself. I had nothing to do [with it].' So he walked with us. … And we followed him. Finally, he came to a small little village. The village name was Sadowne." The fugitives then gave the villager some money with which to purchase train tickets, which he did, and they boarded the train for Warsaw. They received more help from farmers in the vicinity of Częstochowa, their hometown. See the oral history interview with David Lieberman, July 10, 1990, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., Internet: <http://collections.ushmm.org/artifact/image/h00/00/h0000132.pdf>. A Jew who had escaped from Treblinka and managed to return to Warsaw recalled: "The peasants near Treblinka didn't want to shelter me even for just one night. They happily gave me food and even money, but they wouldn't hear of my spending the night, because the Ukrainians who were permanently stationed in Treblinka often showed up … The local peasants told of things that were unbelievable but unfortunately true. … Everyone I talked to near Treblinka spoke of nothing else. They all told the same thing, in horror. The ones closer to Warsaw let me stay the night, but there was no question of staying there permanently." See Michał Grynberg, ed., *Words To Outlive Us: Voices From the Warsaw Ghetto* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2002), 210. Despite the massive German hunt for escaped Jews, some found shelter with farmers living nearby. The family of Jan and Aleksandra Góral, who owned a farm near Kosów Lacki, sheltered eleven Jews in their barn for some twenty months. Among those rescued were the Koenig (Koenigstein) family, the brothers Abram and Mendel Rzepka, and three escapees from Treblinka. See Tammeus and Cukierkorn, *They Were Just People*, 105–12. Szymon Goldberg recalled the assistance of the farmers near Wyszków who took him in: "There were good people, they helped, they gave me food." See Prekerowa, "Stosunek ludności polskiej do żydowskich uciekinierów z obozów zagłady w Treblince, Sobiborze i Bełżcu w świetle relacji żydowskich i polskich," *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu–Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, vol. 35 (1993): 108. Julian and Stanisława Serafinowicz sheltered Shlomo (Szloma) Helman and Yeshayahu (Szyja) Warszawski after their escape from Treblinka, on a farm in Mostówka, a small village south of Wyszków. See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, 703. After wandering in forests for about a month following his escape from Treblinka, Josef Czarny was warmly received by Polish farmers near Parysów, northwest of Garwolin. Szymon and Helena Całka sheltered and cared for Czarny as well as two Jewish women. See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 4: *Poland*, Part 1, 128; Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous*, 205. After escaping from Treblinka, Szymon Goldberg made his way to the villagers of Kukawki, Basinów and Kiciny, just beyond Łochów, where the farmers protected and fed him. See the account of Szymon Goldberg, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/656; Marek Jóźwik, Teresa Mahorowska, and Apolonia Umińska, eds., *Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz: Archiwum ŻIH IN-B, zespół 301, Nr. 1–900 / Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue: Jewish Historical Institute Archives, Record Group 301, No. 1–900* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny Instytut Naukowo-Badawczy, 1998), vol. 1, 227. Abraham (Abram) Kolski was part of a group of prisoners who escaped during the uprising in Treblinka. All nine fugitives, among them Gustaw Boraks, Heniek Klein, Henoch Brener (Henry Brenner), Stasiek Kohen, Albert Kohen, and Erich (Shaya) Lachman, were hidden for the remainder of the war on a farm in Orzeszówka, a village south of the camp, belonging to Julian Pogorzelski and his elderly father Julian Pogorzelski. Throughout the entire period the Pogorzelskis provided the fugitives with all their needs, cared for their health, and obtained medicine for them when they fell ill. (Heniek Klein had tuberculosis and passed away in the hiding place.) When the fugitives emerged from hiding as the Soviet front passed through, their presence became known to the neighbours but no one betrayed them when the Germans returned for a brief period of time. See the oral history interview with Abraham Kolski, March 29, 1990, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C; Testimony of Abram Kolski, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Interview Code 49970; testimony of Gustaw Boraks, Yad Vashem Archives; Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, 625–26. After his escape from Treblinka during the revolt in August 1943, Isadore Helfing was first taken in by a farmer, and then stayed with a partisan group until Soviet forces liberated the area. See the oral history interview with Isadore Helfing, September 3, 1992, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C. Henryk Poswolski, who was injured while escaping during the revolt in Treblinka and made his way back to Warsaw, was sheltered by Feliks and Marta Widy-Wirski in Podkowa Leśna and nursed back to health. See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, 863. According to one eyewitness, some Jewish escapees from Treblinka were accepted into a Home Army unit in the vicinity of Ceranów near Kosów Lacki. See Józef Górski, *Na przełomie dziejów* (Siedlce: Siedleckie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 2006). Yosef Haezrahi-Bürger, one of the "operatives" of Jewish organizations who, after the war, tracked down Jewish children sheltered by Christian Poles described the fate of two Jewish teenagers who managed to escape from a train on its arrival in Treblinka and were sheltered in a village near the camp: "in one of the transports, two siblings—a boy and a girl—were among the Jews in the wagons that reached the Treblinka village railroad station before they could be moved to the extermination camp. While they were waiting, the people in the wagon broke through the wooden floor and several escaped. The guards chased and fired at them but the two children managed to reach a house in the village and hide there, terrifying the owner, whose own children were playing in the yard. When she saw the guards pursuing them, the woman directed the guards to her own house. The guards shot the woman's children, assuming that they were the fugitive Jewish youngsters who were hiding in the house. The terrified woman regained her composure quickly and decided that if this was her fate, she had no choice but to raise the Jewish youngsters. The operative did not the source of the information

about these children after the war but was told that emissaries had been sent to remove them several times, failing each time. In 1947, when he was asked to deal with their removal, the children were sixteen and seventeen years old. They knew they were Jewish but refused to leave their 'mother,' as they called their rescuer, since she had lost her own children and had saved them. The mother left the decision up to them: both persisted in their refusal and remained in the village." See Emunah Nachmany Gafny, *Dividing Hearts: The Removal of Jewish Children from Gentile Families in Poland in the Immediate Post-Holocaust Years* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2009), 202–3, 281. Two train jumpers from a transport to Treblinka joined at least seven other Jews sheltered by the Postek family, farmers in Stoczek Węgrowski, from the summer and fall of 1942. Stanisław Postek, his wife Julianna, and their sons, Wacław and Henryk, were arrested on September 5, 1943 for sheltering Jews. Stanisław Postek and his sons were imprisoned in Warsaw's Pawiak prison. The father was sent to Auschwitz, where he perished in March 1944. The sons were released fro Pawiak in November 1943, but re-arrested the following June. Their mother, Julianna, died on September 6, 1943 as a result of the torture she endured at the hands of German gendarmes in Stoczek Węgrowski. See Aleksandra Namysło and Grzegorz Berendt, eds., *Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2014), 261–62.

Treblinka escapee Samuel Willenberg stresses the risks involved in assisting Jewish fugitives. When a revolt broke out in Treblinka on August 2, 1943, the Germans mobilized their forces (including the Ukrainian camp guards and hundreds of SS soldiers dispatched from Małkinia, Sokołów Podlaski, Kosów Lacki, and Ostrów Mazowiecka) and conducted a thorough search of the entire area, setting up checkpoints on the roads and combing nearby villages and searching villagers' homes. See Willenberg, *Surviving Treblinka*, 25, 143–48; Treblinka Museum, Extermination Camp History: "Defiance and Uprising," Internet: <http://www.treblinka.bho.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=48&Itemid=48>. See Willenberg, *Surviving Treblinka*, 25, 144. Richard Glazer notes that bandit gangs roamed around robbing and posing as partisans, but had "nothing in common with partisans than the name." See Richard Glazer, *Trap With a Green Fence: Survival in Treblinka* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1995), 105. Escapees from Treblinka also had to contend with being stripped of their money by unscrupulous fellow Jews. See Alexander Donat, ed., *The Death Camp Treblinka: A Documentary* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979), 141–42. After the war, when some local people started to dig up the site of the Treblinka camp looking for gold and other valuables, anti-Communist Polish partisan units carried out punitive expeditions against the robbers. See Wacław Piekarski, *Obwód Armii Krajowej Sokołów Podlaski "Sęp", "Proso" 1939–1944* (Warsaw: n.p., 1991); Mariusz Bechta and Leszek Żebrowski, eds., *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne na Podlasiu*, vol. 2: *W walce z systemem komunistycznym w latach 1944–1952* (Siedlce: Związek Żołnierzy Narodowych Sił Zbrojnych, 1998), 201; Kazimierz Krajewski and Tomasz Łabuszewski, *"Łupaszka" "Młot" "Huzar": Działalność 5 i 6 Brygady Wileńskiej AK (1944–1952)* (Warsaw: Volumen, 2002), 255; Kazimierz Krajewski, „Wykreowana historia," *Nasz Dziennik*, March 5–6, 2011. (French peasants were also known to dig into the lavatories of deported Jews in search of gold.) Soviet troops stationed in nearby towns played a leading role in these sordid activities by forcing villagers to plant explosives, landmines and bombs that were detonated to create deep hollows; unearthed Jewish corpses were then robbed of any valuables. This was done without interference from the local Communist security officials, who also likely benfitted from the gravedigging. The number of Jews among the security officials in the county seat in Siedlce, as well as among Soviet soldiers, was significant. See Michał Majewski and Paweł Reszka, "Tajemnica zdjęcia z Treblinki," *Uważam Rze,* February 28, 2011; Kazimierz Krajewski, "Kto profanował groby ofiar Treblinki," *Nasz Dziennik*, March 16, 2011. However, these robbers did not remove gold teeth from Jewish cadavers, as some allege. Gold teeth were extracted from the mouths of dead Jews by a team of Jewish prisoners called "dentists," which included prisoners who were actual dentists and doctors.

> The prisoner work team known as the Dentisten was located between the gas chambers and the burial ditches. It numbered about twenty to thirty men whose job was to extract, with pliers, the gold, platinum, and false teeth from the corpses. The dentists also examined the bodies, especially those of the women, for valuables hidden in the body orifices. Part of the team worked at cleaning and sorting the extracted teeth and preparing them for shipment.

The clothes and belongings of Jewish prisoners were handled by a team of so-called *Goldjuden:*

> This group comprised of approximately twenty people, most of them former jewellers, watchmakers, and bank clerks. Their task was to receive and sort the money, gold, valuables, foreign currency, and bonds taken from the deported Jews.
>
> Some of this group worked at the undressing area, receiving money and valuables from the victims on their way to the gas chambers. Members of this group had to carry out body searches on the women after they had stripped and before they were taken to the gas chambers. The women had to lie on a special table, where they would be thoroughly searched, including in their genitalia.

> One section of this group worked at the square and stores where the belongings left by the victims were sorted and checked. They received the money and valuables and prepared them for shipment from the camp.
>
> These "Gold Jews" were considered extremely privileged, because they could secretly siphon off money and valuables of considerable worth, evening the camp.
>
> On their part the SS personnel needed them to secure their share of the wealth that passed through the camp.

Samuel Willenberg, an inmate of Treblinka, writes:

> The prisoners responsible for collecting and sorting the gold, jewellery, money and other valuables which had reached the transport square were known as Goldjuden, and wore yellow shoulder bands to distinguish them. At any one time several of them would wander about the sorting-yard collecting any valuables we had found in the clothing.
>
> Goldjuden were considered the elite of the prisoners, their work was relatively tranquil, they sat in a closed, warm hut under the supervision of SS man Franz Suchomel, a German from the Sudetenland, who spoke good Czech. Suchomel usually assigned Czech Jews to this kommando, who came from Theresienstadt.
>
> Ordinary prisoners were not admitted to the hut where the Goldjuden did their work, the Goldjuden were better dressed, than the other prisoners, going about in elegant coats, colourful scarves and leather gloves. They looked more like bankers than prisoners, especially when carrying the briefcases in which they stored the valuables found in the clothing of people who had just then been murdered.

See "Jewish Working Kommando's in the Aktion Reinhard Death Camps," Holocaust Education & Archive Research Team, Internet: <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ar/Jewish%20Kommando/jewishkommando.html>; based on Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka*, 102, 108, 112, and Willenberg, *Surviving Treblinka*. Abraham Kolski, was part of a team of several hundred workers that sorted clothing, the so-called Sorting Team for Clothing and Belongings (*Lumpenkommando*), states that it was they who frequently buried in the ground money, gold, diamonds, and other valuables in order to keep them out of the hands of the Germans. See the oral history interview with Abraham Kolski, March 29, 1990, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.

Escapees who managed to make it back to their towns were disbelieved. No one in Radom believed escapee Nathan Berkowitz's story about the destination of the deportation trains: "I gave a detailed report to the head of the Jewish Council, but he called me a liar and chased me out of his office." See Alfred Lipson, ed., *The Book of Radom: The Story of a Jewish Community in Poland Destroyed by the* Nazis (New York: The United Radomer Relief of the United States and Canada, 1963), 57. David Bayer recalled: "Max Rosenblum was in Treblinka. He was deported from my hometown of Kozienice to Treblinka with all the people. He sneaked into Pionki camp where I was, because he had a sister who was there. He told everybody that in Treblinka, everybody was killed, and we didn't believe him. All the people who the Germans took to Treblinka: gassed them. And we called him crazy: 'He's crazy, he must be crazy. Why would they kill everybody, women and children, for nothing?' And he was telling us, 'Believe it! I saw it. They killed everybody—nobody's alive!'" See Interview with David Bayer, First Person, 2009, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Many examples of assistance for Jews who jumped out of trains headed for Treblinka have also been recorded. Hersh Blutman from Ciechanowiec jumped from a train heading for Treblinka when it was only three kilometres away from the camp. Bruised and limping, Blutman turned to his hometown, asking local farmers from whom his father used to buy produce for help. Although they all fed him and allowed him to rest, no one was willing to shelter him until, after many days of wandering, he reached the village of Winna-Chroły where he was taken in by Helena and Aleksander Komiazyk. See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 4: *Poland*, Part 1, 366–67. Wacław Iglicki (then Szul Steinhendler) from Żelechów, who jumped out of a train headed for Treblinka near Łuków or Siedlce, stated: "People used to really help out. I have to say that objectively: when it came to bread or something else, they shared. But finding a place to sleep was a problem. People were afraid. They wouldn't really agree to have us over for a night, or for a longer stay. That was understandable, because if you consider that in every village, in every community, there was a sign saying that for hiding, for any help given to a Jew, there was the death penalty, it's hard to be surprised that people didn't want to have Jews over and so on. They could tell by my clothes that I was a Jew. Because I looked poor, obviously. Ragged, dirty. Wandered around, as they say, aimlessly, didn't know where to go. … Because of that, many knew immediately they were dealing with a person of Jewish origin." See the testimony of Waclaw Iglicki, September 2005, Internet: <http://www.centropa.org> under "Biographies." In his account dated May 1994 (in the author's possession), Joseph S. Kutrzeba writes: "During the first days of September 1942, at the age of 14, I jumped out of a moving train destined for Treblinka, through an opening (window) of a cattle car loaded to capacity with Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto. Wandering over fields, forests and villages, at first in the vicinity of Wołomin, and later of Zambrów, I found myself, in late November, in the area of Hodyszewo (near Łomża). Throughout my wandering, the peasants for the most part were amenable to put me up for the night and to feed me—

Germans in order to rob Polish peasants. They immediately threatened a farmer at gunpoint and waylaid individual farmers who were transporting goods. According to Saul (Shlomo) Kuperhand,

> A farmer chopping wood nearby soon spotted us. Stefan said that we should kill the farmer so he would not send the Germans after us. But Hochko told him that killing an innocent man would accomplish nothing. In fact, Hochko went right up to the man and demanded his identification papers, which he then pocketed.

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some either suspecting my origins or pressing me to admit it." Joseph S. Kutrzeba, *The Contract: A Life for a Life* (New York: iUniverse, 2009), 50ff. Ruth Altbeker Cyprys, who jumped from a train headed for Treblinka, recalls various instances of assistance from railway guards, villagers, passers-by, passengers, and even a gang of robbers. See Ruth Altbeker Cyprys, *A Jump for Life: A Jump For Life: A Survivor's Journal from Nazi-Occupied Poland* (New York: Continuum, 1997), 97, 102–110. The brothers Sandor and Shalom Spector jumped out of two separate trains headed for Treblinka and both of them survived with the help of friendly Poles. See Sandor Spector, "I Jumped From the Death Trains," in Yerachmiel Moorstein, ed., *Zelva Memorial Book* (Malwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 1992), 81–82. Maria Bregman jumped out a train from Warsaw headed for Treblinka, injuring her head. When she regained consciousness, she dragged herself to a village where, posing ineptly as a Polish woman, her wounds were treated by villagers. When German gendarmes arrived the next day looking for Jewish escapees, she was asked to leave. Testimony of Fruma Bregman, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/1984, p. 14. When the brothers Henry and Abe Feigelbaum ecaped from the train taking them to Treblinka, they hid in nearby forests for several weeks before they made their way at night to the home of Czesław Głuchowski in the village of Czołomyje, near their hometown of Mordy, where they survived in a bunker dug under the granary. See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 4: *Poland*, Part 1, 239. The brothers Leibel and Efraim Tchapowicz, who jumped from the Treblinka-bound train during the liquidation *Aktion* in Kałuszyn, were hidden for a few months by a Pole named Strychalski, who continued to provide them with necessities while they were living in the forest. See Leibel and Efraim Tchapowicz, "Hiding," in A. Shamri and Sh. Soroka, eds., *Sefer Kaluszyn: Geheylikt der khorev gevorener kehile* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Kaluszyn in Israel, 1961), 397ff., translated as *The Memorial Book of Kaluszyn*, Internet: <http://jewishgen.org/Yizkor/kaluszyn/Kaluszyn.html>. For additional accounts of Jews who escaped from Treblinka, or trains headed there, and who returned safely to their homes with the aid of random Poles along the way, see: account of David Wolf in *Entertainment and Ball Given by the United Wisoko-Litowsker and Woltchiner Relief*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Vysokoye/Vysokoye.html>, translation of Samuel Levine and Morris Gevirtz, eds., *Yisker zhurnal gevidmet diumgekumene fun Visoka un Voltshin* (New York: United Wisoko-Litowsker and Woltchiner Relief, 1948); Feivel Wolf, "After the Departure from Treblinka," in *Memorial Book of Krynki*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Krynki/Krynki.html>, translation of D. Rabin, ed., *Pinkas Krynki* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Krynki in Israel and the Diaspora, 1970), 290; Gitta Sereny, *Into That Darkness: From Mercy Killing To Mass Murder* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), 149–56; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 135, 142, 248–49 (one of the Poles who helped a Jewish escapee was a member of a rightist-nationalist organization); Isaiah Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution: Collective and Individual Behavior in* Extremis (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), 100, 123; Benjamin Mandelkern, with Mark Czarnecki, *Escape from the Nazis* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1988), 59, 66–67, 73–75; Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych,* 438–39, 481; Glazer, *Trap With a Green Fence*, 149–53 (the author passed through a long series of localities and when he was finally caught, it was not by a Pole but by a Volksdeutsche); Luba Wrobel Goldberg, *A Sparkle of Hope: An Autobiography* (Melbourne: n.p., 1998), 98; Alina Bacall-Zwirn and Jared Stark, *No Common Place: The Holocaust Testimony of Alina Bacall-Zwirn* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 32–35; Henryk Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories: True Tales from the Holocaust and Life After* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 151–52; Eddi Weinstein, *Quenched Steel: The Story of an Escape from Treblinka* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2002); Irene Shapiro, *Revisiting the Shadows: Memoirs from War-torn Poland to the Statue of Liberty* (Elk River, Minnesota: DeForest Press, 2004), 189–90; Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 4: *Poland*, Part 1, 246, 348, 362–63, 364, 366–67, 461, and vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, 703; Maik, *Deliverance*, 87; Halina Grubowska, *Haneczko, musisz przeżyć* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, 2007), 73–74; Israel Cymlich and Oscar Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka* (New York and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and The Holocaust Survivors' Memoirs Project, 2007), 188; Samuel D. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), 310; Krzysztof Czubaszek, *Żydzi z Łukowa i okolic* (Warsaw: Danmar, 2008), 203, 206, 251; Adek Stein, Australian Memories of the Holocaust, Internet: <http://www.holocaust.com.au/mm/j_adek.htm>; *Amidah: Standing Up: Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust* (Darlinghurst, New South Wales: Sydney Jewish Museum, 2011), 6.

"We are a group of 200 escaped prisoners," Hochko told the frightened farmer. "If we have any trouble from the Germans we will kill you and your entire family. We know who you are. We will burn your farm to the ground." …

We had been without food or drink for nearly two days, since escaping from Treblinka. Only Shmulik and Hochko had the ability to confront people without arousing suspicion, so the two of them, with our one rifle, approached an isolated farmhouse.

Hochko knocked on the door and began speaking to the farmer in perfect Polish, which was his native tongue. He said that he and his men were members of the Polish underground and that the farmer should not fear his [German] uniform or the rifle. … The farmer responded by giving Hochko and Shmulik food for themselves and the "soldiers" in the nearby woods. …

Shmulik's leveled rifle encouraged the farmer to be generous … It occurred to us that our gangster friends would probably have murdered the farmer and his family and then taken everything they had. Perhaps their way made more sense in the hellish world we lived in?

We walked for many kilometers before resting again. Hochko … assembled everyone and addressed us.

"… The safest way for us to get food is by intercepting farmers taking wagons of food to the market. We will wait for an individual farmer, so we don't have to worry about several farmers putting up a fight."

We all listened and then approved the plan. About four o'clock the next morning we spotted a lone farmer coming down the road in a wagon. Hochko and Shmulik stood in the middle of the road and Hochko called out to him in his excellent German: "Halt! Show me your papers!"

Seeing the uniform and hearing the German orders, the intimidated farmer pulled his wagon to a complete halt. He cooperated with the interrogation, telling Hochko where he was going, where he had come from, and what he was carrying in the wagon. The farmer denied carrying contraband food for sale on the black market, but when he unloaded his wagon on the side of the road for investigation, there was bread, milk, cheese, smoked ham, salami, bacon, and even water.

Hochko ordered the farmer to appear at German police headquarters at nine o'clock the next morning to pay a fine of 200 Reichmarks. He would then have his documents returned to him. If he failed to appear promptly, the police would come to him. And this, Hochko assured him, would prove to be a most unpleasant experience. …

As we walked, Shloimele challenged Hochko for the rifle that Hochko had been holding. Shloimele assured us that he would get plenty of food for the five of us who remained together, but Hochko categorically refused to give him the gun. Shloimele was a street-smart thug … Hochko knew that Shloimele's efforts would bring results, but he was concerned about his methods. … Shloimele sneered at this suggestion [i.e., asking for food], saying that he knew the Polish people much better and that force was the only way to get anything from them. …

Shloimele left us around noon and made his way to a farmhouse. Boldly he looked through the windows and then went right in. He headed straight for the hearth, knowing that farmers often smoked meat by hanging it several feet up their chimneys. Sure enough, he found armfuls of meat. He filled a sack with bread and ham. He saw a pot of soup on the stove ready for the family's lunch and poured it into a pail. He even took knives, forks, and dishes. Heavily laden, Shloimele made his way back to us in the forest. He certainly earned his bragging rights.

> We did not get a chance to enjoy this banquet at our leisure, however, because we suddenly heard a fusillade of German automatic weapon fire spraying the woods and coming toward us. The furious farmer must have gone right to the Nazi authorities.[127]

On another occasion, the Jewish band held a farmer hostage.[128] Given such events, and as word got around, is it surprising that Polish peasants came to see fugitive Jews as adversaries rather than merely victims? Thus started a pattern that followed the following sequence: brazen robberies *followed* by retaliation (and not vice versa). Yet Kuperhand also goes on to describe the extensive assistance he received from Polish farmers *after* leaving the group he initially foraged with.[129] Another escapee from Treblinka, Kalman Taigman (Teigman), also joined a group of armed Jews who stole food from Polish farmers at gunpoint.[130] Such testimonies, among many others, refute the contention, stridently voiced by historians like Jan T. Gross and Jan Grabowski, that Polish peasants preyed on defenceless Jews for their valuables or out of sheer malice because of an alleged social consensus or "norm" of behaviour among Poles.[131]

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[127] Miriam Kuperhand and Saul Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 130–33.

[128] Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka,* 153.

[129] Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka,* 135–42. Although this book contains several derogatory references of a general nature to the Home Army, it does not mention that several members of the Leszczyński family, Miriam Kuperhand's family's rescuers, were actually Home Army members. After the "liberation" they were arrested and interrogated by the security service, but received no assistance from their former Jewish charges. See Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny,* Part Two, 179–87.

[130] Testimony of Kalman Taigman, Yad Vashem Archives, file 03/1586, as cited in Wojciech Łukaszun, "Ratunek czy niebezpieczeństwo? Obszary leśne w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie jako miejsce schronienia ludności żydowskiej," in Grabowski, *Okupowana Europa,* 132.

[131] See Jan Tomasz Gross and Irena Grudzińska Gross, *Złote żniwa: Rzecz o tym, co się działo na obrzeżach zagłady Żydów* (Kraków: Znak, 2011), translated as *Golden Harvest: Events at the Periphery of the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); and Jan Grabowski, *Judenjagd: Polowanie na Żydów 1942–1945: Studium dziejów pewnego powiatu* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2011), translated and expanded as *Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013). Grabowski writes (at p. 166): "The motivations of rescuers varied from case to case. If the helpers, however, acted out of compassion, they broke a certain consensus in their own community. Within this consensus there was no place for helping Jews." Both these books have come under severe criticism from major Polish historians for their methodology and conclusions. See, for example, Paweł Machcewicz, "Recenzja ostatecznej wersji 'Złotych żniw': Historia zaangażowana," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, February 11, 2011; Bożena Szaynok, "Porozmawiajmy spokojnie," *Więź,* no. 7 (2011): 15–28; Bożena Szaynok, "Żydowskie złoto na kościelnej tacy?: Wokół nowej hipotezy badawczej Jana T. Grossa," *Więź,* no. 10 (2011): 90–97; Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, "Refleksje: Nowa praca, stare podejście" and Piotr Gontarczyk, "'Jak fakty są przeciwko nam, to tym gorzej dla faktów': O metodzie naukowej *Złotych żniw* Jana Tomasza Grossa," in Marek J. Chodakiewicz and Wojciech J. Muszyński, eds., *Złote serca, czy złote żniwa: Studia nad wojennymi losami Polaków i Żydów* (Warsaw: The Facto, 2011), 27–64, 71–101; Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, "Reflections: A New Work, but the Same Old Method" and Piotr Gontarczyk, "'If the Facts Are Against Us, Too Bad for the Facts': On Jan Tomasz Gross's Scholarly Method in *Golden Harvest*," in Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, Wojciech Jerzy Muszyński, and Paweł Styrna, eds., *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold? Studies on the Fate of Wartime Poles and Jews* (Washington, D.C.: Leopolis Press, 2012), 21–63, 70–96; Bogdan Musiał, "*Judenjagd*—"umiejętne działanie" czy zbrodnicza perfidia," *Dzieje Najnowsze,* vol. 43, no. 2 (2011): 159–70; Krystyna Samsonowska, "Dąbrowa Tarnowska—nieco inaczej," *Więź,* no. 7 (2011): 75–84. (Typical of the level of discourse on such topics in the Western media, these reputable historians are written off "hardline Polish nationalists". See Jerome Taylor, "Shameful secrets in the fields of the Holocaust," *The Independent,* February 10, 2011.) The photograph used by the Grosses as the point of departure and centrepiece of their book *Złote żniwa* (*Golden Harvest*),

A similar situation prevailed in the Wilno and Nowogródek regions where Jews survived in the forest by robbing farms. Armed aggression directed at peasants provoked a like response from peasants and their protectors. The following account describes the activities of a group Jewish forest dwellers who acquired weapons and staged forays in the countryside. They were eventually "absorbed" by Soviet partisans, who had trouble finding recruits in largely Polish and Lithuanian areas.

> [In mid-July 1943:] Leiba [Kobrowski] insisted they should all move from their current location to the forest near Marcinkance [Marcinkańce], where a sizeable group of Jews from Druskieniki, Marcinkance and Pozecze [Porzecze] had gathered … They would be safer there, since the forest was much denser and access was more difficult. …
>
> Izak [Kobrowski] came to the conclusion that they had to have weapons: their money was running out and the only way to survive was to take food by force. A decision had to be made—were they to buy weapons or use the rest of that money to buy food and hope that the war would soon be over? … A young Polish peasant, Longin, a friend of Izak sold them two rifles, one sub-machine gun, grenades and some ammunition. Izak had to teach the men how to use and clean a weapon. …
>
> The 'food operations' now dominated their life. The men would pick a faraway village, as far as 40 or 50 kilometres from their camp in the forest. After arriving at their destination they would observe the activity in the village and around the target house before going in, preferably on a dark night. They surrounded the house with four men, though two of them were unarmed, and Izak, with the sub-machine gun, was the one who demanded food. They usually took flour and dried peas; potatoes were too heavy. They sometimes took a calf or a pig which they slaughtered and cut into chunks on the spot. The roundtrip took about four to five days. …
>
> Their group now comprised over 30 people. …
>
> Not far from their camp, [in the spring of 1944] they encountered a detachment of regular Red Army partisans. Well dressed in warm *foufaikas* (parkas stuffed with cotton and wool), well fed and well armed, they were supplied through air-drops. The site of the family camp was attractive to them because it was well camouflaged. The partisans gave an ultimatum: 'We are here to fight the Germans. If you want to help us in this task, you are welcome to stay. If you don't, get out of here, because you will endanger us all!'
>
> The unit was composed of some 25 men and five woman, all volunteers. The commander, comrade Finkel, was in his early thirties, a Jew from Moscow … The deputy commander was a woman. … They had all recently been parachuted into the forest in a major effort by the Red army

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which allegedly portrayed Poles digging up Jewish remains in Treblinka in search of gold, was exposed as bogus by Polish journalists Michał Majewski and Paweł Reszka. See their articles "Tajemnice starego zdjęcia" and "Dlaczego Grossowie powinni przeprosić," *Rzeczpospolita*, January 22–23, 2011 and March 20, 2011, respectively. A number of Jews rescued by Poles spoke out against the thesis of the book: Janina Dłuska, Szewach Weiss, Samuel Willenberg, Adam Sandauer. Unfortunately, Jan T. Gross shows signs of being unbabalnced in his dealings with individuals as well. He verbally abused the journalists who exposed his photograph and after a TV talk show featuring his book, he accosted one of the guest speakers, Rev. Tadeusz Isakowicz-Zaleski, yelling at him repeatedly: "You'll go to hell!" See Paweł Lisicki, "Źli ludzie idą do piekła," *Rzeczpospolita,* April 15, 2011.

> to disorganize the thinly stretched Wehrmacht supply lines before a major attack was to begin in the summer. …
>
> Finally, after much haggling [among the Jews], Izak prevailed and Commander Finkel made him *Nachalnik Spetsyalnovo Semyeynovo Partisanskovo Otryada* [Commander of the Special Family Partisan Detachment].[132]

In his memoirs Tuvia Bielski mentions a group of Jewish stragglers whom the Soviet partisans were allegedly intent on murdering: "not far from Abelkevitz [Obelkowicze near Dworzec], there was a farm on which there was a group of armed Jews who robbed by night and did nothing during the day. The population round about were angry and complaining."[133] Their leader was Israel Kesler (or Kessler), reportedly a thief and arsonist, who ran a brothel in Naliboki before the war. After receiving an ultimatum, Kesler agreed to join the Bielski group sometime around December 1942. The following are descriptions of the so-called Kesler group:

> A native of the small town Naliboki, Kesler was a professional thief. Before the war he spent several years in prison. … Like the Bielskis, he never became a ghetto inmate. Instead, he collected a group of Jews from Naliboki and from the work camp Dworzec. Though his connections to Belorussian peasants he acquired guns and ammunition and a place to stay.[134]

> When Abraham [Viner, also a native of Naliboki] met Kesler he asked to be accepted into his unit, but Kesler refused, saying, "'You cannot stay with us. You are not made of the proper material. You would not be able to kill, to fight, you are not fit to be a partisan.' I left; I had no choice. I and the others were not accepted. We were of the same social background. We had no arms, nothing."
>
> Better suited for life in the forest, Kesler looked down on Jews whom he felt did not fit in. In fact, most young working-class men seemed to resent and envy those who had been their social superiors before the war.[135]

Kesler's group was able to secure a measure of autonomy during the German raids on Naliboki forest in the summer of 1943. It set up its own camp and became notorious for robbing peasants.[136] The main Bielski group was not immune from such abuses either:

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[132] Blumstein, *A Little House on Mount Carmel,* 335–40.

[133] Nirenstein, *A Tower from the Enemy,* 357–58. See also Kowalski, *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance, 1939–1945,* vol. 4 (1991), 509–10. For more about the exploits of the Kesler group see Tec, *Defiance,* 75–77; Duffy, *The Bielski Brothers,* 119–22.

[134] Tec, *Defiance,* 76.

[135] Tec, *Resilience and Courage,* 286.

[136] Tec, *Defiance,* 128–29, 178–79; Duffy, *The Bielski Brothers,* 184–85, 204.

> Undisciplined rough behavior was not limited to Russian partisans. When most of the Bielski people reassembled, complaints about one of their own group leader, Kaplan, were also heard. Local farmers on whose goodwill they depended accused Kaplan and a few of his men of robbery. These forcible confiscations included money and valuables. …
>
> Hersh Smolar, a prominent partisan and a member of the Soviet headquarters, knew that "the accusation was that the Jews had been robbing the peasants. They take clothes, not only bread. [General] Platon let me read the document.
>
> "It was indeed true. There were some Jewish partisans who took clothes. The partisans were not allowed to take anything but food, but the Jews did take other things."[137]

Both Kesler and Kaplan, as well as other partisans, were eventually executed by the Bielski brothers for their communal transgressions such as insubordination, subversion, lack of discipline, disputes over stolen property, etc.[138] There is no evidence that any Jew was ever punished for excesses committed against the local population, despite Bielski's claim to the contrary in a report he submitted to the Soviet supreme command outlining the history of the detachment.[139] In the spring of 1944, Kesler denounced Tuvia Bielski to General Dubov for financial mismanagement (misappropriation of gold, jewelry and money) and asked for permission to form a separate detachment. Fearing that Kesler was planning to usurp his authority, Bielski had Kesler arrested and put to death following a quick trial. He then denounced Kesler to the Soviet command as a "marauder" and "bandit."[140] Estera Gorodejska, who was a member of Kesler's group yet showered praise on Bielski for his efforts to save Jews, described the "power struggle" in an entirely different light:

> In 1943 Bielski surrounded himself with members of the command such as Gordon, Malbin, Fotasznik, etc. They played cards all day long and were never sober. The command ate very well when everyone else got watery soup. There was great dissatisfaction in the camp, but discipline was so strong that no one dared to say anything. Kesler went to see Sokolov (Dubov's aide) to ask his permission to organize an independent unit. When the command found out about this, they entered Kesler's *zemlianka* in a drunken state and arrested him. This was in March 1944. The next day they

[137] Tec, *Defiance,* 124–25, 151.

[138] The following executions are mentioned in the literature on this topic: Tec, *Defiance,* 125 (according to Tec, Kaplan was executed by Zus Bielski), 177–78 (Białobroda, allegedly an informer for the Belorussian police in the Lida ghetto), 182–83 (according to Tec, Kesler was executed by Asael Bielski), 200 (Polonecki); Levine, *Fugitives of the Forest,* 261 (Kesler); Duffy, *The Bielski Brothers,* 187 (Kaplan), 243–45 (Kesler and a barber—likely Białobroda—who had collaborated with the Nazis in Lida), 258 (another execution). For other examples of punishment for internal disciplinary transgressions see Duffy, *The Bielski Partisans,* 218. Semen Zorin was known to execute an 11 or 12-year-old boy for leaving the partisan base against orders. See Levine, *Fugitives of the Forest,* 264.

[139] "Jewish Units in the Soviet Partisan Movement: Selected Documents," *Yad Vashem Studies,* vol. 23 (1993): 409: "No particularly negative aspects of fulfilling the tasks set out by the command were observed, aside from several instances of despoliation of the local population by partisans of our detachment. The command nipped these events in the bud by taking extraordinary measures, i.e., execution by shooting of two partisans."

[140] Musial, *Sowjetische Partisanen in Weißrußland,* 203–205, 214.

> took Kesler out of detention and Bielski himself shot him three times. He was drunk. He said to the deceased Kesler: "You're lying down, you scum. Why don't you answer now?" He shot the corpse two more times. The command ordered some Jews to bury Kesler. They made a small mound for him. The command told them to remove the mound and wipe his grave off the face of the earth. … A report was written that Kesler was killed because he had left the unit without the permission of the command (when he had gone to see Sokolov) and for robberies on the civilian population. … A few days before we joined up with the Red Army, retreating German units wanted to cut through the forest and stumbled upon us. We engaged in combat. Eight people from our unit fell, Gordon among them. The Germans lost 40 men. The day we marched out of the forest, Bielski killed Faivl Połoniecki, a Jew from Mir. I understand there was a dispute between Bielski and Połoniecki over some [stolen] clothes.[141]

Anatol Wertheim describes the antics of Semen Zorin, the leader of his Soviet-Jewish unit, who had a habit of descending on a village with a company of men, pressuring the villagers into giving in marriage a peasant girl he had taken a liking to. After nuptials and celebrations that lasted for several days, Zorin abandoned his new bride.[142] The most candid description, however, is that of Yakov Ruvimovich, who joined up with the Soviet partisans after being sheltered by a Belorussian family for over a year.

> About half of our people were Jews, but what kind of partisans were they? All they did was rob and rape. They liked taking me along with them when they went reconnoitring. "Yasha," they called, "come with us." Since I was a young boy I was afraid and did not breathe a word. They raped whomever they came across. Once I went to our leader, Romanov, and told him what I saw. "You better be quiet, you mother-fucker," he bawled me out. "Can you prove it?" I couldn't because I usually stood watch on the street. They enjoyed taking the wives of [Polish] officers. They all enjoyed that.[143]

Examples of the activities of unprincipled Jewish bands have been recorded by Jews in other parts of Poland as well:

> Thus, in Galicia, where in the absence of an organized anti-German partisan movement groups of armed Jews simply tried to survive in the forests, there were cases of fratricidal murder motivated by the urge to obtain arms. In the Bialystok [Białystok] region such a 'wild group' of Jews, as they

[141] Account of Estera Gordejska, dated August 9, 1945, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/568. Gorodejska states that Kesler was a prewar horse trader and part of the criminal underworld, but was friendly and popular with many in the unit.

[142] Wertheim, "Żydowska partyzantka na Białorusi," *Zeszyty Historyczne,* no. 86 (1988): 148–49.

[143] Hugo-Bader, "A rewolucja to przecież miała być przyjemność," *Gazeta Wyborcza, Magazyn Gazety* (Warsaw), November 15, 1996.

were called, raped several Byelorussian peasant girls and stabbed to death two Jewish partisans of the Jewish Forois ["Forward"] Detachment to get hold of their rifles.[144]

[In the environs of Buczacz, Tarnopol Province:] The Jewish bandits were no better than the [Ukrainian] murderers. They fell on the Jews in hiding, on the Jews in the forests and robbed them naked. That happened to Shaul Enderman and others.[145]

To Buczacz they brought Jews from the town of Tłumacz. Among the youth from Tłumacz was a so-called band. This was a group of young, armed boys. Brave and determined for anything, they were the scourge of the area. They even robbed their well-off brethren.[146]

A group of Ukrainian "partisans" counting Jews among their members are known to have pillaged and murdered in the vicinity of Kopyczyńce east of Tarnopol.[147]

[In Volhynia:] A group of Jewish families called "The Tenth" possessed guns and boldly raided Ukrainian farmers for food and clothes, dividing the loot among themselves. To be part of their group became a privilege with many benefits. Gershon wanted to join them, but Moishe did not. As chance would have it, Gershon found a gun without bullets. Ignoring Moishe's advice, Gershon approached the leader of The Tenth, asking to join. They turned him down.

The Tenth became a power to be reckoned. Originally thought of as an elite group of Jews, it was discovered that their acts of force were motivated by their own selfish needs and gratification. It was while hundreds of Jews were hiding in an area known as Abluva, that the true character of the Tenth was realized. The Tenth became aware that the Germans had discovered where the Jews were hiding. Instead of informing everyone of the intended raid, they left unannounced for Russia, leaving the others unprepared for the assault that followed.[148]

Robbing peasants with the use of firearms was a common occurrence.[149] A Jewish-led band of eight Jews and Ukrainians (the latter may have been Jews posing as Ukrainians) invaded the convent of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Niżniów near Stanisławów, in Eastern Galicia,

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[144] Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe,* 305.

[145] Account of Dr. Avraham Halfan, in I. Kahan (Yisrael Cohen), ed., *Sefer Buczacz: Matsevet zikaron le-kehila kedosha* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1956), 234; translated into English as *Book of Buczacz: In Memory of a Martyred Community,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.yizkor/buchach/buchach.html>.

[146] Izak Szwarc, "Buczacz: Obozy pracy w okolicach Buczacza," as cited in Ajzensztajn, *Ruch podziemny w ghettach i obozach,* 49. See also the testimony of Róża Dobrecka, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/ 2274.

[147] Szewczyński, *Nasze Kopyczyńce,* 80.

[148] Abram, *The Light After the Dark,* 95.

[149] See, for example, Menachem Katz, *Path of Hope* (New York and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, and The Holocaust Survivors' Memoirs Project, 2008), 181–85, 193–98 (Kuropatniki near Brzeżany).

in the early morning hours of April 16, 1944, as the German-Soviet front was advancing nearby, on the pretext of looking for German officers. After robbing the nuns, the assailants proceeded to force them into the chapel, beating them mercilessly on their heads with the butts of their guns until blood flowed. Some of the younger nuns managed to escape and hide, and the bandits directed their wrath against the elderly nuns whom they abused physically.[150]

After leaving the ghetto in Międzyrzec Podlaski for the nearby forests, Elias Magid and several Jews formed a group that robbed farmers, threatening to shoot them if they did not provide them with food. They moved eastward after the farmers complained to the authorities and the Germans organized a raid. They came across several others Jews and "began to conduct the life of real bandits, plundering and robbing."[151] Such occurrences were not unique to that area but were widespread.[152] In some cases, members of Jewish forest groups turned on each other. The following account is from the Łuków area:

> There was a 14-year-old boy in our group, Itche Meir, whose parents had owned the paint factory in Lukow [Łuków]. After explaining that his parents were dead, he confided that he knew where the family gold was buried in an old cast-iron pot. Two of our group, brothers-in-law—one a little shoemaker and the other a strapping hulk of a man who had worked in a slaughterhouse—volunteered to go with him to find the gold.
>
> After a few days, the men came back alone and told us that Itche Meir had changed his mind and run away. At first we believed them, but I soon became suspicious because of the way they were behaving. I started to worry as to what really happened to the young boy.

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[150] Agnieszka Michna, *Siostry zakonne—ofiary zbrodni nacjonalistów ukraińskich na terenie metropolii lwowskiej obrządku łacińskiego w latach 1939–1947* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2010), 82–83.

[151] Account of Elias Magid, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/2019, cited in Czajka, Młodkowska, and Umińska-Keff, eds., *Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz/Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue,* vol. 3, 18.

[152] Jankiel Grynblatt, who survived by working as a tailor for villagers near Żelechów, was encouraged by a Jewish acquaintance to join a forest group made up of escaped Soviet prisoners of war and Jews who survived by robbing Polish farmers. After their numbers increased, the largely Jewish group linked up with Serafim Alekseev, a Soviet officer who escaped from a German prisoner of war camp and oversaw a number of partisan groups operating in Łuków-Garwolin area. During a raid, villagers shot two Jewish partisans in self-defence. The Jewish partisan group was subsequently attacked by a Home Army unit who sought to protect the villagers from further robberies. When Jewish partisans stole a pig from a farm in the winter of 1943, which represented a major loss to the average peasant, the aggrieved farmer informed the German authorities. (The Germans meticulously counted and tagged livestock such as pigs and cows, and farmers were required to account for any missing livestock.) The Germans were able to track down the culprits as they had carelessly left a trail of blood in the snow from the slaughtered animal that led to their bunker in the forest. Seven Jews were killed including some escapees from Treblinka. In retaliation, Jewish partisans shot the Polish farmer, who was hardly a "collaborator" hunting down Jews. He was simply an innocent victim of robbery who sought protection and, in all likelihood, would never have set out to harm anyone. See Jerzy Diatłowicki and Janusz Roszkowski, eds., *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945: Opór i walka z faszyzmem w latach 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. E. Ringelbluma and Stowarzyszenie Żydów Kombatantów i Poszkodowanych w II Wojnie Światowej, 2010), vol. 2, 140, 144–45. (Grynblatt's account appears to describe this event twice.) The activities of Serafim Alekssev's partisans are described in Sulej, *Zdrada i zbrodnia,* 19–20, 86–90, 299–302.

> A few days later, as I peddled my wares, one of my customers told me he'd found a fresh grave near the road. That night I took two men with me to find the grave. … Digging it up, my fears became a reality: there was poor Itche Meir's body with his head bashed in. … Returning to the camp, we found the suspected murderers. We said, "We found Itche Meir's body. Why did you kill him?"
>
> The shoemaker started crying and confessed. "I begged my brother-in-law not to kill the kid, but he didn't listen." He pleaded with us and cried. …
>
> The big guy, on the other hand, was a different story. He didn't seem to react to his brother-in-law's accusation, he just sat there with his rifle … When he finally fell asleep, however, we took his rifle away. The next day, one man was assigned to take him deep into the forest and execute him. Our judgment was swift, his execution just.[153]

Individual Jews were also known to murder non-Jews without provocation. Majer Rubinfeld shot and killed an unknown person he happened to run across while hiding in a forest near Rohatyn; afterwards, he stole his gun and money.[154] Rescuers of Jews could also find themselves among those robbed by Jewish forest groups:

> Another Pole complained bitterly that his household was stripped bare of its belongings by a Jewish partisan group. Learning that he was actually involved in a Jewish network, they returned some of his possessions—"but only a fraction," he said.[155]

Northwest of Lublin, a largely Jewish gang known as the "Morel" gang, but headed by a Polish bandit named Kapica, became notorious for pillaging in the countryside near the village of Garbów. Its members included Solomon (Shlomo) Morel,[156] who eventually joined the People's Guard (*Gwardia Ludowa*), the

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[153] Wrobel, *My Life My Way*, 88–89.

[154] Diatłowicki and Roszkowski, *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945,* vol. 2, 204.

[155] Samuel P. Oliner and Pearl M. Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (New York: The Free Press/Macmillan; London: Collier Macmillan, 1988), 72.

[156] The Morel gang counted the Morel brothers, Shlomo (Solomon) and Icek (Yitzhak), as its members. The gang was reportedly liquidated by a People's Guard detachment under the command of Grzegorz Korczyński, but some of its members including Solomon Morel were absorbed into Korczyński's unit. According to Frank Blaichman, however, Yitzhak Morel and another member of the Markuszów group were killed while "on a mission to pick up some food from a village," and in retaliation the Jewish partisans set fire to a village and shot two or three villagers. See Frank Blaichman, *Rather Die Fighting: A Memoir of World War II* (New York: Arcade, 2009), 68–69. Solmon Morel, who falsely claimed to have been imprisoned in a Nazi camp during the war, later joined Chil Grynszpan's partisan unit. After liberation, he joined the Communist security forces and worked as a guard at the notorious prison in Lublin Castle where numerous Home Army members were tortured and murdered. He was transferred to a prison in Tarnobrzeg. Afterwards he became the infamous commander of the Stalinist concentration camps in Świętochłowice and Jaworzno. Another person who headed the Jaworzno labour camp for a period was named Grossman. See Henryk Pająk, "Banda Morelów," *Nasza Polska,* April 14, 1999; Zygmunt Woźniczka, "Obóz pracy w Świętochłowicach-Zgodzie i jego komendant," *Dzieje Najnowsze* (Warsaw), no. 4 (1999): 17–36; Adam Dziurok, ed. and comp., *Obóz pracy w Świętochłowicach w 1945 roku: Dokumenty, zeznania, relacje, listy* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2002), 29; Adam Dziurok, "23 lata, 6 miesięcy i 22 dni Salomona Morela," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* nos. 6–7 (2004): 42–45; "Informacja o działalności

Moscow-directed Communist underground which was later transformed into the People's Army (*Armia Ludowa*), an organization whose record of robbery and violent crimes against the civilian population and killing Jewish refugees was second to none.[157] Jewish bands were responsible for extensive plundering and murders in the Podlasie region, north of Lublin.[158] In the vicinity of Oszmiana, west of Wilno, small bands consisting of Soviets (former German prisoners of war) and Jews robbed and murdered the civilian population. The Jewish bands were known for their cruelty, especially one under the command of a Jewish woman from Smorgonie.[159]

Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu w okresie 1 lipca 2003 r.–30 czerwca 2004 r.," Warsaw, January 2005 (Katowice sygnatura akt S 61/01/Zk); Adam Dziurok and Andrzej Majcher, "Solomon Morel i obóz w Świętochłowicah-Zgodzie," *Instytut Pamięci Narodowej,* July 7, 2005, posted at: <www.ipn.gov.pl>. Adam Dziurok mentions several other Jewish partisans who became security officers and worked as prison functionaries: Bernard Szwarc (Lublin, Białystok), Franciszek Lewin (Lublin, Siedlce), Józef Ruchelsman (Lublin, Biała Podlaska), Leon Giterman (Lublin, Biała Podlaska), Władysław Wolsztajn (Lublin, Białystok), and Sewer Rozen (the head of the prison in Barczewo).

[157] The Communist People's Guard (*Gwardia Ludowa—GL*), whose membership included numerous Jews, was infamous for robbing and committing violent crimes in the Polish countryside. Its members also perpetrated murders on numerous Jewish partisans and Jews hiding in the forests. Official reports of its numerical strength and military accomplishments are grossly inflated. See Chodakiewicz, *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne,* 96–98; Chodakiewicz, *Tajne oblicze GL-AL i PPR,* passim; Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza,* passim, especially 178–82, 245–75, 340–50, 373, 381, 397, 399–401; Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets,* 154–55, 179, 188, 196–98, 431; Krakowski, *The War of the Doomed,* 94. The murder of Jews in Krasnystaw by the People's Guard is mentioned in Robert Kuwałek, "Żybowski ruch oporu na Lubelszczyźnie," posted online at: <htpp://kft.umcs.lublin.pl/strona/zaglada/okres_zaglady_opr.html>. Members of the Communist underground (Polish Workers' Party) also blackmailed and robbed Jews hiding outside the ghetto in Warsaw and robbed Jews during the final stages of the Warsaw ghetto. See Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza,* 212 n. 43, and Yitzhak Zuckerman ("Antek"), *A Surplus of Memory: Chronicle of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: University of California Press, 1993), 304. The fact that they denounced Poles to the Gestapo and murdered Jews during the German occupation did not prevent People's Guard members from holding official positions, often important ones, in the postwar Communist regime, where they worked closely with Jewish Communists and former partisans in combatting the "fascist" anti-Communist Polish underground. See Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza,* 407–420. People's Guard members generally did not face punishment for collaborating with the Nazis, nor did the Security Office shy away from employing former Gestapo agents, among them those responsible for the capture of Home Army Commnader General Stefan Rowecki. See Jacek Wilamowski, *Srebrniki Judasza: Zdrada i kolaboracja: Konfidenci niemieckich władz bezpieczeństwa w okupowanej Polsce 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Agencja Wydawnicza CB Andrzej Zasieczny, 2004), 144–46; Waldemar Grabowski, "Kalkstein i Kaczorowska w świetle akt UB," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* nos. 8–9 (August–September 2004): 87–100. Among the Gestapo agents from Pomerania employed in official positions were Alexander Arendt, Jan Szawlewski, and Heinrich Kassner who also went by the name of Jan Kaszubowski. See R. Skorowski, "Polacy, Kaszubi, Niemci i komuniści," *Głos* (Warsaw), October 22, 29 and November 5, 2005. Characteristically, a man named Matys, who became the terror of the ghetto in Izbica, received the protection of the local Gwardia Ludowa and Armia Ludowa leader whom he supplied with arms, and thus avoided the death sentence passed on him by the non-Communist Polish underground. Matys served a prison sentence for his crimes after the war and was ostracized by the community. See Piotr Rudnicki "Borowiak," "Na Lubelszczyźnie," in Stanisław Durlej and Janusz Gmitruk, eds., *Zbrodnie hitlerowskie na wsi polskiej w latach 1939–1945* (Kielce: Ludowe Towarzystwo Naukowo-Kulturalne Oddział w Kielcach, and Warsaw: Muzeum Historii Polskiego Ruchu Ludowego, 2008), 315–17.

[158] Mariusz Bechta, *Rewolucja, mit, bandytyzm: Komuniści na Podlasiu w latach 1939–1945* (Biała Podlaska: Rekonkwista; and Warsaw: Rachocki i s-ka, 2000), 81–100. This valuable source also describes robberies and rapes that forest Jews experienced at the hands of Soviet and Gypsy bands. Ibid., 84. For additional examples of assaults and robberies by Russian partisans in this area see Gitel Donath, *My Bones Don't Rest in Auschwitz: A Lonely Battle to Survive German Tyranny* (Montreal: Kaplan, 1999), 103.

[159] Wołkonowski, *Okręg Wileński Związku Walki Zbrojnej Armii Krajowej w latach 1939–1945,* 85; Chodakiewicz, *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne,* 314 n.149.

Throughout Poland Jews connected to Communist partisan formations clashed repeatedly with the anti-Communist underground and the civilian population, and in many cases robbery came to the forefront. A Jewish unit of the People's Guard known as the "Lions," led by Izrael Ajzenman (Israel Eisenman), a prewar Communist Party member convicted prewar robber (who victimized both Poles and Jews), did little else but plunder widely in the vicinity of Kielce. The local population undertook self-defence. Incensed, following out instructions from Moscow to clear the area of "reactionaries," Ajzenman's partisans murdered seven Poles in Drzewica on January 20, 1943, and robbed their homes. Among the victims were five members of the National Armed Forces (*Narodowe Siły Zbrojne*—NSZ). At least a dozen other Poles on their hit list were spared because they fled and could not be found. As could be expected, this was *followed* by retaliation by the National Armed Forces against the perpetrators, however, Ajzenman himself eluded punishment. This was to be a major turning point in relations between the National Armed Forces and the Communist partisans. Ajzenman was sentenced to death by the People's Guard for common banditry but again escaped punishment. (After the war, Ajzenman entered the state security service and embellished his partisan unit's war record by making fantastic claims of combat actions against the Germans. He continued to commit crimes such as robbery and rape, for which he lost his position and served a sentence of less than a month. Under the assumed name of Julian Kaniewski, he was employed in various positions.) [160]

In vicinity of the Wyszków forest, the Polish population was terrorized by raids conducted by Soviet and Communist People's Guard partisans. The latter included some well-to-do gravediggers who had escaped from the Warsaw ghetto alongside members of the Jewish Fighting Organization (*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa—ŻOB*). According to Communist sources, the gravediggers were rapacious plunderers who even aroused the enmity of their fellow Jews to the point of the latter wanting to "get rid of them at any price and to liquidate them." According to another Communist source, one of the Jewish groups (likely the Growas

[160] Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 95; Leszek Żebrowski, "Mord w Drzewicy: Nieznane karty komunistycznej partyzantki," *Słowo–Dziennik Katolicki,* July 1–3, 1994; Leszek Żebrowski, "Spór o mord w Drzewicy," *Gazeta Polska,* January 5, 1995; Żebrowski, *Paszkwil Wyborczej,* 99 n.1; Żebrowski, "Działalność tzw. band pozorowanych jako metoda zwalczania podziemia niepodległościowego w latach 1944–1947," in *Skryte oblicze systemu komunistycznego*, 77; Chodakiewicz, *Tajne oblicze GL-AL i PPR,* vol. 2, 124–31; Piotr Gontarczyk, "Mord w Drzewicy (22 stycznia 1943 r.): Przyczynek do badań nad rzeczywistym obrazem konfliktów pomiędzy polskim podziemiem niepodległościowym a komunistami," *Biuletyn Kwartalny Radomskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego,* nos. 3–4 (1999): 89–106; Leszek Żebrowski, "Kaniewski Julian," in *Encyklopedia "Białych Plam"* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2002), vol. 9, 113–15; Leszek Żebrowski, "To nie była 'wojna domowa': Jeden czerwony życiorys," *Nasza Polska,* July 29, 2003 and August 5, 2003; Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza,* 175 n.30, 184–86, 283–84, 417; Aleksandra Bańkowska, "Polish Partisan Formations during 1942–1944 in Jewish Testimonies," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials,* vol. 1 (2008): 121. Jewish historians misrepresent the circumstances of the massacre in Drzewica (Shmuel Krakowski, for example, claims it was an assault on a German police post), and allege that it was the National Armed Forces (NSZ) who first attacked Ajzenman's detachment. They also embellish Ajzenman's wartime accomplishments. See Stefan [Shmuel] Krakowski, "Żydzi w oddziałach partyzanckich Gwardii Ludowej i Armii Ludowej na Kielecczyźnie," *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* (Warsaw), nos. 65–66 (1968): 55–58; Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Europe,* 426; Krakowski, *The War of the Doomed,* 107–8. There are other reports about robber bands containing Jews and Soviets such as Lebioda and Lepierz as well as purely Jewish groups engaged in robbery in the area north of Kielce. See Wojciech Jerzy Muszyński, "The Polish Nationalists: A Mainly Theoretical Anti-Jewishness," in Chodakiewicz, Muszyński, Styrna, eds., *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold?,* 317.

group mentioned below), which contained many former ghetto policemen, broke away and behaved like bandits. It is not surprising that relations with the local population and Home Army partisans proved to be problematic. The killing of some Jewish partisans in the Wyszków forest has been attributed in Holocaust literature to the Home Army or alternatively to the National Armed Forces, even though the latter did not operate in the area. Merdek Growas' group was most probably murdered by a band of partisans belonging to "Miecz i Pług," a radical organization that turned bandit and was later eliminated by the Home Army. However, Jewish sources do not mention that it was the Communist partisans who initiated the conflict with the Polish partisans by joining in a treacherous assault on a Home Army commander, which was followed by Polish retaliation. Another source of problems for both the Jews and Poles were the Ukrainian guards who, after deserting their posts at the Treblinka death camp, were recruited by the People's Guard based near Wyszków.[161]

[161] The Jews who made their way to Wyszków forest (some 60 kilometres northeast of Warsaw), with the help of the People's Guard (GL), after the failed revolt in the Warsaw ghetto of April 1943, consisted of members of the Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB) and also included the so-called Pinkert group, gravediggers who had amassed considerable wealth in the ghetto. Along with the Jewish police, they were accused of being hyenas, digging up recently buried bodies to extract gold crowns and fillings and steal jewels and shrouds. See Stanislaw Adler, *In the Warsaw Ghetto, 1940–1943: An Account of a Witness, the Memoirs of Stanislaw Adler* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1982), 258; Charles G. Roland, *Courage Under Siege: Starvation, Disease, and Death in the Warsaw Ghetto* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 47; Itamar Levin, *Walls Around: The Plunder of Warsaw Jewry during World War II and Its Aftermath* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 2004), 98; Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 102–103. Yitzhak Zuckerman states that they "also made money by roaming around the streets and abandoned buildings … even during the first days of the Uprising." See Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory,* 397–402. Some of them had allegedly collaborated with the Germans. Soon after their arrival in Wyszków, the Pinkert group became notorious for robbing and terrorizing the local population. According to Communist reports, they so aroused the enmity of their fellow Jewish partisans that the latter wanted "to get rid of them at any price and to liquidate them." See Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 103; Chodakiewicz, *Tajne oblicze GL–AL i PPR,* vol. 1, 110, n.3, vol. 2, 72–84. Likely some of them were eliminated by the People's Guard. The ghetto fighters who had been incorporated into a newly formed People's Guard were armed with weapons (having brought with them 28 rifles destined for but not used in the ghetto revolt); they too carried out robberies on the local population, even though they had sufficient funds to purchase food and did not need to resort to such measures to survive. According to Zuckerman, "I supplied them with money; there was no question of money then." Zuckerman explains that their robbery was "selective": "One of the things customary with our people was not to take money or property from sympathetic villages, not to steal or use weapons to acquire things, but to pay good money. But if they came on unsympathetic villages … they behaved differently." In other words, if the partisans acted decently and paid with the money they had, the villagers were considered sympathetic; the remaining villagers—the so-called "hostile" ones—could be plundered mercilessly. See Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory,* 397–402, 477–78. See also Żebrowski, *Paszkwil Wyborczej,* 113–16; Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 102–103; Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe,* 413; Zivia Lubetkin, *In the Days of Destruction and Revolt* (Israel: Beit Lohamei Haghettaot–Ghetto Fighters' House and Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1981), 259, 305; Krakowski, *The War of the Doomed,* 135–36; Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, eds., *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej,* 286; Michał Grynberg, *Żydzi w rejencji ciechanowskiej 1939–1942* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1984), 121–22; Roman T. Gerlach, "Ani niedźwiedzi, ani lasu ani nic: Tragedia getta warszawskiego," *Zeszyty Historyczne,* no. 150 (1996): 3–21; Aleksandra Bańkowska, "Polish Partisan Formations during 1942–1944 in Jewish Testimonies," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials,* vol. 1 (2008): 103–22 at 113, 119, 120; Dariusz Libionka, "ZWZ-AK i Delegatura Rządu RP wobec eksterminacji Żydów polskich," in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945,* 97–98, 181, and ibid., 619; account of Jan Załęski in Diatłowicki, *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945,* vol. 1, 214 (Załęski accuses the break-away group led by "Ignac Gajowy" of banditry). Curiously, the People's Guard, who were desperate for recruits, also accepted into their ranks some Ukrainian guards who had deserted their posts at Treblinka; these former death camp guards became notorious for their robberies and assaults on the local population, as well as for harassing Jewish partisans and Jews hiding in the forest. When the Soviet army arrived, the Jewish partisans denounced them to a Soviet-Jewish commander and they were promptly assembled and executed. Many Jewish partisans in Wyszków forest were killed because of frequent German raids in the area. After taking part in a People's Guard operation against the Home Army, in which a friendly Polish (AK) commander was ambushed and killed, Communist partisans (among them Jews) faced retaliation from the AK, or more precisely by the KN–AK (*Konfederacja Narodu*), a group led by of Bolesław Piasecki which had subordinated

itself to the AK. (After the war, a Jewish revenge group murdered Piasecki's teenage son, about which there is more later.) See Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 102–103; Barbara Engelking, *Na łące popiołów: Ocaleni z Holocaustu* (Warsaw: Cyklady, 1993), 159; Żebrowski, *Paszkwil Wyborczej*, 110–17; Chodakiewicz, *Tajne oblicze GL-AL i PPR*, vol. 1 (1997), 108–110, 128–30, vol. 2 (1997), 72–84, and vol. 3 (1999), 79–82; Bechta, *Rewolucja, mit, bandytyzm*, 97; Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza*, 251–52, 288. The execution of the Home Army commander was part of a pattern of treachery that the Soviet partisans, reinforced by Polish Jews in their ranks, had embarked on in the summer of 1943 in the Wilno area. Coupled with the many violent attacks on the civilian population in the course of gathering food and other provisions, open conflict developed between Jewish and Polish partisans. The conflict was not inevitable. According to one report, two young Jewish men who were passed from farmer to farmer in the village of Zdziebórz near Wyszków were accepted into the Home Army. See Krystian Brodacki, "Musimy ich uszanować!" *Tygodnik Solidarność,* December 17, 2004. Strangely, the claim, often repeated in Holocaust literature, that the murder of Merdek Growas's group was the work of the National Armed Forces (NSZ) came into being despite the fact that Jewish testimonies clearly alleged problems with the Home Army, and not the NSZ, which had no bases in that area. In all likelihood, it was the work of a band of partisans belonging to extremist "Miecz i Pług" who turned bandit and was later eliminated by the Home Army. See Dariusz Libionka, "Polska konspiracja wobec eksterminacji Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim," in Engelking, et al., eds., *Prowincja noc*, 475–81. In fact, the source of the problems encountered by the Jewish partisans was manifold. Pninah Papier (Grynszpan-Frymer), who survived the failed Warsaw ghetto revolt, provides a more complex, albeit disjointed and at times confusing, account of her experience as a partisan in the Wyszków forest: "It was said that there, the Russian partisans would take us on. … Captured Russian soldiers who escaped from captivity wandered aimlessly around the forests … They took weapons from us and ran away. Even Kshatshek [Władysław Gaik "Krzaczek", the GL contact who brought the Jews to Wyszków forest—*M.P.*] did not know these woods. Under his guidance, we once raided a police station and got weapons. But it was a failure, because on the next day the Germans started shelling and there were casualties." Papier continues: "Our entire group was banged around quite a bit over time and was broken up among various partisan groups. A group from Hashomer Hatzair was sent to one partisan outfit and murdered there. Chaim Greenspan (Frimer) went with a group to Czerwony Bor [Bór] and we lost all contact with him. On the paths, the Russians attacked us and took our weapons. We did not know the woods and by the time we familiarized ourselves with them, only 14 of our group of 60 remained alive. … But the situation became increasingly complex. The PPR wanted us, the 'AK' wanted us. However both accused us of crimes and tried to liquidate us. We fought independently as a group of fighters from the Warsaw Ghetto but being isolated, we saw only one solution, which was to return to Warsaw." See Pninah Papier [later Grinshpan], "In the Warsaw Ghetto and in the Wyszkow Forests," in 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). The aforementioned "Krzaczek" or Władysław Gaik (sometimes mistakenly referred to as Gajek), who had arranged for a truck to collect Jewish escapees from the Warsaw ghetto at a Prosta Street manhole and to take them to a People's Guard base in a forest outside the city, near Łomianki, helped Jews at various times for free and at other times for money. Suspected of being a double agent, "Krzaczek" is said to have lured Jews out of the ghetto to rob and kill them, to have incited the GL command against the Jews, and to have led them on suicidal missions. He was eventually executed, according to one source, by the Germans in the ruins of the ghetto—see *Słownik biograficzny działaczy polskiego ruchu robotniczego* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1987), vol. 2, 166. Vladka Meed (Miedzyrzecki), a courier for the Jewish underground, presents another distorted picture of conditions in Wyszków forest. While acknowledging that most of the killings of Jewish partisans were occasioned by German raids, she alleges that the deterioration of relations with the local villagers was caused by the activities of a "wild Polish-Ukrainian detachment," who were actually the aforementioned Ukrainian Treblinka guards taken in by the People's Guard. They "had appeared in the neighbouring woods, plundering the houses and raping the women of the villages. As a result, the peasants lumped all the partisans together as common criminals. Thus their attitude towards the Jewish partisans also changed, and this made the lot of the Jewish fighters even worse than it had been before." Meed does not mention that Jewish partisans also plundered widely and, typically, lays the ultimate blame for the failure of the Jewish partisan unit on the "treachery of the Polish underground." See Vladka Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall: Memoirs from the Warsaw Ghetto* (Israel: Beit Lohamei Hagettaot–Ghetto Fighters' House and Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1972), 203, 277–86; Vladka Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall: Memoirs from the Warsaw Ghetto* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979), 161, 179, 219–25, 252. The recollections of Jacob Celemenski, a Bund activist and courier for the Jewish underground (ŻOB) who travelled to Wyszków forest several times, bringing money for the Jewish partisans from the coordinating committee of Bundists and Zionists, contain rather curious information. Celemenski confirms that the Jewish partisans suffered severe casualties because of frequent German raids and that a group of Russian partisans "sneaked into the villages every night to find what they could, thereby terrorising the local peasants. This gave all partisans, Jewish included, a bad name. Nevertheless, the Jews maintained contact with their Russian colleagues." According to Celemenski, "Conscience kept them [i.e., the Jewish partisans] from looting peasant villages for food; they chose instead large estates or the houses of the wealthy." They were also said to be in touch with Polish Home Army partisans who were billeted among local peasants. Celemenski does not mention the connection of these Jewish partisans to the Communist People's Guard. However, he does note the following: "A group of men, women and children affiliated with the Pinkert funeral parlor [in Warsaw], had paid Polish communists to settle them in the

woods. They were faithfully transported, but then the organisers stripped them of their money, food and clothing and left them to wander aimlessly. They were helped out by being given some of our own meagre food supply, as well as by a peasant woman who was friendly with one of the Pinkert family." Reportedly, the woman was his mistress. By the spring of 1944, of the original eighty partisans, only thirty remained. The others had either perished or returned to Warsaw. According to Celemenski, "At this point, both the Russian partisans and some Polish AK insurgents wanted the bedraggled ghetto heroes to join their ranks, and threatened to kill them if their proposal was rejected." Celemenski and Simha Rathaiser ("Kazik"—later Rotem) were dispatched to Wyszków forest early in May 1944, by the Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB), to come to the aid of the partisans. There they learned that the peasants despise the partisans because the partisans raid them for food. They were also told that the Soviet partisans wanted the Jewish fighters to join them. "Above all, they insisted on the services of two doctors, Zygmund Skurnik and Jurek, as well as those of the nurses. They threatened to enforce their will by using their military might if they were refused." Celemenski goes on to state: "At the same time the Polish fighters from AK, with whom we had a friendlier relationship, also delivered a strong demand for the Jewish fighters to join their forces, with the same ultimatum: if not—bear the consequences. The Jewish partisans, who wanted to belong to neither the Russians nor the Poles, understood that the demands of both groups were coming from higher up the command … Perceiving the Russians to be more amenable to compromise, I felt it would be best to first talk the Polish AK out of this plan." Celemenski and "Kazik" then met with the Polish Home Army representative, a local commander and his party to convey the Jewish group's refusal to accede to these demands. The Poles would not budge: Proceedings were cordial, but as far as the Poles were concerned, there was nothing to bargain over, either we joined or we suffered the consequences. The commander expressed, in however comradely a fashion, strict military sentiments. We were going to have to approach the top brass in Warsaw, so we asked for three more days to consider our position. The commander consented. Kazik took pictures with a small camera, 'for posterity'." Celemenski and "Kazik" returned to Warsaw the following day. "In Warsaw we reported to our people, who immediately went to the AK headquarters and persuaded the command to rescind the ultimatum about joining their forces." See Celemenski, *Elegy For My People,* 167–75. On the other hand, Simha Rotem, a representative of the Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB), describes these events rather differently and doesn't even mention the Russian partisans. He states that he was assigned to meet representatives of the Home Army in the Wyszków area "to try to settle relations between the AK and the ZOB in the forest. The ZOB group had called us in and complained bitterly that the AK were conspiring against them, and in fact wanted to destroy them. With Antek's [Yitzhak Zuckerman] intervention, we got in touch with someone from headquarters who was in charge of the area. He gave us data and details about holding a meeting with the AK underground commander, who would settle relations between the two sides. … Accompanied by several armed companions, I went to the meeting place. … After a few polite words, I brought up the problem. To reinforce what I said, I introduced myself as a member of the AK in Warsaw, working on their behalf, which was only partly correct, since I … hadn't been appointed by them. … I explained that the AK command wanted them to make peace with the ZOB, and I scolded them for what they had done in the past. … my interlocutors promised to make every effort to ensure the safety of our people. In return, they asked the members of the ZOB not to pester the peasants in the area. In fact, things did calm down in the area for some time, which made our companions feel safer." Rotem refers to correspondence from Zuckerman from that period which adds yet a different dimension. Reportedly, the AK representative that Rotem met with wanted to check into the affiliation of the ŻOB" group. If it belonged to the Polski Związek Powstańczy (a cryptonym for the Home Army), "they would leave them alone." Zuckerman's letter goes on to say that the "[communist] PPR treats our group as 'its own people,' who have a certain autonomy. Recently, they carried out an armed attack in cooperation (with us). The PPR thinks the group is acting correctly (they don't know about their contacts with the AK) otherwise (it's the AK), they would have destroyed them." Apparently, Zuckerman wanted to obtain from the AK headquarters a letter confirming the ŻOB group affiliation with the Home Army. See Simha Rotem ("Kazik"), *Memoirs of a Warsaw Ghetto Fighter: The Past Within Me* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 87–95.

Other crimes directed at Jews which have been attributed to the non-Communist Polish underground by Jewish historians and authors have also been called into question. For example, the alleged murder by a National Armed Forces (NSZ) unit of 30 Jews at 25 Długa Street in Warsaw, sensationalized by *Gazeta Wyborcza* on the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, was thoroughly discredited by historians. See Żebrowski, *Paszkwil Wyborczej,* passim; Engelking and Libionka, *Żydzi w powstańczej Warszawie,* 191. A group of Jews allegedly killed by the NSZ in Zakrzówek near Janów Lubleski was, based on Jewish reports from 1946, actually murdered by the Germans. See Leszek Żebrowski, *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne: Dokumenty, struktury, personalia* (Warsaw: Burchard Edition, 1996), 2: 6, 21–22 n.4. Contradictory Jewish sources claim that members of the NSZ killed 120 Jews in Worczyn, in Volhynia; however, there was no NSZ base in that area and the events themselves are in doubt. See Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 95, 329; Władysław Siemaszko and Ewa Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na ludności polskiej Wołynia 1939–1945* (Warsaw: von borowiecky, 2000), vol. 1, 912. See also Chodakiewicz, *Tajne oblicze GL-AL i PPR,* vol. 2, 39–40 n.18 (concerning the activities of the GL in Rzeczyca, falsely attributed to the Home Army), 143–44 n.17 (concerning the activities of the People's Army [AL] near Lubartów, falsely attributed to the Home Army); vol. 3: 14, 221–22 (concerning the activities of GL commander Leon Plichta "Wrona" near Kraśnik, falsely attributed to the Home Army); Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, "Logika faktów," and Leszek Żebrowski, "'Odpowiedź' prof. Krzysztofa Dunin-Wąsowicza, czyli o potrzebie dekomunizacji nauki," *Zeszyty*

Historyczne WiN-u, no. 9 (December 1996): 275–92; Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza,* 318–19 n.52. The murder in June 1944 of Professor Ludwik Widerszal and Jerzy Makowiecki, two officers of Jewish origin serving in the Home Army Bureau of Information and Propaganda, is falsely attributed to the NSZ by Piotr Wróbel, *Historical Dictionary of Poland, 1945–1996* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), 203, as is the betrayal of Professor Marceli Handelsman (who was arrested by the Gestapo in 1944) by Gunnar S. Paulsson, *Secret City,* 45. The murder of Widerszal appears to have been the work of a counter-intelligence unit led by Andrzej Popławski (aka Sudeczko), attached to the supreme Home Army command, who suspected Widerszal of contacts with the Communists; whereas the execution of Makowiecki, who was in favour of reaching a compromise with the Soviets, and his wife may have been carried out by the Kripo (criminal police). See Jerzy Janusz Terej, *Na rozstajach dróg: Ze studium nad obliczem i modelem Armii Krajowej,* 2nd revised and expanded edition (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1980), 288; Leszek Żebrowski, "O polskim sądownictwie podziemnym," *Zeszyty Historyczne WiN,* nos. 2–3 (January–June 1991): 23–25; (Communist historian) Ryszard Nazarewicz, *Armii Ludowej dylematy i dramaty* (Warsaw: Oficyna Drukarska, 1998), 218–24; and Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza,* 381 n.64; Marek Strok and Mariusz Olczak, "Kto zabił Makowieckich?" *Rzeczpospolita,* October 10, 2009. One of the members of the group of assassins of Ludwik Widerszal was Tobiasz Berkal, a Betar member who served in the Home Army under the name of Paweł Ostrowski. Although Berkal survived the war, there is no record of his having alleged that Widerszal's execution had anything to do with his Jewish origin. See Dariusz Libionka and Laurence Weinbaum, *Bohaterowie, hochsztaplerzy, opisywacze: Wokół Żydowskiego Związku Wojskowego* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą, 2011), 38. According to another version, the perperators were an unaffiliated extremist radical group. See Tomasz Strzembosz, *Rzeczpospolita podziemna: Społeczeństwo polskie a państwo podziemne 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Krupski i S-ka, 2000), 317; Janusz Marszalec, "Na obrzeżach legendy: Kontrowersje wokół działalności podziemia w latach 1939–1944," in Sławomir Poleszak and Adam Puławski, eds., *Podziemie zbrojne na Lubelszczyźnie wobec dwóch totalitaryzmów 1939–1956* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2002), 90, 93–94; Grzegorz Mazur (interviewed by Jan Tomasz Lipski), "Narodowe Siły Zbrojne," *Gazeta Wyborcza,* March 30–31, 2002; Janusz Marszalec, "Morderstwo na Makowieckich i Widerszalu: Stara sprawa, nowe pytania, nowe wątpliwości," in *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały,* vol. 2 (2006): 23–53. For other theories see Gondek, *Polska karząca 1939–1945,* 75–76; Piotr Lipiński, "Raport Rzepeckiego (2)," *Gazeta Wyborcza,* December 28–29, 2002; Sebastian Bojemski, "Likwidacja Widerszala i Makowieckich, czyli Janusz Marszalec widzi drzewa, a nie widzi lasu," *Glaukopis: Pismo społeczno-historyczne* (Warsaw), no. 9–10 (2007–2008): 364–72. Historian Robert Kuwałek alleged, erroneously, that in July 1944, Polish partisans, either the Home Army or the National Armed Forces, killed a group of some 70 Jews hiding in a forest near Uchanie, near Hrubiesów. See Robert Kuwałek, "Żydowski ruch oporu," Internet: <http://archive.is/zC6g>. In fact, six or seven Jews were killed by a band of criminals, who soon after joined the Communist Citizen's Militia. See Anna Ambroziak, "Przeprosiny tylko lokalne," *Nasz Dziennik,* January 28, 2014. Although the National Armed Forces has become a convenient scapegoat, about 90 percent of the references in Yad Vashem accounts to alleged misdeeds committed by Polish partisans refer to the Home Army as perpetrators, not the NSZ. See Gutman and Krakowski, *Unequal Victims,* 217–20. The same holds true for the post-"liberation" period, at least in the province of Lublin, where the anti-Communist underground was particularly active. According to research by historian Rafał Wnuk, the vast majority of altercations with Jews, in various capacities, are attributable to the Home Army and its successor underground organization, Freedom and Independence (*Wolność i Niepodległość—WiN*). See Rafał Wnuk, *Lubelski Okręg AK DSZ i WiN, 1944–1947* (Warsaw: Volumen, 2000), 268–453. The tendency to lay blame on the NSZ for most crimes committed against Jews is a remnant of postwar Stalinist propaganda which took every opportunity to vilify that movement. See Dariusz Małyszek, "Narodowe Siły Zbrojne w PRL i na emigracji w latach 1945–1989 w świetle historiografii, publicystyki, literatury oraz filmu," *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość,* no. 2 (10) (2006): 245–46.

Some of the most outrageous charges—which have been thoroughly discredited—pertain to the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944. According to Reuben Ainsztein, the Home Army told Yitzhak Zuckerman, the commander of the Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB), that "there was no room for his men in the Home Army." Ainsztein also claims: "The Polish fascists probably killed more Jews than Germans during the uprising … Many of the Polish Nazis [sic] were former officers and as such were given command of Home Army units, where they did their best to intensify anti-Jewish hatreds by telling their men that the reason why the Red Army had stopped on the eastern bank of the Vistula was because it was commanded by Jews responsible for the Katyn massacre, who now wanted to take revenge on the Poles for the Warsaw ghetto. In view of the bad conscience of many of their soldiers on this subject, their propaganda was not without success." See Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Europe,* 674, 676, and generally, 674–81. Similar charges were repeated by Shmuel Krakowski, in his *The War of the Doomed,* 275–91. Marysia Warman (née Bronisława or Bronka Feinmesser), a Jewish activist and liaison officer on the "Aryan" side of Warsaw who was married to Zygmunt Warman, a ŻOB fighter who escaped from the ghetto together with Yitzhak Zuckerman and Marek Edelman, denies this blanket refusal: "When the Polish uprising broke out, Antek [Zuckerman] and Marek [Edelman] went to the higher officers in the Polish [Home] army and asked them to take us as a group, as the Jewish Fighting Organization. They refused. 'Individually, please come, but not as a group; we won't give you any commander.'" See Gurewitsch, *Mothers, Sisters, Resisters,* 288. See also Gustaw Kerszman, *Jak ginąć, to razem* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation, 2003), 123. This attitude on the part of the Home Army should not be surprising given that the

ŻOB remnants were, at the same time, negotiating with the Communist underground (where Zuckerman admits their loyalities lay—Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory,* 523, 534) and had themselves refused to merge with the anti-Communist Jewish Military Union (ŻZW) on the eve of the April 1943 revolt in the Warsaw ghetto, agreeing only to accept ŻZW members individually, and not as a group. Many of Ainsztein and Krakowski's charges were challenged or toned down in Gunnar S. Paulsson's *Secret City,* 168–98. Polish historians have examined the charges more rigorously and have marshalled compelling evidence to discredit most of them. Janusz Marszalec believes that some 15–20 Jews were killed by criminal elements (some of them Home Army members) during the course of the uprising. See Żebrowski, *Paszkwil Wyborczej,* passim; Teresa Prekerowa, "Żydzi w Powstaniu Warszawskim," in Marian Marek Drozdowski et al., eds., *Powstanie Warszawskie z perspektywy półwiecza: Studia i materiały z sesji naukowej na Zamku Królewskim w Warszawie 14–15 czerwca 1994* (Warsaw: Instytut Historyczny PAN, 1995), 84–94; Janusz Marszalec, *Ochrona porządku i bezpieczeństwa publicznego w Powstaniu Warszawskim* (Warsaw: Rytm, 1999), 251–61. As Norman Davies rightly concludes, the accusations that had been repeated for decades are grossly exaggerated and, by and large, Jews served in the ranks of the Polish underground without incident. See Davies, *Rising '44,* 287. In some cases, the Polish underground had merely liquidated Gestapo or Kripo agents and informers who happened to be Jewish. See, for example, Marszalec, *Ochrona porządku i bezpieczeństwa publicznego w Powstaniu Warszawskim,* 369 (a Gestapo agent named Haman). In fact, there were quite a few Jewish agents and informers not only in Warsaw, but also in virtually every ghetto and town throughout occupied Poland. They constituted a source of danger not only for Jews in hiding but also for the Polish underground. Historian Yehuda Bauer concedes that Jewish collaborators caused "tremendous damage." See Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 148. For some examples of Jewish testimonies confirming this phenomenon see: Levin, *Fighting Back,* 115, 280 (Wilno), 311 (Kaunas), 314 (Wilno, Oszmiana), 346 (Kaunas); Grynberg and Kotowska eds., *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945,* 7–8 (Kraków), 131 (Włodawa), 181, 184, 187 (Częstochowa), 191 (Kielce), 254 (Skierniewice), 283 (Lwów), 392 (Białystok), 409 (Łomża), 540, 551 (Wilno). Numerous other examples can be found in the Mark Paul's study, *Patterns of Cooperation, Collaboration, and Betrayal: Jews, Germans and Poles in German-Occupied Poland during World War II,* 2012, Internet: <http://www.kpk-toronto.org/archives/Collaboration.pdf> and <http://glaukopis.pl/pdf/czytelnia/PatternsOfCooperationCollaborationAndBetrayal.pdf>.

In actual fact, many members of nationalist organizations came to the assistance of Jews during the German occupation. Some Jews even fought in the ranks of the National Armed Forces (*Narodowe Siły Zbrojne*–NSZ), despite its reputation in Holocaust literature as being virulently anti-Semitic. A number of Jews came forward as witnesses on behalf of their wartime benefactors who were members of the Home Army or National Armed Forces when the latter were put on trial by the Communist authorities after the war. The number of false charges levelled against Poles for crimes against Jews, doubtless motivated by blind revenge, ran very high. See Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów,* 88–89. In one case, Jews testified on behalf of National Armed Forces officers who had sheltered them and were charged with killing some Soviet partisans; the latter, it turned out, had murdered a Polish family and raped and plundered in the Łuków area. See Chodakiewicz, *Tajne oblicze GL-AL i PPR,* vol. 2, 92–93; Leszek Żebrowski, "'Odpowiedź' prof. Krzysztofa Dunin-Wąsowicza, czyli o potrzebie dekomunizacji nauki," *Zeszyty Historyczne WiN-u,* no. 9 (December 1996): 284–85. For additional examples of Jews testifying on behalf of NSZ members see: Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918–1955,* 427–32; Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust: Polish-Jewish Conflict in the Wake of World War II* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 2003), 189–90, 194–96 (many examples); Leon Guz, *Targowa 64: Dziennik 27 I 1943–11 IX 1944,* 2nd edition (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 2001), 94–95; Krystyna Kabzińska, ed., *Sylwetki kobiet-żołnierzy* (Toruń: Fundacja Archiwum i Muzeum Pomorskie Armii Krajowej oraz Wojskowej Służby Polek, 2003), 237–40 (Maria Krystyna Nachtman, an NSZ liaison officer, rescued Dr. Zachariasz Frank of Wołomin); Łukasz Kamiński and Jan Żaryn, eds., *Reflections on the Kielce Pogrom* (Warsaw: Institute of National Remembrance, 2006), 95–96; Jan Żaryn, "Elity obozu narodowego wobec zagłady Żydów," in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945,* 393; Łukasz Kamiński and Jan Żaryn, eds., *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego,* vol. 1 (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2006), 90; Daniel Wojciechowski, "Dwukrotny więzień Mokotowa: Ks. Mieczysław Połoska (1896–1981), *Nasz Dziennik,* January 5–6, 2008; Kamiński and Żaryn, eds., *Reflections on the Kielce Pogrom,* 95–96; Wojciech Jerzy Muszyński, "'Czarny mecenas'," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 3 (2009): 53–56 (Jerzy Zakulski from Kraków rescued Maria Bernstein, Mirosław Ostromęcki, Jerzy Regulski, Edward Kemnitz); Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów,* 192 (Czesław Fabisiak), 210 (Rev. Bolesław Grudzieński), 262 (Janina Sabina Konopacka), 344 (Mirosław Ostromęcki). On Jews who served in the NSZ, especially during the Warsaw Uprising, and NSZ members who came to their assistance, see: Chaim Lazar Litai, *Muranowska 7: The Warsaw Ghetto Rising* (Tel Aviv: Massada–P.E.C. Press, 1966), 327; Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers,* 115; Bartoszewski and Lewin, eds., *Righteous Among Nations,* 590–91 (Władek Chajutin joined the NOW-AK, formerly NSZ, unit of Franciszek Przysiężniak, *nom de guerre* Ojciec Jan, in the Janów Lubelski area); Waldemar Monkiewicz, "Za cenę życia: O ratowaniu Żydów w Białostockiem o okresie okupacji niemieckiej," in Dobroński and Monkiewicz, eds., *Białostoccy Żydzi,* vol. 2, 153–54 (Bolesław Filipowski helped the Jewish underground movement in Białystok ghetto); Chodakiewicz, *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne,* 117–18, 127, 221–22, 353–55 n.205, 416 n.23; Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 96–97; Sebastian Bojemski, *Poszli w skier powodzi…: Narodowe Siły Zbrojne w Powstaniu Warszawskim* (Warsaw and Charlottesville, Virginia: Glaukopis, 2002), 235–52; Sebastian Bojemski, "Jewish members in the right-wing NSZ," *The Sarmatian Review,* vol. XXII, no. 3 (September

Robbery and the use of violence, as Jewish partisans themselves concede, were widespread. This occurred even when the partisans had money to acquire food and no need to resort to brutal tactics. A partisan in the Jewish "Adolf" partisan unit in the southern part of the Lublin province presents the situation is a succinct and clear light:

> Jews from the nearby villages made up the bulk of the unit. They often fought battles, they robbed in order to gain provisions. The food was generally good, due to the energy of the partisans.[162]

2002), Letters, posted online at: <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/%7Esarmatia/902/223letters.html>; Tec, *Resilience and Courage,* 221–22; Krzysztof Kaczmarski, *Podziemie narodowe na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1944* (Rzeszów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej—Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2003), 221–22; Sebastian Bojemski, "Z więzień," *Glaukopis,* no. 1 (2003): 65–69; Aleksandra Bańkowska, "Polish Partisan Formations during 1942–1944 in Jewish Testimonies," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials*, vol. 1 (2008): 116; Sebastian Bojemski, *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne w Powstaniu Warszawskim (1 VIII–2 X 1944)* (Warsaw: Fronda, 2009), 245–66; Engelking and Libionka, *Żydzi w powstańczej Warszawie,* 141–43 (Jewish prisoners released from Gęsiówka during the Warsaw Uprising fought in Zygmunt Reliszko's "Koło" Brigade and in the "Młot" Division); Sebastian Bojemski, "Polscy narodowcy a Żydzi: Praktyka dnia codziennego w czasie okupacji niemieckiej na przykładzie NSZ," in Chodakiewicz and Muszyński, *Złote serca, czy złote żniwa,* 353–78; Sebastian Bojemski, "The Polish Nationalists and the Jews: Everyday Practice During the German Occupation, and the Case of the National Armed forces (NSZ)," in Chodakiewicz, Muszyński and Styrna, eds., *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold?,* 325–48. Feliks Pisarewski-Parry, for example, after being freed from a Nazi prisoner convoy in Warsaw, became a relatively high ranking officer in the NSZ regional command in Warsaw. See his memoir *Orły i reszki* (Warsaw: Iskra, 1984). Another Jew who fought with the NSZ in Warsaw was Jerzy Lando. See his memoir *Saved by My Face: A True Story of Courage and Escape in War-torn Poland* (Edinburgh and London: Mainstream, 2002), 184–208. Stanisław Ostwind-Zuzga, the NSZ commander in the county of Węgrów, who was of Jewish origin, was executed by the Communist authorities in 1945. See Mariusz Bechta, *...Między Bolszewią a Niemcami: Konspiracja polityczna i wojskowa Polskiego Obozu Narodowego na Podlasiu w latach 1939–1952,* Second revised edition (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej and Rytm, 2009), 519. Several NSZ officers in the Podlasie region rescued Jews during the German occupation, among them Stanisław Miodoński, and Jerzy Wojtkowski. Ibid., 142, 529. Staszek Kotok, a musician from Wilno living in Warsaw, obtained forged documents from the National Radical Camp (*Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny*–ONR) and became its liaison officer, travelling by train and playing folk tunes like a beggar, while passing on instructions, secret orders, and documents to the units of the underground organization. See Severin Gabriel, *In the Ruins of Warsaw Streets* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2005), 46–47. On May 5, 1945, the NSZ's Brygada Świętokrzyska (Holy Cross Brigade), under the command of Colonel Antoni Szacki ("Bohun-Dąbrowski"), rescued about 1,000 prisoners—including 280 Jews—when they loberated the women's concentration camp in Holýšov near Plzeň (Pilsen), in Bohemia. (This rescue operation, which was more daring and effective than any undertaken by Jewish partisans, was reported in the June 19, 1986 issue of *The Jewish Voice.*) When the Stalinist security forces went on a killing spree that targeted opposition political activists, Stanisław Radkiewicz, the Minister of Public Security, publicly blamed "the NSZ thugs" for the murders. See Piotr Lipiński, "Kto zabił Bolesława "Ściborka?" *Gazeta Wyborcza,* April 17–18, 2004. The charge that the NSZ collaborated with the Nazis, which was a staple of postwar Stalinist propaganda and is found in many Jewish memoirs, has been authoritatively discredited by secret Gestapo reports that unequivocally reject this notion based on the NSZ's anti-German wartime record. See Leszek Żebrowski, "Narodowe Siły Zbrojne," in *Encyklopedia "Białych Plam"* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2003), vol. 12, 288. In fact, it was the NSZ who was responsible for the death of General Kurt Renner, the only German general assassinated by the Polish underground during the occupation. See Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza,* 269. Although the NSZ is often also blamed for killing more People's Guard members than the Home Army, the available data simply does not support that claim either. Ibid., 300, n.77. These examples, among many, illustrate how inadequate and unreliable the present state of research is. For a comprehensive assessment of relations between the Polish underground and the Jews in the county of Janów Lubelski/Kraśnik see the recent study by Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets: Occupation Politics in Poland, 1939–1947* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2004), chapters 4 and 5. That author shows that far more Jews died at the hands of the Communist underground and bandit groups individually than at the hands of the Home Army and National Armed Forces combined. Ibid., 153, 155, 177 n.100.

[162] Hersz Broner's testimony is cited in John Lowell Armstrong, "The Polish Underground and the Jews: A Reassessment of Home Army Commander Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski's Order 116 Against Banditry," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 72, no. 2 (April 1994): 273. Tuwie Miller, the commander of the Jewish police in Parysów near Garwolin, used threats to obtain weapons from villagers and then forced them to supply his forest group with food. A local Home Army commander protected him nonetheless. See Dariusz Libionka, "Polska konspiracja wobec

In the summer of 1943, a Jewish band came at night to rob a Polish estate near Ryki, northwest of Lublin, belonging to a landowner named Kuszel. When he came to the defence of his daughter's honour, he was murdered. In the environs of Kraśnik groups of Jews attacked well-to-do Polish families. Not only did they rob their homes, but they killed some of them and made off with a few young women.[163] Violence begot violence. On September 7, 1943, in Kozice Dolne, south of Lublin, a Jewish forest group set fire to eight farmhouses and murdered the wife and young child of a certain Kasprzak, who had killed a Jewish family from Piaski sheltered by the village head man for some time.[164]

A group of Jews who escaped from Radzyń Podlaski formed a partisan group led by Yitzhak Kleinman, and lived in bunkers in a forest not far from the village of Stara Wieś. In March 1942, they robbed a small dairy processing plant located on a landowner's estate near that village and killed the German-appointed director. Containers of cheese and butter were hauled away by horse and wagon and shared with their comrades in the forest. Soon after, German gendarmes captured one of the bunkers and shot the Jews hiding there. Kleinman's group decided to take revenge on the peasant believed to have reported the bunker to the Germans. One night armed partisans descended on his home, locked everything from the outside and set it on fire. The peasant and his entire family perished in the flames.[165]

Leibl (Lejb) Goldberg, a native of Międzyrzec Podlaski, describes a pattern of robberies his Jewish forest group engaged in, pretending to be Russian partisans (unpersuasively), which sometimes descended to the level of outright terrorization of the impoverished local population. Ocasionally, they met with defiance from peasants who were being robbed and encountered partisans who came to protect the villagers from repeated raids.

> We headed toward a lone house standing in the field. A lamp was lit in one of the windows. I stopped near the house and my colleagues stood a little farther away. With feigned energy I started knocking on the door and called out [in Russian], "Open up." The window opened and a frightened voice answered, "Please, please." A woman handed two five-kilo loaves of bread through the window." I yelled, "Too little, give more." … Leaving I asked the woman whether Russians came here. She answered that they did and that people were afraid of them. Now we knew how to behave. We went away. We had 12 kilos of bread. My colleagues became bolder. We approached the next house which was also located off the beaten track. Here too I yelled [in Russian], "Open up" and

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eksterminacji Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim," Engelking, Leociak and Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc,* 491–92.

[163] 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 Gieysztora, 2004/2005), 399.

[164] Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945,* 175.

[165] Tzvi Leiberson, "Radzyner Jews in Partisan Groups," in Yitzchak Zigelman, ed., *Radzyn Memorial Book,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/radzyn/radzyn.html>; translation of I. Siegelman, ed., *Sefer Radzin* (Tel Aviv: Council of Former Residents of Radzyń (Podlaski) in Israel, 1957), 306–308.

knocked loudly. I entered the house first, and behind me Moshe Sztajbnerg. The rest stood sentry outside. In order to scare the residents I said in Russian, "We have automatic weapons. I'll shoot anyone who leaves the house." When the householders were sufficiently frightened, we searched the house. The house was well off. We found bread, half a metre of buckwheat, and flour. … In the same way we worked our way through five more houses. We took away full bags. Each one weighed at least 150 kilos. They were full of food with a large quantity of bread. We marched back with joy and pride. …

We decided to secure coal for the entire winter. Observing the surroundings we noticed that a worker from the power station … had amassed many bricks of coal. We calculated that we needed 1,000 bricks for three months. We went to his house. … It was dark in the house … We went to the stable which was near the house, tore off the lock with a staple and entered inside. … Most of all we took potatoes and garlic and hid them not far from our hideout. I stood sentry when the others left with the potatoes. Suddenly it became light in the house. Apparently the householders had heard us. Thinking what to do now I said loudly and emphatically, "I'll at one shoot anyone who leaves the residence." It became dark in the house. My colleagues returned. … Everyone again loaded up some bricks [of coal] and we went back and forth three times. We set the bricks not far from our hideout. Standing sentry I noticed there was an opening in the stable leading to the attic. I understood that there must be something there. When my colleagues returned I said, "Moshe, climb up and see what's there." He climbed up and said that there was about a meter of onions, two down-filled pillows and some underclothes. I ordered abruptly, "Take everything down." … We took everything to that same place. …

We decided to make our third round in a remote colony of the same village. We heard the sound of music in the village which was coming from one house. … Lozer [Potaż] and I looked through the window into the house while the others waited at a distance. Through the window I saw some couples dancing. … Suddenly someone left the house and started to call his dog. … The Christian became visibly frightened of us and asked us not to cause a commotion. He brought us some milk but we didn't want to drink. You could hear music from a record player in the house … I entered inside. Fear descended on all those gathered in the residence. The girls went to another room. … Moshe and Lozer also entered the residence holding their hands on their holsters to give the impression that they had weapons. I saw that it made an impression on everyone. I yelled, "Play a tango." They played a tango right away but the girls were afraid of dancing with me. The boys pushed them toward me by force. After dancing with one for a few minutes I said, "There's something wrong with her, give me another." Moshe also wanted to dance. I gave an order, "We're leaving!"

We went to the first better looking cottage and knocked on the door. It was opened immediately. We took a sack of buckwheat and bread and left. Not far from us we heard yelling, "Hurrah, Jews, hurrah," but no one had the courage to come closer to us. We realized that it would not be good to work in this village. …

We kept returning to the village of Sitno. We felt more sure of ourselves with a rifle. Entering a house we asked the owner, "What's your name?" He answered Jan, for example. Then looking deep

into his eyes, I said, for example, "No, your name is Wacław." In order to frighten him some more I took a German cartridge out of my pocket and inserted it into my Russian rifle … This always worked. The Christian in these cases would always fall on his knees in front of me and cry, "Sir, my name is Jan," and he would show me various documents to convince me. I waited precisely for that. Then I said politely, "If you are Wacław, you will live." In these situations his wife and children would also cry a great deal. When everyone was sufficiently terrified I conducted a search during which we always found some flour, grease, and buckwheat. … When the Christian saw us on the other side of his door he thanked God and bid us farewell for the road. …

Our next raid was in Sitno, for meat. I stood sentry with my rifle. My colleagues entered the cowshed and tied up a pig. Suddenly, at a distance of 20 steps, I noticed someone lighting a cigarette. I aimed the rifle in his direction but the dim light immediately disappeared. I went to my colleagues and said, "We have to be careful, they're getting something ready for us." … Suddenly I heard a voice and a shot from a pistol in my direction. I ran to my colleagues and yelled, "We have to run, they're going to shoot at us!" We left the pig that was tied up and ran away. They kept shooting at us. All of the roads were staked out. We chanced on a side road which we took in the direction of the town. Thinking that we came from the forest, they had not staked out that road. We didn't return to that village anymore. Not wanting to return home empty-handed, we made a detour from the main road to several houses and again brought back some food, grease and vodka. …

Two days later we went on another foray. We decided to start in a remoter colony of the same village. We arrived at the first cottage. They opened [the door] for us. We took some bread, some food and went to the next house. They didn't want to open [the door] for us. But when the owner looked out the window and saw a rifle he softened and opened right away. I entered the house with Moshe. Here we also took bread and meat. We heard a strange pounding. I thought that someone was in the attic and that it was the echo of their footsteps, but suddenly the peasant threw himself on his knees in front of us and yelled, "Run away, save us!" They though that Germans were coming. They were afraid that if they encountered Jews they would kill them too. But these were Polish partisans. We left. They shot many rounds of gunfire at us. They were evidently waiting for us because the previous night we had taken a pig here. We escaped through the courtyard. …

At night we went to Rogoźnica to [Lozer Potaz's] friend, a Christian. We thought we would get something more from him but he only gave us a small piece of bread, saying he didn't have more. We rested in his barn all day and at night we went out to look for bread. We knocked on [the doors of] several homes. They handed us bread through the window. We had enough for ourselves. We approached a cottage where we had been several times. As usual, after knocking, we asked for a piece of bread. The inhabitants started to yell, "These are the Jews." Immediately people appeared from all ends and started to run in our direction. We went into the grain and from there into a small forest where there were enormous pools. We threw our sack into a ditch and ran farther. As we ran we heard a few shots.[166]

[166] Memoir of Lajbusz (Łajbł) Goldberg, December 18, 1946, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 302/95. After the war, Goldberg sought the protection of Soviet officials in order to carry out revenge against Poles who had allegedly wronged Jews during the German occupation and against members of the Polish anti-Soviet underground. See also his testimony under the name of Lejb Goldberg, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/3502, referred to later. Goldberg's colleague, Lozer Potaż, was killed in Czemierniki in unclear

Initial friendly relations often withered away over time, as was the case in the area northwest of Lublin, where the familiar cycle was repeated. Alter Roset, who together with his family was hidden in a dug-out in the barn of a Polish farmer, recalled:

> Apart from our family which was composed of six people, there were several other Jewish families who, like us, survived the war in hideouts in Płouszowice. …
>
> In the vicinity of Płouszowice several Jews started up a partisan group under the leadership of one Mordechaj [Kiersztenbaum or Kirszenbaum], called Marcinek from Markuszów. Marcinek and his partisan group, which included Jews from Lublin, kept attacking [the cottages of] peasants and forced them to hand over arms and food. The peasants had to carry out their orders but looked for ways to get rid of him.
>
> One day when the entire partisan group came to the home of one of the peasants, that peasant sent his daughter to inform the Germans …
>
> The Germans immediately surrounded the house and started to shoot the partisans with their machine guns. Only Marcinek, the leader, managed to escape the gunfire and hide in a nearby barn. …
>
> When Marcinek saw that the Germans had left, he left the barn several hours later. Then some peasants armed with axes and scythes threw themselves at him, but, with the help of a few grenades he had on him, Marcinek killed around fifteen peasants, and forced the others to flee. Then, out of revenge, he set fire to several cottages.
>
> Fleeing from there, he came across of the members of his partisan group named Icchok, who also managed to escape the Germans' gunfire.
>
> They learned about our hideout and came to us. We hid both of them. But the peasants found out about this and wanted to force our host to turn all of us over.
>
> Our peasant did not want to turn us over, and only later when he and his family started to get threats did he tell us to leave the hideout. …
>
> We remained in the village wandering around for six weeks until the peasant took us back.[167]

In his memoir, Samuel Gruber ("Mietek"), the leader of a Jewish partisan group in that same area, wrote:

> Why not see what we could get from these peasants?
>
> We followed Genek's suggestion with dispatch. Some of the peasants gave us a little difficulty. They belonged to the *Armja [Armia] Krajowa* … The result was that we had to administer a few

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circumstances, together with a Jew from Radzyń Podlaski named Hershel Ponczak. See also Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust*, 165.

[167] Alter Roset, "Grupa partyzantów spod Płouszowic," in Adam Kopciowski, ed., *Księga pamięci żydowskiego Lublina* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2011), 348–50; translation of *Dos bukh fun Lublin* (Paris: Former Residents of Lublin in Paris, Paris, 1952). Another Polish family who sheltered a large group of Jews in Płouszowice was recognized by Yad Vashem. See Gutman and Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 4: *Poland*, Part 1, 501–2.

good beatings to those peasants before we could get any weapons at all. But in some instances my one pistol, brandished with the proper gestures into a slow-witted peasant's face, was sufficient. Our forays into the countryside near the Garbowky [Garbów] Forest yielded us a grand total of ten rifles and about a dozen rounds of ammunition. …

Not long before, we had lost another one of our group: Kaganovich. He had gone with Szengut, Tolka, and some of the Markuszow [Markuszów] men to get weapons from the Poles. They were stopped by a German patrol. … Among the dead was Kaganovich. The next morning we went into the forest to bury him. We took away with us his personal possessions, his gun, his wrist watch, his cigarette lighter and some gold coins. …

Worse, the peasants in the area became increasingly hostile. … [they] did not take kindly to the idea that they should be called upon to feed Jews. More often than not, our men approaching a farmhouse would be met by ferocious dogs. Some of the peasants organized themselves into a self-defense force to keep the Jewish partisans away. [In actual fact, these measures were taken against all marauders without distinction.—*M.P.*] …

One night two of our men, [Yitzhak] Morel and Shmuel Topper carrying his precious machine gun, led a small group on a food-gathering mission to a village where we had always been given a friendly reception. But this time our comrades suddenly found themselves surrounded by Poles and a pack of vicious, snarling dogs. Before they could regain their wits, Morel and Shmuel had their machine gun taken from them and found themselves forced against a wall. The Poles opened fire on them. The others in the group escaped, but Morel and Shmuel were killed.

The news sent our whole camp into an uproar. We decided to take drastic action. Jaeger and I led a patrol of 20 men, including a band of Markuszow boys under Sever Rubinstein, to the village. We ordered all the villagers out of their houses and herded them together into the village square. … After we had cleared the village of its entire population, including horses, cows and birds, we set fire to the barns and houses. Within hours, the village had been reduced to a pile of rubble. On the way back to our camp, we scattered some crudely lettered on the road, telling what we had done to that particular village, and why. …

And so, on February 9, 1943, … we left Drop's farm [a helpful Polish—*M.P.*] and plodded through the snow to the nearby village of Pryzcowa-Gura [Pryszczowa Góra]. There we knew several peasants who had, in fact, given us shelter on other occasions. We were in luck, for this time, too, they readily took us in for the night. …

It seems that the villagers [in Pryszczowa Góra, where the Jewish partisans had killed a Polish boy whose father allegedly reported their presence to the Germans—*M.P.*] took the words of their priest [who urged the villagers to provide food to the partisans and not to report them to the Germans, as they were enjoined to, until they left the village—*M.P.*] to heart, for the next day they treated us with unusual deference and hospitality. They gave us food, clothing, and even shoes … However, this was not enough for some of our men. They went out on their own and, instead of asking peasants for what they wanted, acted the part of thieves and holdup men.

One of our boys was in the habit of going out, armed with a revolver and rifle, to hold up farmsteads in the area, demanding food, clothing and money. … But even our friends did not like being held up for what they might have given us of their own free will, and they gave us a full and angry report of his activities. …

We had made friends also with some Polish non-Jews, particularly in a hamlet called Przypisowka [Przypisówka, a village whose inhabitants were known for their pillaging—*M.P.*]. Nearly every boy from that village had, at one time or other, gone out into the woods to help the partisans. These youngsters were quite a different breed …[168]

Early in the summer of 1943 we had an unpleasant incident with the "A.K." A small group of our men, including Jaeger and myself, had gone into one of the villages [pillaging] for food … Somehow, the "A.K." unit in the area got wind of our whereabouts and they opened fire on us … We returned the fire and the shooting went on for almost half the day. … At any rate, luck was with us, and none of our men was hurt. But we wanted to find out who had put the "A.K." on our trail. We had our answer. …

We called on our Polish friends from the village of Przypisowka for help. They promptly came to our aid and before long we had flushed out all the troublemakers. The man [who had been robbed] who had caused our recent trouble with the "A.K." confessed without too much prodding. We shot him right then and there, and buried him in the woods. As for the other spies, our men tracked them down to their homes, where they made short shrift of them. …

Another time, we found that we were being followed by a group of boys on bicycles. … We gave the boys a proper grilling and proceeded to beat them up. In no time at all, they broke down and told us that they had been under orders from a German task force set up expressly for spying on partisans. They said that they were not Poles but Ukrainians. …

But at the moment these young Ukrainians who had trailed us apparently had little heart for killing. They turned tail. Yet we captured them all and shot them. Zelazny Eisenberg, who was strong as an ox, picked up one of them bodily, lifted him above his head and flung him to the ground before putting a bullet through him.

After this incident, we moved to another locality … Here, the Poles actually behaved as friends, keeping us informed of all German movements in the neighborhood. …

… Another one of our men, Issar, asked to be let loose in Markuszow, where he had quite a few friends. There, he said, he would have a field day roughing up any Germans or "A.K." members he might find. …

We took David and his wife Bela and her sister Blimka to the village of Wola-Przybyskowska [Wola Przybysławska] where friendly farmers would take care of our wounded. …

I proposed that my own small group should look for a farmstead and stop there for a rest. Before long, we saw a likely place. We knocked at the door and were invited in at once [likely by a fearful farmer—*M.P.*]

Inside we settled down to an impromptu party as we usually did after a successful operation. We always carried in our baggage a supply of sausage and vodka, obtained as gifts, or loot, from affluent farmers …

We had in our unit a young man who happened to be a cousin of Franek [Efraim] Blaichman. Somehow, this young man had got hold of a bicycle from one of the farm boys in the area, and took to riding around on it. … bicycles were not often seen about those regions during that period. …

[168] Compare with Chodakiewicz, *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne,* 138, who describes the circumstances of, and the fall-out from, an attack by the Home Army on the Communist partisan base in Przypisówka, a village known for its plundering.

> And so it happened that one of our men [Jankel Klerer], seeing Blaichman's cousin from a distance riding on a bicycle, mistook him for a Nazi spy and opened fire. Luckily, the man's aim was not accurate, and Franek Levin [Froim Lewin] was only wounded in the arm. … The wound was very serious, and Franek Levin never regained the full use of his arm. …
>
> Mietek [i.e., Communist partisan leader Mieczysław Moczar] borrowed some of our men for a special mission: to teach a lesson to a gang of Ukrainian and Lithuanian collaborators who were ambushing partisans in the village of Jamne [Jamy]. The men picked for the mission included Sever Rubinstein, Franek Blaichman and Bolek Alef [Bolkowiak] … There had been a full-scale battle, in which many of the Germans and their collaborators were killed. None of our own men had been hurt. …
>
> Some of our men volunteered to go back to our former bases west of Wieprz [River], raid some of the more affluent farmers and take the horses. … I felt they would be risking their lives for no good reason. Still, a large group of our men disregarded my advice and went out to look for horses. They took some fine saddled horses … and set out to rejoin us.[169]

Unlike Samuel Gruber, the aforementioned Franek (Frank) Blaichman, whose partisan group joined Gruber's group in June 1943, does not mention in his memoir taking part in any robberies of local farmers or the use of force to obtain arms from them (allegedly the farmers provided arms willingly). He does recall that his group was accused of such robberies by the local leaders of the Home Army, "which was fiercely anti-Semitic."[170] From his description of the encounters with the Home Army, however, one can infer that the measures taken against the Jewish partisans were in response to raids on farms, which the Home Army tried to curtail, and not because of alleged "orders from London that no Jew should be permitted to survive," which historians know never existed.

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[169] Gruber, *I Chose Life*, 52–53, 54, 55–56, 77, 83–84, 85–86, 88–89, 90, 92, 97, 100, 107, 112–13, 119. Gruber's unit eventually joined up with Chil Grynszpan's partisans in the Parczew forest and became the deputy commander, while Franek (Frank, Efraim) Blaichman was a platoon commander. Grynszpan affiliated with the People's Guard, which was later transformed into the People's Army. Grynszpan, Gruber and Blaichman were appointed lieutenants. Ibid., 128, 136. According to Blaichman, "Everyone received a job according to his ability, so we were treated very fairly, I couldn't say that we had any discrimination whatsoever." See the interview with Frank Bleichman, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, February 10, 1992. The shooting of Froim Lewin by Jankel Klerer is also described in Blaichman, *Rather Die Fighting*, 71.

[170] Blaichman, *Rather Die Fighting*, 62. Blaichman also claims that the 27th Division of the Home Army, originally formed in Volhynia, had to be warned not to attack Jews when it moved into the Parczew forest area. Ibid., 119. In fact, many Jews had already joined that formation in Volhynia. See Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews 1941–1944*, 257–68. Blaichman describes the National Armed Forces as "ultra-nationalist, anti-Communist, anti-Semitic partisans who followed Nazi orders." Ibid., 63. He accuses the NSZ of killing a group of Jewish partisans in Borów forest, south of Lublin, on September 9, 1943. Ibid., 106. In fact, the NSZ struck at a People's Guard unit composed mostly of local Polish bandits on August 9, 1943. See Rafał Jan Drabik, *Wydarzenia pod Borowem z 9 sierpnia 1943 r.: Rzeczywistość i oblicze polityczno-propagandowe* (Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski—Wydział Nauk Humanistycznych, Instytut Historii, 2002), 71–73; posted on the Internet at: <http://members.fortunecity.co.uk/ak/dr/tytul.htm>; Rafał Drabik, "Wydarzenia pod Borowem," *Glaukopis*, no. 1 (2003): 115–43; Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza*, 285–87.

> About ten days after this meeting, thirty of us were traveling from one village to another in five horse-drawn carriages. There were some trees and houses about fifty feet off to one side of the road. Suddenly, shots rang out. Someone was shooting at the lead wagon. We all jumped down, spread out, and started to return fire, though it was hard to make out where the shooters were. The exchange of fire went on for maybe a quarter of an hour. Then we waited, listening, and heard people running. We ran after them, shooting as we ran. We killed two of them—we saw their bodies sprawled on the ground as we ran—and flushed out the others, who had tried to hide behind a couple of sheds. When they saw that they were outnumbered, they dropped their guns. We had expected men. These were just young punks.
>
> Under questioning, they said that they were members of the AK, the anti-Semitic Home Army. They had been ordered to kill us because we were Jews and because we robbed farms. They said that their local leaders had received orders from London that no Jew should be permitted to survive to bear witness to the events of the war. We persuaded the punks to tell us who their leaders were. When we were done with our interrogation, we decided not to kill them because they were so young and we had suffered no casualties. We let them go, warning them that, if we caught them again, they wouldn't escape so lightly.[171]

Moreover, not all the problems the Jewish partisans experienced were occasioned by Polish partisans. One of their main foes were informers employed by the Germans as spies.[172] These informers also struck fear in the local population. Any informant who fell into the hands of the Jewish partisans was, according to Blaichman, executed after breaking down during interrogation.

> … we were raided again from the Germans, and there were 3 Polish collaborators spearheading the raid. They were walking with baskets, and make believe that they are looking for mushrooms or things like that in the forest, and looking for partisans. They didn't know that we have firearms. And the Germans were several hundred yards behind them. … we captured 2 out of 3, one escaped. … At night we began to interrogate those guys, and we uncovered from them a gold mine of information. They told us everything what we wanted to know … Those guys were recruited by the Germans, and put in place before prior to the deportations, and they were supposed to report to the

[171] Blaichman, *Rather Die Fighting,* 63–64. At a later point, Blaichman nuances the charge leveled against the Home Army as "a relentless campaign to kill Jews and prevent the AL [Communist Armia Ludowa] and other leftist groups from coming to power after the war." Ibid., 97. At another point, he describes how members of the Grynszpan group (among them Leon (Yehuda) Lerner) shot at him and other Jewish partisans, having mistaken them for AK. Ibid., 115. Blaichman also mentions that he accidentally shot aand killed a fellow Jewish partisan named Furman, and that Isser Rosenberg, the commander of the Kamionka group, was was accidentally killed by his best friend, Michael Loterstein. Ibid., 67, 85–86. He also mentions that the AL nearly executed, as suspected "spies," two Jews captured near Ostrów Lubelski, Joseph Cynowiec and his girlfriend Irka. Ibid., 133. Other versions of Frank Blaichman's wartime exploits can be found in an interview recorded for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., on February 10, 1992, online at: <http://www.jewishpartisans.org/pdfs/study_guide_3A.pdf>, and in Adam Dickter, "Partisans Fight for Place in History," *The Jewish Week,* April 5, 2002.

[172] The pervasive fear of spies on the part of the Soviet partisans, described in Part Two, is also found in Jewish accounts. For example, Oskar Gelles, who joined the Home Army, repeatedly refers to the Home Army being infiltrated by German spies during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. See his account in Diatłowicki and Roszkowski, *Żydzi w walce,* vol. 2, 221–23.

> Germans who is helping a Jew first, and then who is selling off illegal farm products … and then, who's a communist. They were involved in everything. So they went undercover, they were walking around everyday to the villages, and threatening people that anybody who will help a ew will be killed on the spot with [his] whole family. They also gave us addresses for others who were working with them together. …
>
> And we captured that time as many as 8. 6 plus those 2. And we interrogate them, and we found that they all were involved in those raids, and capturing Jews, and killing Jews, and we punished them, accordingly. And from that day on, … the whole neighborhood had changed, the whole area. We … sent a message to those killers, that they cannot escape without being punished what [for] they were doing. There was a mixed reaction among the people because the Poles knew exactly who those guys were. But they were handicapped, they couldn't do nothing. They were afraid for German reprisals and things like that. We had no choice. We had to what we had to do in order to stay alive. And then we learned from this here, what's truly happening among the population. Before, when we, after we escaped, … and we were in the forest, we really couldn't understand what [was] happening. The people were chasing us away like dogs. We went to buy food in the villages, they sounded an alarm, with pots and pans … And we were running … then we understood why these things [were] happening because those people were threatening all the time, from those collaborators, and that's why they were afraid. After that, they opened up, people started to talk, start to be open more, and helping us.[173]

Another account of the exploits of the well-armed Markuszów group was penned by Shiye Goldberg, a member of the Bełżyce group also active in that same region. After an initial period of good relations with the Home Army in Jastków,[174] relations with the local farmers soured as plundering intensified and the Germans exacted harsh punishment on farmers for helping Jews.

> I found several Jews who had fled from the estate, the girl Slawa among them. They had already managed to build a bunker, where they placed the typhus victims. A huge pit was dug in the field belonging to a peasant woman. Her husband was working in France and she was at home with her two sons. The pit was dug with great skill. A tunnel led to another tunnel, large enough to wiggle through, and to a second pit, connected with the bunker by a third tunnel. No German could discover the hideout. The woman brought food to us.
>
> The occupants of the bunker were divided into three groups—people from Markoshew [Markuszów], Belzhetz [Bełżyce] and Kaminka [Kamionka]. I had to join the Belzhetz group, since, like its members, I had no weapon. The Markoshew group was armed and therefore enjoyed the role of leadership. …
>
> In the meantime the typhus was taking its toll in the bunker. Slawa went insane, ran to the Germans and told them that Jews hiding out. The Germans knew her from the camp and they

[173] Interview with Frank Bleichman, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, February 10, 1992. See also Blaichman, *Rather Die Fighting,* 52–55, 86–87.

[174] Goldberg, *The Undefeated,* 137, 168.

believed her … They called on the Lublin military police. The police made short shrift of the people there … They killed the peasant woman and one son (the other wasn't at home), destroyed the hogs and burnt down the house. We saw this from the second pit we had dug. …

We made contact with the villagers in the area and showed up in the villages in full daylight, armed. Some villages were friendly, as long as their possessions were not touched, but we had to show them that we were in control. In some cases we had to tear down or burn dwellings and the villagers were afraid of us. …

When we came to the village the farmers rang the alarm bells they had affixed to the roofs of their homes, so as to arouse the Germans: "The band is here!" Our commander was Jaeger, one of the prisoners of war. Seeing a farmer climbing up to the bell, Jaeger shot him in the arm and said:

"Next time the bullet will lodge in your skull." …

When we ran short of garments and footwear, we ascertained when and where a wedding was to be held. We broke into the celebration, ordered the farmers to lie on the ground, took their good boots and fur-lined coats and disappeared. The villagers from which we took nothing did not inform against us, out of fear. …

Whenever we needed meat, we would go to a farmhouse and knock on the door of the manager:

"We want two cows and two hogs."

… The animals were hit on the head and dropped dead. We carted them away on a sledge harnessed to one or two pairs of horses. … We sold the hide of the cow (plenty of customers for it), cut up the cow with hatchets. We arranged with a farmer to dig two pits to hold two barrels for storing the meat, drawing on it whenever we needed; the pit was deep enough to provide refrigeration even in the summer. …

I expected that the partisans [from Markuszów] would take me with them. They knew all my toils of the last months. … my friends took my pistol away and told me to get well without it. …

The partisans made off. For some reason they seemed to have millions of dollars with them, judging from what they gave the farmers as a gift as they took their leave, with fond embraces. I followed them.

"Where do you think you're going?" someone said to me … I said I would go along until we crossed the path of the Belzhetz group, which I would then rejoin. The others were adamant I was not wanted.

"Look," I pleaded. "I don't have any weapons, I'm weakened by typhus. I have lice all over me. You're abandoning me to die. Have pity! Take me along!"

One of the group, Seveck by name (a short time ago he died in America) came out:

"You fellows keep going. I'll take care of him." He went down to one knee and aimed his rifle at my head:

"I'm counting until three. Then I'll shoot you in the head. Believe me—that's exactly what I'll so."

I heard him begin counting in the seathly silence of the moonlit forest: "One—two—" More I didn't hear. With my last remaining strength, I returned to the farmer's hayloft. …

[After a German raid on a farmhouse in Tomaszowice where partisans were staying, villagers helped the wounded Jewish partisans.—*M.P.*]

The farmer returned with a horse and some news:

"You're only other survivor is in my neighbor's house with bullets in his thighs. I'll take you to him."

The survivor was Janek or Yossl, a youth of 19. He was bandaged roughly as I was. The farmer harnessed the horse to cart and climbed up after us. I told him where to go, up to a certain point, and then asked him to stop and turn back. … Janek and I struggled on our feet, dragging ourselves until we came to the dugout. …

New of what had happened spread quickly throughout the region. It seems that there was only one other survivor of our unit—Jankl Wayngarten. … In the shooting he was hit in the leg and dragged himself to the home of a farmer named Pietrak … Jankl crawled into the cellar of the house. The Germans spied him in the act. They threw hand grenades into the cellar and set the surrounding houses on fire. Then they lined up the entire Pietrak family and shot them. As news of the incident spread, the farmers took to the forest in fright. Why did the Germans kill Pietrak? He didn't even know about Jankl and the cellar. …

We had been paying the farmer well for the dugout. The manner in which we got our money is another story. Not far from the village, at a place called Woleslavin [Wola Sławińska] there was a water mill. It was busy day and night. We told the miller that we were imposing a levy on him, since we had to have some income. Unless he paid tribute of so much per sack of flour, we would take the leather straps required for running the mill and sell them. We bargained a bit and an agreement was reached: so much per sack for so many sacks. … Our unit ringed the mill and one of us was sent to pick up the payment.[175]

The situation near the Skrzynice forest south of Lublin was described as follows by another Jewish partisan:

We knew we had to get arms at any cost if we were going to form a partisan unit … At night, the three of us went to the peasant Skulski looking for guns we heard he'd hidden. We threatened him and told him we knew about the hidden guns he denied having. We told him if he didn't give us the guns, we'd take his wife and children from the hut, shoot him, and burn everything down. The peasant still refused to give us the guns.

Then the three of us took bundles of straw into the hut and set them on fire. His wife cried and begged Skulski to give us the guns, but he kept denying he knew anything about them. … I told my two friends to take the peasant's wife and children away … The house burned, and my friend raised his gun and shot Skulski dead. …

We told the chieftain to inform the peasants in the village that if partisans came, they should surrender their guns, and if anyone informed or retaliated against the Jews in hiding, we'd put the

[175] Goldberg, *The Undefeated,* 164–66, 168–71, 174–75, 184–86.

whole countryside to the torch.[176]

Such violent encounters did not bode well for future relationships. When some villagers denounced the now armed Jewish forest group, they retaliated by killing more Poles and burning down their cottages.[177]

Just to the west, in the forests near the village of Osmolice, armed Jewish groups had their share of encounters with Polish peasants, criminals posing as members of the Home Army, German forces, and Soviets units of various ilk, but not with genuine Polish partisans. One survivor who acted as a liaison for the various Jewish groups recalled:

> The first Jewish partisan groups with which I was connected came into being in autumn 1942. … in it there were the two brothers Nudel from Lublin, the brothers Nachman and others. … a Lublin boy whom we called Zduk [Zadok] … purchased the first revolver from the peasant Oleszka in Tyszewo [Tuszów] Majdan. Then he together with the young Srul, a stepbrother of the Nachmans, went off to other peasants and, threatening them with the revolver, took away a couple of rifles and some revolvers.
>
> With the weapons they went away into the forests. Soon more youths came to them and very quickly the group numbered twenty-odd men. Zduk was the leader. They joined up with a band which belonged to the "Armia Krajowa," or posed as a group of the "Armia Krajowa." … Together they also organized and carried out an attack on the Zabi-Woli [Żabia Wola] estate. …
>
> Two weeks after the attack, Zduk and a portion of his comrades had another meeting with the aforementioned band from the "Armia Krajowa" in order—they were told—to receive more arms. The band posed as "Armia Krajowa," but it was instead simply a group of bandits from before the

[176] Testimony of A.G. in Isaiah Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution: Collective and Individual Behavior in Extremis* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), 172. This testimony also mentions that Polish peasants had taken pity on a group of Jewish women and children living in the forest, and that Yisruel Fingerkurz of Głusk "heads into the countryside to peasants he knows, and they always give him potatoes." Ibid., 168, 171.

[177] Testimony of Wolf Rauchwerg from Mętów, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/1446. Although weapons were often taken by force, in some cases they were bought, and on at least one occasion, when apprehended by the Germans, a Pole from Mętów was betrayed by a Jew to whom he had sold a rifle, which resulted in the arrest and execution of Jan and Wawrzyniec Joć. See Adam Puławski, "Co robiło się na Mętowie," Internet: <http://www.ipn.gov.pl/portal/pl/374/4705/Co_robilo_sie_na_metowie.html>. Wolf Rauchwerg also describes how Polish farmers were conscripted to comb the forest looking for Jewish fugitives under the careful watch of the Germans, who executed any Jew who was apprehended. During one such raid, Maria Joć (the wife of the aforementioned Jan Joć) was in the forest with two of her children picking mushrooms, when a German patrol started to fire at anyone they encountered, killing her and wounding her daughter. More than a dozen villagers in Mętów near Głusk, outside of Lublin, sheltered Jews. See 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), 325. The nearby village of Majdan-Kozice Dolne, however, acquired a bad reputation because the Jews who took refuge there often took part in robberies and shared their booty with the villagers who sheltered them. See Adam Puławski, "Co robiło się na Mętowie," Internet: <http://www.ipn.gov.pl/portal/pl/374/4705/Co_robilo_sie_na_metowie.html>. In reprisal for the village guard's firing at a Jewish group who came to rob the villagers, a mixed Polish-Jewish-Soviet partisan unit set fire to part of the village of Majdan near Kozice Górne, killing a number of villagers. See Chodakiewicz, *Polacy i Żydzi 1918–1955*, 263. For other reports about Jewish and mixed armed groups robbing and pillaging in the Lublin region see Henryk Pająk, *Oni się nigdy nie poddali* (Lublin: Retro, 1997), 233; Temchin, *The Witch Doctor*, 84–87; Chodakiewicz, *Polacy i Żydzi 1918–1955*, 262– 63.

war. They received the Jewish partisans, they treated them to poisoned liquor, and afterwards shot them. …

Heniek Zimerman [Zimmerman] was the leader of the best organized and most active Jewish partisan group at that time. …

Heniek Zimerman allegedly shot the 7 men from the band which had killed Zduk and his comrades. He took their weapons …

When the peasant Balczuk at Tyszewo Majdan turned in the Osmolice Jew Yual (by the way Zduk's brother-in-law [Zduk had earlier threatened and robbed the Polish villagers—*M.P.*]) Heniek Zimerman set fire to his house. Balczuk tried to escape, but the partisans captured and shot him. …

Heniek Zimerman fell in battle with a weapon in his hand. It happened thus: At the end of summer 1943 a strong German military unit surrounded the village of Majdan-Dembinski [Majdan Dębiński]. This was a punitive expedition against the village. They set fire to 12 houses, confiscated the grain, the swine. Zimerman and his group—altogether 16 men—were hiding on that very day in a barn in the middle of a field near the village. There Germans surrounded the barn, Zimerman and his comrades came out of the barn in order to make their way into the forest. A fight began, which lasted many hours … Reznik and a couple of others managed to get into the forest and save themselves. …

It also happened that I met with the so-called "Khulbovtsy" as was called a band which used to attack, kill and rob everyone, Poles, Jews, Ruthenians. Their ataman [leader] was Fyodor [Fiodor]. In Fyodor's group there was also a Jew, a friend of mine, Berish Orbuz. …

Through Berish, the group of Janek Kleinman and Dzisek also was supposed to join with Fyodor. But by good luck the union did not come about. Berish Orbuz was killed by Fyodor's hand. A few days later, Fyodor's band attacked Dzisek's group bear Zabewali [Żabia Wola] Majdan. In that fight fell among others Abraham Yitzhak Perelmuter and Berek's father. The others got away. Shortly after this the Soviet partisans put an end to Fyodor and his band.[178]

Further south, near Tyszowce, Berko Finger recounted that Jews who hid in the forest could count on the local population for food and information, and that the greatest enemy of the Jews were Soviet partisans.[179] Similarly, to the north, near Węgrów,

two Soviet soldiers who escaped from the Germans are hiding in a bunker in the Wengrow [Węgrów] woods. Peasants bring them bread, milk, and cooked food. …

Those two Russians have already killed a few Jews who wandered into their part of the forest. "We don't tolerate Yids," they say. A Jewish boy and girl were hiding in that vicinity. When they

[178] "Evidence of Motl Shternblitz" [Mordechai Sternblitz], in M. Litvine, ed., *Dos bukh fun Lublin: Zikhroynes, gvieseyde un materyaln ibern lebn, kamf un martirertum fun Lubliner Yidishn yishev* (Paris: Parizer komitet far shafn a monografye vegn Yidishn yishev in Lublin, 1952), 549–52. See also Barkai, *The Fighting Ghettos,* 195–200.

[179] Account of Berko Finger, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/2985.

> heard about the two Russians, they abandoned their hideout to join them. Well, the Russians tore off their clothes and murdered them.[180]

Thousands of Jews sought refuge in the large forested area between Parczew and Włodawa, only to see their ranks dwindle rapidly because of frequent attacks by marauding Soviet partisans and German sweeps.[181] A group of escaped Soviet prisoners of war under the command of Lieutenant Fiodor Kovalov was particularly notorious for carrying out murders and robberies.[182] After its subordination to the Communist People's Guard, Kovalov's group became more restrained in its activities. It was joined by a group of Jewish partisans led by Chil (Yechiel or Yekhiel) Grynszpan. Grynszpan set up a camp for Jewish refugees, known as Tabor, in the forest near the hamlet of Ochoża. Initially, the Jews survived by begging: "They went out regularly on food forays to search for food. They would travel to a village and ask for whatever the farmers could spare. Often they came back with food and supplies."[183] The camp soon became a source of friction with the local population, however, as partisans associated with the camp were far more assertive in their provision-gathering activities.

> About four months after I had joined the partisans, I decided to go again to the Tabor and collect some food for the people there. I went with another two Jewish fellows to a few villages and loaded up two wagons with pigs which we slaughtered on the spot, and some cows which we tied on.[184]

Samuel Gruber explains how he intervened to attempt to restore good relations with the local farmers:

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[180] Rochman, *The Pit and the Trap,* 233.

[181] Assaults by Soviet partisans and German sweeps in the Parczew area are described in Krakowski, *The War of the Doomed,* 27–38. One Jewish partisan describes how Jewish partisans stole weapons from other Jewish partisans and even shot one of them in the process, and how a Soviet partisan named Kolka persuaded a group of Jewish partisans to go with him, stole their weapons, and killed three Jewish partisans who came looking for their colleagues. See the testimony of Nachum Knopfmacher, June 28, 1961, Yad Vashem Archives, file 03/1787. Another Jewish partisan describes friendly relations with a Polish settlement near Jezioro Białe, but their forest bunker was attacked by Russian partisans, who killed two men, assaulted the others, and raped the women. See the testimony of Perczik Menasze, December 15, 1960, Yad Vashem Archives, 03/2053. By comparison, the Jews partisans' problems with Polish partisans were far less serious.

[182] Account of Josef Rolnik in Diatłowicki and Roszkowski, *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945,* vol. 2, 65. Rolnik's testimony is found in the Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/4619, as cited in Michał Czajka, ed., *Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz: Archiwum ŻIH IN-B, zespół 301, Nr. 4001–5000 / Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue: Jewish Historical Institute Archives, Record Group 301, No. 4001–5000* (Warsaw: Żydo:wski Instytut Historyczny Instytut Naukowo-Badawczy, 2007), vol. 5, 220. Rolnik's account of the 1943 assault on an estate in Piechy is inaccurate. It was not a fortified German outpost as he alleges, but defended by 3 Polish "Blue" policemen who repelled a large partisan contingent of some 40 men, mostly Jews. On the activities of the Jews in the Parczew forest see Mariusz Bechta, *Pogrom czy odwet?: Akcja zbrojna Zrzeszenia "Wolność i Niezawiłość" w Parczewie 5 lutego 1946 r.* (Poznań: Zysk, 2014), 91–137.

[183] Friedmann, *Reluctant Soldier,* 39.

[184] Friedmann, *Reluctant Soldier,* 39.

> Early in 1944, we had to cope with unrest in our own ranks. Chil [Grynszpan] had been getting reports from friendly peasants in the area that young boys from Camp Tabor were roaming the country, foraging for food. … He … asked me to go to Camp Tabor and give them a proper talking to. …
>
> These peasants, I explained, were plain, decent people who had frequently helped us out with food and other supplies. But if we, or the Tabor refugees, would begin to raid and loot the farmsteads, this would antagonize the peasants. Therefore, the raids and forays which the young people from the Tabor camp had perpetrated could not be permitted to continue. If we were to lose the good will of these Poles, our usefulness as partisan fighters in the area would be at an end. We were therefore going to rely heavily on the older men and women at Tabor to restrain their young people so that we would be able to keep the friendly peasants on our side.[185]

Harold Werner (Hersz Cymerman "Heniek"), who also fought with Grynszpan's Jewish partisans, describes numerous armed expeditions to secure provisions (food, clothing, weapons, etc.) from farmers for as many as 800 partisans and their families encamped in the forest. Many estates and farms were also burned to the ground by the partisans.

> We walked to the Hola woods. … We were armed. Out of fear, the villagers would give us food, and if they refused, we took it ourselves.
>
> Some nights later, we went for food in the vicinity of the village of Krupiwiec [Kropiwki?]. … If the villagers refused our requests for food, then we took it ourselves using the threat of our weapons. …
>
> The villagers had become used to our requests. … if they said they did not have any food or if they refused to open their doors, we threatened them and helped ourselves to any food we found in the house. …
>
> He denied that he had any guns, but we knew he was lying. Moishe the butcher grabbed him and with one punch knocked him to the ground. He continued to deny he had any guns. Then Moniek took a stick, told the farmer to pull down his pants, and started giving him lashes on his behind. After that the farmer decided to cooperate. …
>
> A few days later, the same group set out to find the second Mosciska [Mościska] farmer who was hiding weapons. … He also denied having any weapons. Yankale became enraged and threatened to kill the farmer on the spot if he refused to cooperate. …
>
> We sent out two or three teams, several times a week, on *bombioshkas* to gather food. These expeditions were almost always conducted at night and were directed to distant villages so as not to antagonize neighboring villages. … The farmers we approached could not resist armed partisans … The villagers were aware of our preference for pigs. … Once we found a pig, we would kill it on the farm, quarter it, and transport it to the base by wagon. …

[185] Gruber, *I Chose Life*, 133–34.

> While escorting the Adampol contingent back to our base, we stopped in a village and asked the local farmers for wagons, horses, and food to take back with us. They gave it to us because we were armed. …
>
> During harvest time in the late summer of 1943, we focused our efforts on destroying all grain crops harvested and held for shipment to the Germans. For three weeks, we were busy burning estates and farms which had their grains gathered for shipment. … we burned and destroyed dozens of large estates which supplied or served as food storage depots for the Germans. …
>
> On one occasion, a villager from Zahajki came to us and complained that some Jewish people had come to his house and had taken not only food but clothing and household possessions that they could not use. …
>
> In the winter of 1943–44, Chiel's partisans were camping in the village of Koniuchy, about ten miles from the Ochoza [Ochoża] forest. [Koniuchy should not be confused with the village of the same name near Rudniki forest—*M.P.*] … Six of us, including me, were assigned to go on a *bombioshka* to another village. … We expropriated a horse and wagon when we got to the village. We loaded it up with items such as meat, bread, and other foods from the estate and smaller farms.[186]

Grynszpan's forte was not fighting the Germans. Jakob Friedmann, who joined a non-Jewish partisan unit in that area, recalls: "Once Chyl's group went to cross an area to shoot some Germans. But they didn't manage to shoot a single German; they were not good shots and they lost one or two of their own people."[187] Harold Werner and other partisans also describe numerous revenge killings of Ukrainian and some Polish villagers, often entire families.[188] It is also worth noting that many Poles—often entire

[186] Harold Werner, *Fighting Back: A Memoir of Jewish Resistance in World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 99, 101, 120, 122, 132–33, 141, 160–61, 202, 204.

[187] Friedmann, *Reluctant Soldier*, 42.

[188] Werner, *Fighting Back,* xvii (Zamołodycze), xix–xx (Zamołodycze), 99 (Zamołodycze), 110 (Hola), 161 (Pachole), 169 (Krzywowierzba), 176 (Zahajki), 178 (Krzywy Bór, Chmielów, Krasówka, Zienki), 179 (Zamołodycze, Kaplonosy), 185 (Kaplonosy), 187 (Ostrów Lubelski), 196 (Marianka); Friedmann, *Reluctant Soldier*, 38, 40, 50, 67. Lists compiled by the collaborationist Ukrainian Central Committee confirm some of the assaults referred to by Werner, usually with lower victim counts; however, Ukrainian historiography attributes these misdeeds to Poles. See "1944 r., sichnia 22. Spysok vbytykh ukrainskykh hromadian na Kholmshchyni i Pidliashshi v 1942–1943 rr., skladenyi Liublynskym predstavnytsvom Ukrainskoho Tsentralnoho komitetu," in Iaroslav Isaievych, ed., *Volyn i Kholmshchyna 1938–1947 rr.: Polsko-ukrainske protystoiannia ta ioho vidlunnia. Doslidzhennia, dokumenty, spohady* (Lviv: Natsionalna akademiia nauk Ukrainy, Instytut ukrainoznavstva im. I. Krypiakevycha, 2003), especially 500–502.

Yitzchok Perlow, in a far-fetched account whose veracity is in question, describes how some of the villagers from Świńska Wola, in Parczew forest, terrified at the prospect of a mass reprisal, had killed some of the Jews who had suddenly "descended by night on the village in hordes … had crept into all the barns, the sheds, the haylofts, the garrets and the cellars. … had dug up unripe potatoes, carrots, radishes—everything." The villagers rounded up other Jews in a barn with the intention of delivering them to the German police. En route, these villagers were set upon and massacred by Jewish partisans and the captive Jews freed. The Jewish partisans then set fire to the village after pouring petrol on the buildings. "His entire company began to riddle the windows of the huts, barns and stables with their automatics. … Peasants, carrying buckets of water, came running out but fell victims to the hail of bullets. Isolated flames soon ignited into one great conflagration that enveloped the entire village." The local priest, whose church at the edge of the village was spared, and a delegation of reeves from surrounding villages met with the partisans soon after. The priest asked: "Why have you wreaked such misery upon our village? … Indeed, [what some villagers had done] was a gruesome crime, a terrible sin! I had warned and censured them time and again but to no avail. Still, your punishment was too

families—were executed and sometimes villages were pacified by the Germans in this area as punishment for aiding Jews and Soviet partisans.[189]

The case of Marianka, a village that had been plundered repeatedly by Jewish partisans, was typical of the pattern and spiral of violence that unfolded in that region. When some of the villagers robbed another village, posing as Jewish partisans, the Jewish partisans retaliated even more violently for treading on their prerogative. The punishment for plundering was harsh. Later, the villagers struck back, and so did the Jewish partisans.

> The first task that I performed under Jechiel's [Chil Grynszpan] order was as following. I [A. Shenko], Hershel (Politruk [i.e., a commissar responsible for political indoctrination]), David Maseike and Simcha from Marianka were to do away with some Poles from Marianka. We had often come to their houses and now they started plundering, in the name of the partisans, rich farmers from other villages. …
>
> We did not catch them red-handed until one day they attacked the house of the farmer Trolzki from the village of Saheike [Zahajki] telling him that in the name of the partisans they were to take everything they needed. … It was due to this farmer that the rumors were proven and thus we executed the sentence. …
>
> On our way back [from massacring twenty Ukrainian villagers in Zamołodycze] we also passed through Marianka. There we shot two Andaks [sic—Endeks] burning all the property for having murdered two of our people of "Tabor" [i.e., the Jewish camp which dispatched daily forays into the countryside]. …
>
> Eight days after our action in Marianka we were told that the Andaks had killed one of our girls. … This time we killed another seven of the murderers [i.e., villagers].[190]

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severe. … Why should the women and children suffer? Or the huts and household effects. … Not everyone is guilty. There are still decent people left in the villages. There is no question but that a terrible outrage had been committed against the Jews. But you have already punished the wicked—the others are not guilty. … I have spoken the same words to villagers months on end. I held sermons and I preached the Ten Commandments." One of the reeves (village heads) stated: "In my village there are six Jews with black tunics and beards [Hasidim], from Włodawa. Our village knows about them but no one betrays them. We shelter them and feed them." Another reeve said: "And in my village there are also some Jews hidden in three or four bunkers. Not all villages are like Świńska Wola. We support the Jews although the Germans are flaying our skins. … In the meantime we are being stripped of our last quart of milk and robbed of our last pig. The Germans come and attach rings on the pigs' snouts—'Requisitioned'. Tomorrow we are to deliver our quota of hogs to the city. What shall we have left for ourselves? What shall we live on? The winter is nearly upon us." See Kowalski, *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance 1939–1945*, vol. 3 (1986), 298–310. There is no village called Świńska Wola in the vicinity of Parczew forest, and Perlow's account appears to be very loosely based on the activities of Ukrainian villagers in Zamołodycze and Sosnowica, as described by Harold Werner. See Werner, *Fighting Back*, xv–xvii, 77, 84. For a markedly different version of the events in Zamołodycze, attributable to the same Harold (Hersh) Werner, see Gilbert, *The Holocaust,* 301.

[189] The village of Białka, near the Jewish camp in Ochoża in the Parczew forests, was pacified by the Germans in December 1942 for sheltering a Jewish woman and aiding Jewish partisans and forest people. The German SS made a selection of 100 men from the population of that village and executed them. See Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity,* Part One, 123–24; Wojciech Sulewski, *Lasy Parczewskie* (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 1970), 91.

[190] A. Shenko, "In a Jewish Division," Moshe Lichtenberg, whose partisan group operated near Włodawa, also demanded that recruits bring their own weapons and be physically fit for combat. See A. Shenko, "In a Jewish Division," in Shimon Kanc, ed., *Yizkor Book in Memory of Vlodava and Region, Sobibor* (Tel Aviv: Wlodawa Societies in Israel and North and South America, 1974), columns 20, 23 (English section).

Another Jew who joined Chil Grynszpan's partisan group was Abraham Wunderbojm (Wunderboim), who later assumed the name of Adam Winder. Wunderbojm escaped during the final deportation of Jews from Parczew, which was carried out by the Germans and Ukrainian auxiliaries in the fall of 1942. At first he lived in the forest with a group of Jewish fugitives who simply wanted to survive. Initially, the Jews would purchase food from the local farmers. After acquiring arms, however, the Jews would simply demand food or take it by force. They placed some Jewish women and children with villagers, threatening them with death if anything should happen to them. The largest source of danger was the Ukrainian police, who staged periodic raids to capture Jews and Soviet partisans living in the forest. In April 1943, the Ukrainians caught a Jewish woman who disclosed to them the whereabouts of the Jewish bunkers. In the ensuing attack on the bunkers, more than 100 Jews were killed. The remnants of Wunderbojm's group eventually joined Chil Grynszpan's partisan group. Because of their affiliation with the Communist underground, they started to receive military supplies from Moscow with which they cut telephone wires, blew up trains, and destroyed small bridges.[191]

When the area was "liberated" by the Soviets, after brief stay in Parczew, Grynszpan's detachment received orders to go to Lublin. There they were enlisted in the service of Poland's newly installed Communist rulers: "Some of the partisans joined the civilian army and some the security police."[192] Although illiterate, Grynszpan served as commander of the Citizens' Militia in Hrubieszów from January 1945 to June 1946 under the assumed name of Stanisław Dąbrowski.[193] (The postwar exploits of some of these partisans are detailed later on.)

As in other parts of Poland, the Jews (as well as Poles) had their share of problems with Soviet partisans, especially in the early period. Jewish testimonies gathered shortly after the war by the Jewish Historical

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[191] Testimony of Adam Winder, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, August 15, 1995, Interview Code 5517.

[192] A. Shenko, "In a Jewish Division," in Kanc, *Yizkor Book in Memory of Vlodava and Region, Sobibor***,** column 26 (English section). Shenko became a prison warden for half a year before leaving for Israel at the end of 1946. Isadore Farbstein became a police sergeant in Lublin and served in that capacity for a year. In his testimony, he describes how Soviet and Jewish partisans plundered in the Parczew area. See the testimony of Isadore Farbstein, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Interview Code 13378. Joseph Rubin attended an NKVD indoctrination centre in Otwock, became an avowed Communist, and was stationed in Sosnowiec, Bytom and Gliwice in 1945–1946, where he arrested members of the anti-Soviet underground, many of whom were deported to the Gulag. See the testimony of Joseph Rubin, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Interview Code 14075. Another Jew from Parczew, Irving Wolsk (Yitzhak Suchowolski), confirms that many Jewish partisans, including his cousin, joined the Communist security police after the "liberation." See the testimony of Irving Wolsk, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Interview Code 2774. Adam Winder (Abraham Wunderboim), a member of Chil Grynszpan's partisan unit, also joined the militia in Lublin after liberation, and was transferred to Radom in early 1945. See the testimony of Adam Winder, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Interview Code 5517. Many of these Communist functionaries (Isadore Farbstein, Joseph Rubin, Adam Winder) later immigrated to the United States.

[193] Friedmann, *Reluctant Soldier*, 42.

Commission in Warsaw describe the brutality of Soviet partisan units, such as rape, theft and atrocious anti-Semitism in their midst.[194] Later published testimonies do likewise.

> The Russians settled near us in the village of Skorodnica forest and stayed for a few days. This was a very undisciplined group of marauding fighters. As they had done in Makoszka forest, as soon as they settled near us they started to rape the young Jewish women in our group. Although we protested, they were armed and we were not, so there was little we could do to stop them. …
>
> There were many escaped Russian prisoners concentrated in the Makoszka forest … The Jews there [in Parczew forest] had their share of problems with the Russians, however. The Russians demanded whiskey, they robbed the Jews of money and weapons, and they raped Jewish women. They lived according to the law of the jungle, especially in the beginning before the Jews organized themselves, obtained more weapons, and resisted their lawlessness.[195]

After escaping from a death train to Treblinka, Benjamin Mandelkern received assistance from random Poles. He then joined up with three cousins from Parczew and headed to the forest. There they were welcomed by three armed Russian partisans who robbed them at gunpoint of all their possessions including their clothes leaving them naked. The fugitives then turned to Poles for help once again.[196]

Women who joined the Soviet partisans were also victimized and treated as sex slaves. Those who had the misfortune of contracting gonorrhea were simply shot, because there was no medication to cure their condition.[197] Bronka Chudy Krygier's testimony is particularly riveting. After her escape from the Warsaw ghetto she worked on a farm near Parczew disguised as a Pole before joining up with Jewish partisans and escaped Soviet POWs. Over the course of eighteen months, she was raped repeatedly by multiple perpetrators:

> The Russian partisans did not give a damn that we were Jews. … If it was a woman or a girl then they had to use her. A man they let him go. … I endured everything that a woman could endure, a young girl in those days. Everything. There is nothing that was no. Everything was yes, I did it. It had to be done because I could have been shot many times, killed by them.[198]

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[194] Aleksandra Bańkowska, "Polish Partisan Formations during 1942–1944 in Jewish Testimonies," *Holocaust: Studies and Materials*, vol. 1 (2008): 106.

[195] Werner, *Fighting Back*, 92, 104. For further examples see pp. 134, and 217. See also Krakowski, *The War of the Doomed*, 28–29; Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918–1955*, 172.

[196] Mandelkern, *Escape from the Nazis*, 71–72.

[197] Friedmann, *Reluctant Soldier*, 52.

[198] Testimony of Bronka Chudy Krygier, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Interview Code 29421.

Shneor Glembotzky describes the activities of a Soviet partisan group headed by a commander code-named "Piri" operating in the Podlasie region. The same pattern of robberies of civilians by the Soviet partisans followed by Home Army protection is repeated. What started off as targeted retaliations against "collaborators" turned into a wholesale war against the "hostile" population. Allegedly, even an entire village, which is not identified, was annihilated by the Soviet partisans.

> At that time a Jewish partisan messenger came to Mezritz [Międzyrzec Podlaski] to enlist Jews with weapons and take them to the forest. Since I possessed a revolver he took me along with ten other Jews. Our troop was headed by the partisan leader known by his nickname "Piri".
>
> Our numbers increased. Many Russian prisoners … fled to the woods. Some succeeded in reaching the partisans uninjured. But there was a severe shortage of weapons. We decided to confiscate the pigs of rich peasants in nearby villages, distribute them among the poor peasants in exchange for information on which peasants had weapons. This plan worked successfully. We obtained not only guns and grenades but also machine guns. Our numbers reached 800, 300 of which were Jewish. We obtained food from the villagers in the order and amount we imposed on them. We assumed an increasingly military form. … A group of saboteurs, headed by the renouned [sic] partisan "Uncle Petya" ["Diadia Petia"], was organized to blow up bridges and destroy railroads. …
>
> But we did not only have the Germans on our hands. White Polish partisans appeared in the forests and they fought with us … We fought back and gave them the treatment they deserved. Their hatred of the Jews and Communists was boundless. Aby Jewish partisan captured was tortured to death. [This is an obvious embellisment. *M.P.*] We too killed the White partisans when we caught them. Once when our troop was returning from a sabotage operation, and passing close by a village, they shot at us from an ambush. Piri, the head of our troop, was killed. We decided to teach them a lesson and make an example of them … At night some of our troops surrounded the village and set it on fire. Any one trying to escape was shot and killed. No one survived this village and no house remained standing.
>
> The partisans war was a war of life and death. We took no prisoners—anyone captured was killed following interrogation. The Germans did the same when they caught a partisan.[199]

Another account from that same region describes pacifications directed at what appears to be Ukrainain villagers. The author, Kalmen Wewryk, after a thorough interrogation, was accepted into a Soviet partisan unit under the command of "Dadia Pyetcha" (Uncle Petia).

> We were encamped near a small village which was known to be a pro-Nazi stronghold. When the order would be given, we were supposed to move in on the village and clean it up, that is, get rid of the Germans and their "friends." One night, our commander said he was going to reconnoiter before the attack. … According to rumors which circulated amongst us later, the commander was quite drunk.

[199] Shneor Glembotzky, "From a Prisoner's Camp to a Partisan Troop," in Alufi and Kaleko (Barkeli), eds.,

> When this misfortune was reported to our High Command a short time later, our whole *Otryad* (military unit) was mobilized and we were ordered to attack the village and find our commander, dead or alive. We fought most of the night against the enemy …
>
> After we took the village we searched every single house, shed, barn and stable, looking for our commander. It was in vain—we never found him. The retreating Germans must have taken our leader with them. We burned the whole village to the ground. …
>
> Our High Command sent teams of partisans to reconnoiter a collaborationist village. This village had a terrible reputation; its Ukrainian inhabitants took please in hunting down lone and solitary Jewish survivors and other "enemies of the Reich." … The Ukrainians were taken by surprise … They retreated after a brief battle and only old people remained in the village.
>
> Our orders were strict. From Ukrainian collaborators we could take whatever we wanted. From decent villages, especially those of Baptist Ukrainians, we couldn't take anything. I went into a house and "confiscated" a pair of fine boots. … I also "borrowed" a shirt and a pair of pants. … We loaded a wagon full of "schnapps" and other goodies. We also loaded up with arms and ammunition because we found an armory in the village. We moved out of that village … I was picked with two other partisans to shepherd 14 head of cattle.[200]

The Sokoły memorial book describes an assault carried out by a group of Jewish forest dwellers who resolved to destroy the village of Sokoły, located in Białystok area. Although Jews hiding in the forest were terrorized primarily by armed gangs of Soviet (Russian) and Polish robbers,[201] they turned their rage on defenceless villagers. The spark that ignited their wrath was the German *Amstkommissar's* decision to destroy the Jewish cemetery. Thereafter, the forest Jews, determined that no Pole should occupy a Jewish house, made repeated efforts to set the town ablaze.

> We organized a new plan of revenge. We bought a bottle of kerosene and matches. We were determined to burn down the town and not leave an inheritance for the murderers of the Jews. At midnight the next night, we went to Sokoly. I [Chaim Yehuda Goldberg] and Moshe Maik

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"Aishishuk"; Its History and Its Destruction, 76–77.

[200] Wewryk, *To Sobibor and Back*, 89–91.

[201] Maik, *Deliverance*, 117, 133, 140, 155, 190, 192–93. The farmers most inclined to help the Jews belonged to the Home Army, and even assisted the Jews to undertake expeditions to plunder abandoned Jewish homes. Ibid., 126, 133, 141–43, 163. Polish farmers who had been robbed by gangs of Christians and Jews continued to help Jews hiding in the forests. Ibid., 159. After the "liberation," two members of the forest group were arrested when the Soviet security forces raided the house of their Polish benefactor, whom they happened to be visiting. The Jews were soon released, with the help of Jews connected to the security forces, but the Pole, a member of the Home Army, was sent to the Soviet interior, where he was likely killed. Ibid., 226–28. Chaim Yehuda Goldberg, a refugee from Sokoły, recalled the following raids on his forest group in November 1942: "…we found ourselves by five young Christians. Four of them pulled out long knives. One of them, who had a grenade in his hand, ordered us, in the Russian language, to line up in a row. With his other hand, he took our watches off our arms and in addition, requested ten marks from each of us. … but they weren't satisfied and asked us to take off our boots. I looked around, and saw that the knives were aimed at me. … These were 'partisans.' The meaning of the matter was that we had no hope of joining a partisan group. … And again it happened: A Russian ran to meet us and blocked our path. … In one hand, he held a grenade, in the other he stroked a bottle of whiskey. … From a distance, he saw a young girl, and tried to run after her, but she succeeded in getting far away from him in time." See Chaim Yehuda Goldberg, "At the Height of the Decay," in Kalisher, *Sokoly,* 158ff.

remained outside, and my brother Avrahamel went inside, into Yossel Malon's house. He piled the straw from the mattresses in high piles, and added anything that was likely to burn. From there, we proceeded to the storeroom of Tova Devora the hatmaker, and did the same as in the previous house. We poured kerosene on the piles. The next place to be set afire was the house of Masha Kaplansky. The house was occupied by Poles …

Avramel quietly snuck into the nearby pigpen. Moshe and I stood ready, with weapons in our hands. Before he poured the kerosene on the flammable materials in the pen, he brought out a large saw and gave it to Moshe. He immediately set the place on fire and locked the door. From there, we hurriedly ran to Tova Devorah's storeroom and it was sufficient to throw a lit match inside; immediately, a flame of fire broke out. We locked the door there and ran to the third point, which was the most dangerous of them all, because it was next to the *gendarmia* [*gendarmerie*, the German police station]. But, since there was no strength that could stop our desire for revenge at that moment, which burned in our hearts like a large flame, we succeeded in setting a fire there as well, and when the flame broke out, we locked the door and ran like an arrow from a bow in the direction of the slaughter-house.

From a distance, we saw how the surroundings were lit by the tongues of flame that went up to the heavens and when we got to the threshold of the building an enormous flame burst out. We fled from the place through the fields, while behind us, the fire lit up the town like it was mid-day.

Thus, we ran without stopping to the Bruszewa [Bruszewo] Forest. Here, we stopped and looked from a distance at how our town was going up in flames.

For us, this was a happy and joyful revenge. The tongues of the fire swallowed the Jewish town without Jews, occupied by the Poles who hate us, who sold their souls to the German devil and provided him with every assistance to murder Jews. … Three-quarters of the city, starting from Tiktin [Tykocin] Street, the large marketplace, and Bath Street, were completely burned down.[202]

Michael Maik, the father of one of the young assailants, reported the success of the mission in his diary with glee:

Thank Almighty G-d, that we also have been privileged to take revenge against Troskolski, the restaurant owner, and a number of Christian shop owners, who enriched themselves from the destruction of the Jews, settled themselves in the homes of Jews and stole their shops. These despicable Poles got what they deserved and came out of the fire with their bodies, but without firm ground beneath their feet, without even a shoelace.

Our heroes, excited for activity and vengeance, were not satisfied with what they had done. They already began to talk about completing the arson operation, down to the last house in Sokoly. It was clear that they had to wait "until the anger would pass" and the mood after the first arson would quiet down.[203]

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[202] Kalisher, *Sokoly*, 158ff. See also Maik, *Deliverance*, 172–77, 201–202.

[203] Maik, *Deliverance*, 177. The author comments on the strategy of the Home Army. While the Home Army eliminated Polish policemen who served the Germans, they exercised caution in their dealings with the Germans so as

Meanwhile, these young Jews posed as "Polish partisans" and robbed in the countryside relentlessly. Their guise did not escape the notice of the true partisans who, up until then, had not bothered the Jews. Understandably, some of the partisans struck back at the Jewish marauders.

> The next night, my youngsters decided to go to the nearby villages disguised as armed partisans, in order to obtain food.
>
> Monik was armed with a pistol and a supply of bullets. Avrahamel Goldberg was armed with the shortened rifle … Our "partisan platoon" also was not lacking hand grenades …
>
> At nightfall, the four boys went out. …
>
> The platoon reached some country dwellings after midnight and knocked on the door of one of the houses where the people were already asleep … Monik informed them, in the tone of an order but politely, that he and his companions were gathering food for 30 men, fighters for the freedom of Poland, found nearby.
>
> As soon as the residents saw that those who entered their house were armed, they immediately surrendered and fearfully gave them loaves of bread, a generous amount of fat and vessels of milk.
>
> After they passed through a number of farmhouses that night, they returned to the dugout with the booty: a number of sacks full of all kinds of food that would be enough for several weeks. …
>
> The wealthy farmers feared the Russian advance and hurried to empty their possessions from their granaries and houses. Our boys exploited the farmers' fears and made it a kind of sport for themselves to frighten them even more, thus it was easy to get whatever we needed out of them. …
>
> In this way, our boys prepared a stock of food for several months during a period of two weeks. …
>
> The boys continued to go out to the distant villages at night, even though we had a supply of food for two or three months. They wanted to obtain a stock of food for half a year. …
>
> Once, they entered a farmer's house to ask for food, apparently for their partisan comrades. By chance, they met up with a group of men from a Polish gang. They started to question our youngsters, who were they, from what political party, for what purpose were they gathering food. Coincidentally, the officer of this gang was not at the farmer's house and Monik, thanks to his ideas and courage, was not at a loss during those dangerous moments, and he found a way out of the trouble.
>
> In another place, one farmer told them that a dangerous Polish gang of *N.S.Z.* [the right-wing National Armed Forces] … had heard that four Jews were running around in the forests with weapons like Polish partisans. That gang was hunting for them and planning to catch them.[204]

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to avoid unnecessary retaliation against the civilian population: "In the continued activities of the organization, attacks will be made against the German *gendarmerie* for the purpose of robbing them of weapons and equipment, but not kill them. The members of the organization were not interested in the Germans burning down an entire village and killing dozens of Poles in revenge for one [dead] German." Ibid., 202–203.

[204] Maik, *Deliverance*, 212–13, 216–18.

The same pattern emerged in the Siemiatycze area, where armed gangs of Jews robbed the Polish population. This, in turn, attracted the attention of the Polish partisans.

> Now there was a big problem with food. The Krynskis [Kryński, the Polish rescuers—*M.P.*] barely had enough food for themselves and for us. Therefore, my uncle [Yehoshua Kejles] and his companions [Chaim Marmur and Chazkel Rozenzweig] would go to various farmers and get some food for all of us. They decided that the three of them would join forces with some other Jews who were hiding in the vicinity and who also had the same problem obtaining food. Together, they went to some well-to-do farmers and took all kinds of produce, with or without the consent of the owners. They would also kill some livestock, separate the edible meat from the animal's organs and bring it to the Krynskis. This procedure was repeated many times. In order to provide food for the thirteen of us.[205]

Of course, the "well-to-do" farmers were hardly wealthy people; they simply had something worth robbing. The Siemiatycze memorial book sets out numerous examples of revenge perpetrated by a forest group led by Hershl Shabbes (Herszl Szebes), who managed "through threats" to acquire some weapons from farmers in that area of mixed Catholic (Polish) and Eastern Orthodox (Belorussian) population. According to that source, this group "several times also executed partisan actions, but its chief aim was to remain in hiding and help escaped Jews." In reality, their principal activity was robbing farmers.

> Several days later the peasant was killed by a Semiatych [Siemiatycze] bullet. This was the first act of vengeance, but not the last. … the Semiatych group went to Skif [Sikwy], salvaged fifteen horses and set fire to the village.
>
> In December, 1942, a gentile from Naike [Narojki] captured three Jews … The Semiatych group later murdered the peasant's entire family.
>
> The watchman of the Malinov [Malinowo] forest betrayed many Jews … Shabbes' group went after the forest watchman. He reached for his revolver, but was quickly disarmed and shot. …
>
> Plotnicki and Meyer Grushkin once saved themselves by a sheer miracle from the "A.K." [Armia Krajowa or Home Army] who attacked them and other Jews in the Yachinovke [Jasieniówka] forest. They accused Meyer Grushkin of killing a gentile and were taking him to be executed. There suddenly appeared an officer of the "A.K."—a teacher from Worchen [Wiercień], who was looking for Hershl Shabbes. The Jews said they did not know where Shabbes was, and their one desire was to survive the war. A peasant who had driven up with a wagonload of food for the Polish partisans pleaded for the mercy of the Jews and they were released.

[205] Sidney J. Zoltak, *My Silent Pledge: A Journey of Struggle, Survival and Remembrance* (Toronto: MiroLand, 2013), 79. The author refers to confrontations with Home Army on pp. 70, 80–81, and 84–85, without clear evidence that all of these activities were the work of the Home Army. Moreover, he is unable to see the connection between the numerous robberies perpetrated by armed Jewish bands, which could not have gone unnoticed by the Home Army, and the Home Army's retaliation. Instead, he claims that the Home Army was simply "actively engaged in killing Jews" and "eager" to take the place of the Germans, especially after the Germans were preparing for their retreat in advance of the Soviet front.

> Old man Krakowski from Brike [Bryki] … was visited by a delegation of partisans from Semiatych and Drogoczyn [Drohiczyn] who told him that his son would be shot if he continued to help the "A.K." … The magistrate [of Brike] was soundly thrashed until he promised to keep quiet. … in Narik [Narojki] … the peasant's house and barn were set on fire.[206]

Shmuel Mordechai Lev of Drohiczyn describes how armed Jewish groups robbed Polish farmers in that area and punished peasants, Poles and Belorussians, who "collaborated" with the Germans:

> a group of armed Jewish partisans … were now active in the nearby forests. Most of them were from our town: Simcha Warshawsky, Ekuthiel Karshenstein, Velvel Wishna and others with the.
>
> They were after some acts of avenging the blood of their relatives, killed or delivered to be killed, by some Poles. They also held up some rich farmers and used the money to help out needy Jews in hiding. This was only one of a few groups of Jewish partisans. There were other such bands active in the vicinity. It was from such a group, whose leaders were: Pessach Katz of Semiatich [Siemiatycze], Shlomo Grude, Kalman Goldwasser and his cousin from Kadzin, that we later got a good sum of money with which to rent a "legal" bunker, whose owner also provided us with some food.[207]

According to Polish sources, Shabbes's forest group was notorious for its assaults on the local population. On March 30–31, 1944, they robbed the home of the Wiliński and Semieniuk families in the settlement of Czartajew and murdered eight members of those families including grandparents in their seventies, a pregnant woman, a 15-year-old boy and a three-year-old child. Afterwards they burned down the farmstead.[208] On the other hand, they were powerless to prevent assaults on Jews by Soviet partisans:

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[206] Tash (Tur-Shalom), *The Community of Semiatych,* xii–xiii. For another Jewish memoir detailing, in a sanitized way, some of the exploits of the well-armed band organized by Hershl Shabbes from Siemiatycze and the Grude ("Groody") brothers from Drohiczyn, mentioned below, see Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka,* 143–66. Strangely, Saul Kuperhand does not describe the nature of "our excursions to the outside world" (p. 149) and the "close calls of our recent forays" (p. 154), though undoubtedly these involved robbery since his Polish benefactors could not afford to feed him and the other Jews they took in and demanded payment (p. 155). Typically, Saul Kuperhand ascribes to the view that "All Germans and Poles, with a few glorious exceptions, were the enemy." (P. 157.) His wife and co-author, Miriam Kuperhand charges, without providing any examples, that the Home Army "were just as bad as the Germans. When they operated clandestinely in the forests, they had never failed to kill Jewish fugitives or even Jewish partisans … these partisans often spent more energy hunting Jews than harassing the German occupiers." (P. 76.) When a division of Soviet partisans under Kolpak arrived in the area, the Jewish forest people did not join their ranks, giving as their reasons: (1) "Many of the partisans were Ukrainians who had served as volunteer guards in the death camps and forced labor camps. Sadistic Jew-haters and murderers, they could not be trusted as comrades in arms." (P. 162.) (2) "You have other reasons to live, people to live for." (P. 163.)

[207] Shmuel Mordechai Lev, "Diary of Pain and Suffering," in D. Shtokfish, ed., *Sefer Drohiczyn* (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1969), 42ff. (English section). A number of Polish farmers came to the assistance of Lev and his family, and Lev's account confirms that Jewish fugitives, including these, "had to beg or steal."

[208] Andrzej W. Olędzki, "Banda Herszla Szebesa: Mord w Czartajewie, marzec 1944," *Głos Siemiatycz Online,* Internet: <http://box.zetobi.com.pl/glos_siemiatycz/histor_zydzi_1944.htm>. See also Mirosław Leszczak, "Zagłada ludności żydowskiej w Siemiatyczach," Internet: <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/siemiatycze_zaglada.htm>.

> On November 15, 1942, [Hershel Shabbes] had reported to the partisans about a group of twelve Jews from Siemiatycze he had found in hiding. The Russian partisan leader immediately ordered his men to find out how much gold and currency the Jews had. Shabbes warned the group of refugees about the Jew-hating partisans, and they managed to hide some of their assets under a barn. They could not hide themselves, however, and the partisans killed all twelve of them.[209]

Assaults continued in that region even after the German retreat and arrival of the Red Army. On December 5–6, 1944, a group of Jewish partisans led by the brothers Shloyme and David Grude (Gruda) murdered six people in Miłkowice-Maćki from the Bojar and Maksymiuk families, including an 11-year-old boy. Later that night they attacked the home of the Jarocki family in Kłyżówka, who had sheltered a Jewish family from Drohiczyn. The Grude band murdered two people including a 12-year-old girl and wounded two others whom they left for dead. The victims' farms were plundered and set on fire.[210] Kesil Karshenstein, whose family members had been denounced to the Germans, took revenge on the Polish farmer who betrayed them by shooting the Pole's entire family.[211] In turn, Polish partisans struck back at Jews in Siemiatycze who had close ties to the Soviet authorities.[212]

The cycle of violent robberies followed by retaliation on the part of some of the local population (in that order) perpetuated itself throughout German-occupied Poland. A band of Jews led by Shimon Deringer from Kraków as well other Jews based in the forests south of Bochnia, where villagers provided widespread assistance to Jews, became notorious for robbing and wreaking revenge on the local population.

> After the liquidation of ghetto Bochnia, [in the] summer, we lived in the forest. We were already armed with revolvers and ammunition that we found ourselves. …
>
> My cousin told me that an underground group from Krakow [Kraków] is located here. Their leader is Shimon Deringer and his wife Yustina Davidson. The members of Akiba made a bunker on the property of the Christian Michal [Michał] in Wisnicz [Wiśnicz]. These people were from the ghettos in Krakow and Bochnia. There were many people who located themselves around here among the Christians. … Many Jews were hidden at the Christians … We used to steal from one Christian and give to another. … We cooked [stolen] cattle and pig meat. …
>
> [Soon they hooked up with a notorious Polish thief:] "We want to make a deal with you. You will steal (for us) and we want to sell (the merchandise)." …

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[209] Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka,* 144.

[210] Andrzej W. Olędzki, "Banda Herszla Szebesa: Mord w Czartajewie, marzec 1944," *Głos Siemiatycz Online,* Internet: http://box.zetobi.com.pl/glos_siemiatycz/histor_zydzi_1944.htm; Waldemar Monkiewicz, "Za cenę życia: O ratowaniu Żydów w Białostockiem o okresie okupacji niemieckiej," in Dobroński and Monkiewicz, eds., *Białostoccy Żydzi,* vol. 2, 189–90; Mirosław Leszczak, "Zagłada ludności żydowskiej w Siemiatyczach," Internet: <http://www.kirkuty.xip.pl/siemiatycze_zaglada.htm>. Compare with Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka,* 51, 140–41 (Miłkowice).

[211] Shmuel Mordechai Lev, "Diary of Pain and Suffering," in Shtokfish, *Sefer Drohiczyn,* 42ff. (English section).

[212] Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust,* 162, 166–67. Compare with Zoltak, *My Silent Pledge,* 99.

They did not refer to me and my brother as partisans, but as two murderers, wild people. They were scared of us. However we went to Christians because there were so many Jews and they had nothing to eat. And from where could the people take? They had to resort to robbery. There were rich Christians.

There was a case in Krolowka [Królówka] where two horse dealers lived. Janek Noiman knew exactly where they resided. Every Thursday they used to sell colts and would bring the money home. We were three people. We put on masks and at night we entered their houses with weapons. We said to them to raise their hands and to remain still. They started to attack us [i.e., defend themselves—*M.P.*] and we shot twice. Then we took from them 40 thousands [sic] Zloties [złoty]. [This was an enormous sum at the time. A teacher made around 300 złoty a month, and a petty bureaucrat around 500 złoty. *M.P.*] From that money it was possible to survive. … And there were a few places like that. The money was hidden under a painting. We gave them more severe beating. [sic] They did not recognize us [?]. There were other places, however, where the Christians did not have any food. …

We mislead [sic] the Christians by telling them stories about partisans. That we are partisans and they believed us. They gave us (what we wanted). …

At that Christian [sic], the one whose son managed to escape, was a priest. Our people killed him with knives because he was a big anti-Semite. [The murder of the priest is not confirmed in Polish sources. Later on it seems that they just burnt down the church or priest's residence.—*M.P.*] …

Then we started to take revenge. We had already a group of 35 men. We knew about several peasants [who were robbed?—*M.P.*] who gave away Jews. We burned, hit and killed. We used to do it at night so people would not be able to tell who did it. [?] …

We knew that a certain Christian was informing about Jews. We struck him with a wooden stick and we buried him. We took him out of his house and buried him. There was a priest who talked about things he shouldn't have from the platform [pulpit?]. We came at night and burnt (down his church). This was our revenge. …

Later at night we went to burn a priest's residence. On that mission went Yankle Noiman and I. It was September 7th, 1944. The priest spoke from the platform, saying that there were still Jews in that area and they must be liquidated. … At night we went on this burning mission … and burnt the priest's residence. …

The 19th of January, 1945. We were liberated by the Russians. …

The A.K. [Home Army] was still killing Jews. The commander of the criminals turned out to be a Jew with the name Sawar, he is still there to this day. He was of Russian descent. Later he became the [Communist] commander of the Wisnicz prison. He indeed ordered them to gather all the Jews. Later they sent the Jews to Krakow.[213]

[213] Testimony of Johanan Kalfus, September 18, 1967, Yad Vashem Archives, 03/3284 (2777/232-F), posted on the Internet at <http://www.angelfire.com/my/heritage/ghetto_bochnia/testimonies/kalfus.htm>. According to Yustina Davidson, quite a few of the revenge actions took place before the revenge action in which Hilek Wladyslawski was seriously wounded. See also the accounts of Herman Amsterdam and Dawid Wulf which confirm the ties of Jewish forest groups with with Polish criminal elements and their extensive participation in roberies in the area, in Maria Hochberg-Mariańska and Noe Grüss, eds., *The Children Accuse* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 1996), 147–51, 171–79. In keeping with official postwar propaganda, the latter source alleges the culprits were members of the National Armed Forces.

Armed Jewish fugitives from Pilica in Miechów county joined with partisan groups in Jędrzejów and Opoczno and collected 100,000 złoty by going into farmers' homes and demanding a levy on "pain of death."[214] Armed Jews forced their way into homes and farm buildings in Brnik, Luszowice and other villages near Dąbrowa Tarnowska, demanding or stealing large quantities of food and threatening the residents.[215] Jakub Künstlich and Szymon Goldberg, who were sheltered by Poles in their native village of Jadowniki Mokre west of Dąbrowa Tarnowska, obtained a rifle and used it to rob and threaten farmers in distant villages, seizing their food, chickens, rabbits and the occasional pig. Their Polish host accompanied them on their expeditions so that it wouldn't appear to be a Jewish enterprise.[216] More often, however, Jewish fugitives would enter into barns and stables surreptitiously and take calves, pigs and chickens and steal food from cellars and fields.[217] This too angered farmers, most of whom were themselves poor and struggling to feed their families.

Armed Jews hiding in the forests surrounding Dulcza Wielka near Radomyśl Wielki, in Mielec county, staged raids on nearby farms to collect food provisions.[218] The brothers Salek and Zyga Allweiss hid in the forests during the day, and during the night took shelter in barns and obtained food from farmers in the vicinity of their home village of Jaślany near Tuszów, in Mielec county. After acquiring a rifle and a gun, in exchange from an accordion and bicycle they had stolen from other farmers, the brothers ambushed people on the way to the railroad station and took food and clothing from them, and stole livestock and large quantities of bread from farmers whom they threatened with their weapons.[219] Three armed groups of Jews, consisting of some 80 people, who were encamped in forests in the Jasło-Dębica area raided farms in the vicinity for to replenish their food supplies, thus incurring the hostility of local farmers.[220] Morris

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[214] Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945,* vol. 2, Part A, 549.

[215] Musiał, *Lata w ukryciu,* vol. 1, 136. Tadeusz Kot, the source of this information, had hidden Jews on his farm in Brnik. His charges were friends of an armed Jewish intruder who demanded food, abused Kot's grandmother, and threatened Kot, who had to defend himself. Kot's charges were themselves armed and roamed in the countryside. The armed Jew who had invaded Kot's house was later apprehended when he broke into a chicken coop to steal some chickens. The farmer locked him in the coop, as he would any common thief, regardless of nationality, and summoned the German authorities.

[216] Testimony of Adam Merc, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, August 15, 1995, Interview Code 36349. One of the persons they robbed learned of their whereabouts and summoned the local police. They subsequently threatened him, warning him not to do so again.

[217] See, for example, Michel Borwicz, *Vies interdites* (Tournai, Belgium: Casterman, 1969), 86–87 (near Łańcut). In the village of Niedźwiedza near Brzesko, a farmer named Pałach caught a Jew stealing his calf. When the latter's friends came to free him, a fight broke out and one one of the Jews was killed. After the war, the famer was sentenced to 15 years in prison. See Musiał, *Lata w ukryciu,* vol. 1, 191.

[218] Testimony of Cyla Braw, dated February 1947, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/2342.

[219] Testimony of Salek Allweiss, dated March 8, 1993, Holocaust Memorial Center, Farmington Hills, Michigan, Internet: <http://www.holocaustcenter.org/page.aspx?pid=459>.

[220] Testimony of Abraham Schuss, dated November 9, 1945, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/1153.

(Moishe) Goldner and his father raided Polish farmers' fields in the vicinity of Dębica, to the east of Tarnów, "carrying a heavy iron bar in case we needed to defend ourselves, for on several occasions we had spotted Poles patrolling their fields at night." They were once confronted by Poles with scythes who were "simply trying to protect what was theirs." As Goldner explains, "because the farmers now had an immense quota to fill for the Germans, with harsh penalties if they fell short, they did not react kindly to having their fields raided." On that occasion, Goldner managed to shatter one of the farmer's kneecaps with his metal bar and escaped with father.[221] After teaming up with a professional Polish bandit with connections to the Communist underground in 1942, Goldner describes the brazen exploits they engaged in and the fate of those farmers who resisted:

> … armed robbery was not something I had ever thought about participating in before. On the other hand, I reasoned, after the many months I had spent on my own raiding stores and fields, who was I to make moral judgments? …
>
> Kopec had also taken time to familiarize me with the two weapons he was carrying. One was a *Steilhandgranate*, a German-made stick grenade with a metal cylinder at the end of a long wooden handle. The other was a Russian submachine gun that never left his side. It was a Tokarev PPSh41, crude but effective, with a distinctive drum-shaped magazine that looked like a large metallic wheel. This magazine extended down just behind the barrel. …
>
> We entered the village after midnight. It seemed that Kopec selected houses at random. He had a sense about these things, I would come to learn, honed through years of experience. The plan was to find a window that could be forced open just wide enough for me to slip through. Before the war people seldom bolted their front doors, but times changed. There were bandits about.
>
> Once I entered through the window, my instructions were to quickly open the door so Kopec could enter. … Our hope was to get in and out without waking anyone, and at the first house we were successful. After a moment's hesitation I began taking what little food I could find—just a few paltry vegetables, no bread or meat—while Kopec searched for clothing and valuables. …
>
> A few blocks away, in the second house we entered, the door made a loud noise as I opened it from the inside. A woman called out, "Is somebody there?" from the sleeping quarters in back.
>
> Gun extended at his waist, Kopec bounded into the room and ordered its occupants—the woman, her husband, and a young child, as I recall—to huddle together in a corner of the room. The couple trembled with fright, but at least they obeyed. The child began to cry, but Kopec paid no attention. He handed his weapon over to me.
>
> "Watch them while I search the house," he said to me. "If they give you any trouble, kill them."
>
> The woman gave a soft wail and protectively sheltered her hysterical child. Her husband looked on helplessly.

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[221] Larry Stillman, *A Match Made in Hell: The Jewish Boy and the Polish Outlaw Who Defied the Nazis: From the Testimony of Morris Goldner* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 86–87.

… I am certain he [Kopec] was listening carefully for any signs of resistance. There were none, as it turned out. There seldom were. Many families knew the procedure well, you see, having been robbed repeatedly as banditry became almost routine. …

By the time we broke into the third house, I relaxed a bit, for I began to realize that the gun I held functioned perfectly well merely as a threat. I even rationalized that these people all had roofs over their heads, and beds to sleep on, and in most cases, a change of clothes. All of which was more than I had, more than most Jews had, and these Polish families were simply sharing their good fortune with me—albeit at the encouragement of a formidable semiautomatic submachine gun.

Deep down, however, I was not really comfortable with this justification. What's more, I was appalled at the thought that Kopec would use his weapon on innocent people without a second thought. Still, I knew I had better quickly adapt to this new way of life if I wanted to survive, so I tried to push these moral quandaries out of my mind.

After the third robbery we reluctantly left the comfort of the warm homes we had invaded and fled back into the forest. …

And during one of those robberies we had a rather close call of our own.

As was our usual practice, Kopec approached a house while I waited just out of sight, behind a tree. With no light other than that of a nearly full moon, I watched as he tried the door. It was bolted. He walked over to a window to see if he could pry it open enough for me to enter. I expected that any moment he would give me the okay to join him and enter the house.

Next thing I knew, he was surrounded by two men and a woman. All three carried rifles. And they were cautiously approaching Kopec as if they had cornered a dangerous animal, which in a manner of speaking, they had. *Had they been lying in wait for bandits like us?* I wondered. (*Bandits like us!* How strange to think of myself as Kopec's partner in crime.)

Kopec was also armed, naturally, but with three against one, he would expect me to start shooting first. That was why we never approached a house together and why I carried the submachine gun. Even though this was the first time I had to use it, I hesitated for only the briefest moment. From my vantage point I was able to surprise the family just as they had surprised Kopec. I took them out without getting Kopec in my line of fire.

At the time I convinced myself it didn't matter that I took the lives of three Poles, including a woman—even though these might have been innocent people just trying to defend their home. Killing them—perhaps orphaning children, who knows?—haunts me now, I admit it, and from the safety of my old age, I would gratefully undo it if I could. But back then I did not see a choice. Circumstances being what they were, it was them or us, and I did not hesitate to protect the man who protected me. It was a simple as that.

Of course, we helped ourselves to whatever we could find in the house, then continued southward.[222]

[222] Stillman, *A Match Made in Hell,* 28–30, 96–97. Goldner continued to steal after the war: "I began the familiar walk into Dębica. Along the way I stole a cow. The opportunity presented itself as I walked past a small farm just across the Wisłoka River, outside the city. … while I would not accept money as a gift, stealing in order to *get* money was another matter entirely." Ibid., 189.

Lala Weintraub (Fishman), who passed as a Pole, worked as a bookkeeper on an estate near Radom that was supervised by a peaceful Polish manager. One day in the fall of 1944, the farm was raided by a group of Jews whose affiliation is unknown, with fatal consequences for the manager. He was taken by them, likely as a "collaborator," and never heard of again.

> There was a third force operating in the area, and there came a day when its members served notice to us that the farm was under their control and that they would no longer tolerate Janek in the role of overseer.
>
> It happened on a quiet, balmy evening in late September. We were relaxing on the veranda of the main house—Janek, his wife, the cook, and me—when there was a stirring in the bushes beside the house. A hand appeared to part the branches, and four men emerged from the hole made in the wall of foliage. They were dressed in civilian clothes but were heavily armed with an assortment of pistols, rifles, and submachine guns. We all stood in anticipation of what they might do. They had dark hair, dark complexions, and what could be regarded as Semitic features—no Slavic towheads among them. I thought they looked Jewish. They also looked tough and dangerous. Were they partisans or bandits?
>
> We didn't ask, and they didn't tell us. But at first they acted like bandits. They pointed their weapons at us. "Hands up!" one of them barked.
>
> We raised our hands.
>
> "Inside the house!"
>
> We filed in through the front door.
>
> We stood in the dining room, hands over our heads. The man who was doing all the talking—presumably the leader of the band—bullied up to Janek. "Where's the money?" he shouted.
>
> Janek made a limp gesture in my direction. "She's in charge of the money," he said in a quavering voice.
>
> The leader came over to me. "Is that true?"
>
> I nodded.
>
> "Get it."
>
> "Follow me," I told him.
>
> We went into my room, and I fetched the strongbox from the file cabinet and opened it. On the removable top tray of the strongbox, there were a few cash notes and some coins mixed in with a number of receipts. The man grabbed it all and stuffed it into his pants pocket. Then, gesturing with a pistol, he ushered me out of the room. I realize that he hadn't lifted the top tray to look into the bottom compartment of the strongbox, where most of the cash was stored. I didn't mention this oversight to him. …
>
> Just then, the man said to me in a low voice, "We know who you are and we know what you are. But don't worry—your secret is safe with us."
>
> I was stunned, rooted to the spot, unable to move or speak. Was I to interpret his utterance as a veiled threat or reassurance? I stared at him. He had a stern, tired expression, but there was no hostility in his face. Reassurance.

> We went back into the dining room. The leader pointed his gun at Janek. "You," he snapped. "You're coming with us."
>
> Two of the partisans—for that is what they were, otherwise they would not have been so mindful of my security—seized Janek by either arm and forced him out the door. Janek didn't protest; he was powerless in their grasp and must have known that protest would only make matters worse for him.
>
> The leader warned us to remain in the house for at least five minutes after they were gone. Then the partisans slipped into the bushes whence they came, and that was the last we saw of them. And it was the last we saw of Janek, too.[223]

Jewish accounts from the Działoszyce area refer to revenge actions against Polish "collaborators" by Jewish partisans, but there is insufficient context to assess these events and the activities of the partisans.

> Desperate, we ran to the Chroberz forest. When we got there, they told us that a gentile named Krzyształ had killed five members of the Jurysta family. Some time later, Monas Rzeźnik, one of the partisans in our area, caught the nurderer and shot him "as a lesson so that others might learn and fear."
>
> Monas and his group of partisans also killed a gentile by the name of Przemysław from Dębowa Zaga [Zagaje Dębiańskie?]. For his "good deeds" collaborating with the Germans, he got his head chopped off. From that time on, the gentile murderers were fearful of Monas Rzeźnik and his partisan comrades, and they relented a bit.[224]

These Jewish partisans appear to be the same ones who "protected" Jews hiding with Polish farmers in that area and who supplied these Jews with goods that the partisans likely stole from other farmers.

> As soon as they find out about a Jew, they come to help in whatever way they can. The first time, there were eighteen of them who came at night, understandably, riding horses. They brought all kinds of wonderful things and gave us some money, which we are using to help us along even now. The farmer [who hid them] did not lose anything because of them.[225]

The situation in the vicinity of Brańsk in northern Podlasie followed a similar pattern:

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[223] Lala Fishman and Steven Weingartner, *Lala's Story: A Memoir of the Holocaust* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 256–57.

[224] Fay Bussgang and Julian Bussgang, eds., *Działoszyce Memorial Book* (New York: JewishGen, 2012), 312.

[225] Bussgang, *Działoszyce Memorial Book,* 321. Another account in that book also speaks of "revenge" murders against Poles. Ibid., 323–24. David Wohlgelernter describes how even those Poles already sheltering Jews lost their nerve because of the German terror: "It was when in all the villages there were strong raids and every farmer threw out whatever Jews they were sheltering, fearing for their own lives. Even hiding among the high sheaves of grain did not help, because even there, the murderers found them. They [the murderers] went on for a certain time, sweeping through the grain day after day, and shot whomever they found. Dozens of innocent Jewish souls were murdered and left lying there until after the harvest, when the farmers buried them." Ibid., 322.

> Gradually the Jewish group gained enough confidence to come out of their bunkers and live aboveground. With arms, hunger became less of a problem. Given their conditions, they were not scrupulous about the methods of acquiring food. They conducted raids on farmers' stores, or 'requisitioned' food at gunpoint. They also had contacts with Poles who were willing to deliver food voluntarily. The raids *led to later* acts of revenge, but the accounts stress that Poles grew much more respectful when they realized that the Jews who had come to negotiate with [i.e., rob] them were armed.[226] [emphasis added]

As noted earlier, those who wanted to join the ranks of the partisans were carefully interrogated and Communist as well as Jewish partisans were known to execute people they were unsure of. The Germans also sent Jews into the countryside as informers and *agents provocateurs,* who proved to be another source of peril for the underground and the unsuspecting civilian population who provided them with assistance. In July 1943, the Gestapo and gendarmes in Kraśnik released a group of Jews to gather information about Poles who sheltered Jews and the Polish underground organizations operating in the area. The Polish underground had to take steps to eliminate this threat, as did the Communist partisans in the area.[227] A Jewish partisan group led by Edmund Łukawiecki, which operated in the forests north of Lubaczów

[226] Hoffman, *Shtetl,* 235. Hoffman cites Zbigniew Romaniuk, a regional historian, whose research discredits the charge that the Home Army and the National Armed Forces assaulted or killed Jews in this region. When the AK was implicated directly, according to Romaniuk, "it was for other reasons. He cites one episode in which the AK attacked a group of eight Soviets and four Jews, in retaliation for their violent behavior during food raids. One Jew was killed in that raid, and two Russians wounded." (In the study cited below, Romaniuk says that one Soviet was killed and two Jews were wounded.) Members of the Home Army warned Jews when their hiding places were discovered or reported to the Germans. The acts of violence that did occur were committed by bandits who used the AK as a cover; some of them were executed by the Home Army. Moreover, sympathetic local Poles including schoolteachers and a priest supplied the Jews with arms. Ibid., 237. See also Zbigniew Romaniuk, "Brańsk and Its Environs in the Years 1939–1953: Reminiscences of Events," in *The Story of Two Shtetls,* Part One, 80, 84–85.

[227] Both the Polish nationalist (NSZ) and Communist underground executed these Jewish agents. A Jew sheltered by Poles in the nearby village of Borów was also suspected of spying for the Germans. See Chodakiewicz, *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne,* 113–15; Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, "Agenci i bandy pozorowane na Lubelszczyźnie: Z dziejów okupacji niemieckiej w Janowskiem," *Radzyński Rocznik Humanistyczny,* vol. 2 (2002): 122. The fear of German-sent spies was not a baseless one. Two Jews, possibly *agents provocateurs*—one a refugee from Warsaw, the other a local Jew named Kelman—came to Sterdyń, near Sokołów Podlaski, with a punitive detachment of the SS and German gendarmerie to identify the Poles who had helped them in that town and on a nearby estate in 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 had helped them in the area. As a result, more than a score of Poles were executed in the villages of Brzóza and Zarzetka near Łochów; some of the Polish victims were beaten and shot by Rubin himself. See Paweł Szapiro, ed., *Wojna żydowsko-niemiecka: Polska prasa konspiracyjna 1943–1944 o powstaniu w getcie Warszawy* (London: Aneks, 1992), 163; Piekarski, *Obwód Armii Krajowej Sokołów Podlaski "Sęp", "Proso" 1939–1944,* 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 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.

(Puszcza Solska), executed a young Jewish woman who had betrayed at least one family of Jews in hiding and tried to infiltrate the partisan group.[228]

Other Jewish partisan groups also took similar measures against potential collaborators, often without any verification of their story or background. As the following account by Eta Chajt Wrobel, a Jewish woman from Łuków, shows, the consequences for those who happened to be wrongly suspected were dire indeed and, understandably, could lead to retaliations against those partisans who wrongly mistreated innocent villagers.

> During my travels, I often found myself in dangerous situations. For example, one day I was on the road to Lukow [Łuków] and a young boy who recognized me from Dietz's chicken flicking factory started screaming in the street that I was a Jew … A businessman who lived in a fancy house on the outskirts of the town heard him screaming, called him over, grabbed him by the throat, and then yelled at me to run. I began running to ward the village as the man held on to the boy. … I had no idea what happened next, but that man definitely saved my life.
>
> Months later, back in that area, my men caught this same businessman when he came across our camp while walking through the woods. The men told him they would not let him leave the forest until it was dark. But he knew very well that our practice was that any non-Jew who wandered into the forest and discovered us never left the woods alive.
>
> I found out that they'd caught someone when I heard a commotion from one corner of the camp. I walked over to find a man on his knees, begging for his life, promising that he would never tell anyone, even his wife, where we were. I instantly recognized him as the man who'd saved me from that vicious boy. I ordered my men to let him go immediately, knowing that he would never tell. …
>
> It came to pass that an Orthodox Jew by the name of Noach one day wandered into our camp. A saddle maker by profession, he was basically uneducated and a fright to behold. It didn't help that he was in a constant state of fury and full of hate for the *goyim* (non-Jews). He was as strong as a bull, and when he would get his hands on a Pole who deserved a beating, each blow was in the name of one of his family members: "This one is for my father. This one is for my mother. This one is for my sister. This one is for my brother," and he would name names until the collaborator or thief was beaten senseless.[229]

[228] Lavee (Łukawiecki), *Jewish Hit Squad*, 3–18.

[229] Wrobel, *My Life My Way*, 83–84, 90. The author, Eta Wrobel, writes: "Many people helped us without being paid … And so we spent the winter of 1943–1944 in the woods near Lukow [Łuków]. The peasants in the area continued to give us warm clothing and would let us sleep in their barns, where eight or 10 of us would huddle together for warmth." Ibid., 85, 94. Their contact with Russians hiding in the woods proved to be disastrous: "We sent two men to find their whereabouts but it turned out that these Russians were deserters. We never saw our men again." Ibid., 95. After establishing contact with the communist People's Army, their campsite was attacked by a group said to be the Home Army. Ibid., 103. On one occasion, a collaborator from Łuków was captured and was shot in each eye. Ibid., 85. On another occasion, a village was burned to the ground because someone had killed a Jewish woman and her children. Ibid., 88.

While this particular author did not mention any raids on farmers carried out by her forest group of Jews, which joined up with the Communist People's Army, other Jewish survivors did do so.[230] A Jewish woman who passed as a Pole in the countryside near Łuków recalled brazen raids carried out by desperate Jews:

> Communism was a bunch of Jews, still young ones, remnants and they were running from farm to farm … and doing terrible things. … they—all the people went around there—every night he came to another farm. If he didn't like them, he went out … took a torch, burned the farm. How long could those Goyim take something like that? So … then the Germans were looking for him …[231]

However, the son of a member of an armed Jewish group in the Łuków area claims that there were no robberies, and that they "lived on meagre supplies they bought from villagers, sometimes giving them IOUs for food." He describes the reason for their "desire for revenge" thus:

> A few locals continued to tell the Nazis about families that were harbouring Jews, so Rosenbaum's father and uncle encircled their farmhouses with kerosene and lit them on fire. When they came out of their homes to escape the flames, the Rosenbaums shot them dead.
>
> "That only happened a few more times and then there were no more snitches."[232]

Sonia and Abram Hurman, who moved about in the area southwest of Łuków, where they received help (and even some weapons) from dozens of Poles, reported frequent cases of Jews taking food by force from Polish farmers. They even speak of their forest group's reluctance to accept Jews known for their "brutality" and "crimes," and note that eventually even farmers who were friendly became less generous for the simple reason that they did not have much food for themselves. In one egregious case, the Communist partisan leadership ordered the execution of a Jew and Ukrainian who wandered about and terrorized the farmers.[233] But such punishment was meted out only very rarely. Soviet partisans were more

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[230] On robberies carried out by armed Jewish forest groups in this area see also Czubaszek, *Żydzi z Łukowa i okolic,* 230, 246, 250; Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today,* volume II: *District Lublin,* 188. Polish criminals who robbed and raped, and who sometimes teamed up with Soviet groups, were also a scourge for the rural population and Jews hiding in the forest. Both the German authorities and the Polish underground took measures against criminals. A Polish gamekeeper was said to have been denounced by a Jew from Łuków named Telman. See Bechta, *...Między Bolszewią a Niemcami,* 196.

[231] Testimony of Lily Fenster (née Lubaskurka), November 8 and 10, 1994, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, University of Michigan at Dearborn, Internet: <http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/fenster/section024.html>.

[232] Rick Westhead, "'We'd See Corpses in the Street'" [Online edition: "Holocaust Survivors Network Founder Hank Rosenbaum Recalls Horrors He Suffered to Survive the War"], *Toronto Star,* April 8, 2013. The Rosenbaum family, consisting of Zalman, his son, Yitzhak, and his wife, Sara, and their son, Chaim, as well as Chaya and Izak Epsztein and Kivel Tykocki (Zalman's grandson and Chaya's bother), were sheltered by the family of Stanisław Tomaszewski in the village of Kępki, north of Łuków. See Gutman and Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 5: *Poland,* Part 2, 819–20.

[233] Hurman, *Pod osłoną nocy,* 58–59, 60, 62, 74, 88, 116. The execution of some flagrant robber partisans by People's Guard commanders is confirmed in Mirosław Sulej, *Zdrada i zbrodnia: Studium przypadku: Komuniści na terenie Podobwodu Dęblin–Ryki Armii Krajowej podczas II wojny światowej i później* (Warsaw: Volumen, 2012), 98.

inclined to administer collective punishment, as was the case near Serokomla, south of Łuków, where they wanted to torch a village whose inhabitants had helped them, after a forester informed the Germans of the presence of their partisan unit in the area as he was required to do.[234]

To complicate matters further there were also the so-called "sham units" (*oddziały pozorowane* or *grupy pozorowe*) attached to the Communist security forces. These units were created by the Soviets to fight the Polish underground and to compromise it by committing political and common murders for which the Home Army was often blamed. Though such units had been utilized earlier, they were formally mobilized into action by a secret order issued to the provincial cells by Stanisław Radkiewicz,[235] head of state security, on December 4, 1945:

> In the last few weeks, the anti-government activity of the reactionary and conspiratorial bands [i.e., Polish insurgents] has intensified throughout the land. We are in the possession of documents proving that this action is supported by legal opposition parties and that people sympathize with it. … In conjunction with this, I am instructing the directors of the Security Service outposts to prepare in great secrecy an action aimed at the liquidation of the members of these parties and to make it appear as if it was done by the reactionary bands. For this action use the special fighting squads created last summer. This action must be accompanied by a press campaign aimed against the terrorist bands on whom will fall the responsibility for these deeds.[236]

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[234] Diatłowicki, *Żydzi w walce,* vol. 2, 68–69. Abram Rozenman's account refers to a partisan group led by Serafim Alekseev, a Soviet officer who escaped from a German prisoner of war camp, who on this occasion was persuaded not to take revenge against the entire village. Alekseev formed or oversaw a number of partisan groups, some of them Jewish, with links to the People's Guard (*Gwardia Ludowa*). These groups were involved in widespread robberies that especially targeted estates, well-off farmers, and independentist activists, and were responsible for many murders such as that of Home Army member Kazimierz Kuszell, who attempted to prevent his daughters from being raped, and the family of Home Army member Marian Boruc. See Sulej, *Zdrada i zbrodnia,* 19–20, 86–90, 299–302.

[235] Stanisław Radkiewicz, who rose to the rank of Minister of Public Security, was an ethnic Belorussian from Polesia (Polesie). During the interwar period he had joined the *komsomol* [Communist youth] where he used the pseudonym of "Pietia" or "Pietka." See Noskowa and Fitowa, eds., *NKWD i polskie podziemie 1944–1945,* 294; Tomasz Grotowicz, "Kaci Polaków: Stanisław Radkiewicz," *Nasza Polska,* October 18, 2000.

[236] Cited in Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 104. The authenticity of this document has been questioned by some historians. For more on the activities of the "sham units" see: Leszek Żebrowski, "Partyjne oddziały partyzanckie: Bandy pozorowane 1944–1947," *Gazeta Polska,* November 7, 1996; Chodakiewicz, *Tajne oblicze GL-AL i PPR,* vol. 1, passim; Żebrowski, "Działalność tzw. band pozorowanych jako metoda zwalczania podziemia niepodległościowego w latach 1944–1947," in *Skryte oblicze systemu komunistycznego,* 75–90; Leszek Żebrowski, "'Bandy pozorowane'," in *Encyklopedia "Białych Plam"* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2000), vol. 2, 258–60; Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, "Agenci i bandy pozorowane na Lubelszczyźnie: Z dziejów okupacji niemieckiej w Janowskiem," in *Radzyński Rocznik Humanistyczny,* vol. 2 (2002): 113–26; Maciej Korkuć, *Zostańcie wierni tylko Polsce…: Niepodległościowe oddziały partyzanckie w Krakowskiem (1944–1947)* (Kraków: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej—Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu and Towarzystwo Naukowe "Societas Vistulana", 2002), 474–95; Adam Dziuba, "Odkrycie w archiwum IPN," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 5 (May 2003): 81; Błażejewicz, *W walce z wrogami Rzeczypospolitej,* 151, 171; Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza,* 415; Kamiński and Żaryn, eds., *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego,* vol. 1, 35, 47, 372. For operations against the Ukrainian Insurgent Army see Eugeniusz Misiło, ed., *Akcja "Wisła": Dokumenty* (Warsaw: Archiwum Ukraińskie, 1993), 385; Zbigniew Nawrocki, *Zamiast wolności: UB na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1944–1949* (Rzeszów: Instytut Europejskich Studiów Społecznych w Rzeszowie, 1998), 182. Leszek Żebrowski points out that the Communist press attributed all sorts of heinous murders and robberies perpetrated by the "sham units" to the anti-Communist underground organizations. Tadeusz Piotrowski states that, according to German counter-intelligence, by the summer of 1944 there were 20,000 Soviet agents behind German lines, and they were increasing at the rate of 10,000 every three months. It was these

Nor did the fact that many Jews joined the ranks of the Communist partisans operating in central Poland, the People's Guard (*Gwardia Ludowa*), later transformed into the People's Army (*Armia Ludowa*), prevent that formation from killing Jews, among them its own members. The People's Guard not only engaged in widespread banditry, having absorbed criminal elements including entire gangs of robbers to bolster its numerically small ranks (as it was shunned by the vast majority of Poles), but also murdered hundreds of Jews. As early as 1942, two groups of escapees from the camp for Jewish prisoners of war on Lipowa Street in Lublin and from the Jewish labour camp in Janiszów near Annopol were attacked by People's Guard detachments near Kraśnik Lubelski.[237] Detachments of the People's Guard under the command of Grzegorz Korczyński, Tadeusz Maj ("Świt"), and Józef Bielenda killed scores of Jews in the Lublin, Kielce and Kraków districts respectively.[238] A People's Guard unit under the command of Leon Plichta ("Wrona")

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agents who provided the Soviet Einsatzgruppen, the "operational groups," with the names of the Home Army members to be arrested and liquidated. See Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 104. For a description of the activities of "sham units" in the Nowogródek region see Andrzej Chmielarz, "Likwidacja podziemia polskiego na Nowogródczyźnie i Wileńszczyźnie (lipiec 1944–lipiec 1945)," in Boradyn, ed., *Armia Krajowa na Nowogródczyźnie i Wileńszczyźnie (1941–1945),* 190; and Alexandra Viatteau with Stanislaw Maria Jankowski and Youri Zoria, *Staline assassine la Pologne, 1939–1947* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1999), 166.

[237] Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets,* 155, 196 Chodakiewicz, *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne,* 96–97, 100, 116, 350 n.186, 187. For a selection of Communist archival documents detailing these incidents see Chodakiewicz, *Tajne oblicze GL-AL i PPR,* vol. 2, 43–71. Dariusz Libionka takes issue with the claim that it was the People's Guard who murdered one group of Jewish prisoners of war who escaped from Lublin, and blames a detachment of the National Military Organization–National Army (*Narodowa Organizacja Wojskowa–Armia Narodowa)* which was later incorporated into the National Armed Forces (*Narodowe Siły Zbrojne,* NSZ). See Dariusz Libionka, "Narodowa Organizacja Wojskowa i Narodowe Siły Zbrojne wobec Żydów pod Kraśnikiem—korekta obrazu," *Zagłada Żydow: Studia i materiały,* vol. 7 (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów IFiS PAN, 2011): 23–62. However, Libionka's research has been exposed as faulty, and the evidence as to who carried out the murder appears to be inconclusive. See Rafał Drabik, "Żydzi, bandytyzm a podziemie narodowe: O mordzie na Żydach w lasach zakrzowieckich (pod Kraśnikiem," *Glaukopis: Pismo społeczno kulturalne,* no. 31 (2014): 95–125. Samuel Gruber, a Jewish partisan knowledgeable about this matter, appears to point the finger at the former: "Unfortunately, of the forty men of the advance guard who left [the Lipowa Street camp in Lublin] for the woods only two survived to tell of the fate that had befallen the others. After completing their work on the bunkers, the Polish underground fighters had hidden out in the woods to await the arrival of our men. When our men had filed into the bunker, the Poles, who were supposed to be their allies against the Nazis, rushed out from their hiding places, threw hand grenades into the bunker they themselves had built, and opened fire on those inside. At the time the *Armja Ludowa,* the left-wing freedom fighters, blamed the rightist partisans, the *Armja Krajowa,* and spread abroad a story of how the 'sons of the bourgeoisie' had killed forty 'heroes.'" See Gruber, *I Chose Life,* 41.

[238] This topic received its first extensive treatment in Chodakiewicz, *Tajne oblicze GL-AL i PPR,* where the murders perpetrated by Tadeusz Maj are described in volume 3, at p. 14. See also Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza,* 178–82, 346–48 (robberies perpetrated by the People's Guard are mentioned throughout this book, primarily in chapters 7, 10, 11 and 13); Piotr Gontarczyk, "Z genealogii elit PZPR: Przypadek Stefana Kilianowicza [sic] vel Grzegorza Korczyńskiego," *Glaukopis,* no. 1 (2003): 214–29; Aleksandra Bańkowska, "Polish Partisan Formations during 1942–1944 in Jewish Testimonies," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials,* vol. 1 (2008): 106, 113, 120–21; Mariusz Krzysztofiński, "Dziś a nie jutro trzeba atakować wroga: 'Szlak bojowy' grupy GL 'Iskra' na Rzeszowszczyźnie," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* nos. 3–4 (March–April 2006): 59–67, here at 62–63; Mariusz Krzysztofiński, "Działalność grupy GL 'Iskra': Przyczynek do badań nad stosunkiem PPR i GL do ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie," *Glaukopis,* no. 11–12 (2008): 170–81; Janusz Borowiec, "Zbrodnie popełnione na Żydach przez oddział Gwardii Ludowej 'Iskra' w świetle dokumentów sądowych," in Edyta Czop and Elżbieta Rączy, eds., *Z dziejów stosunków polsko-żydowskich w XX wieku* (Rzeszów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Oddział w Rzeszowie, 2009), 73–87; Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, "Proces Tadeusza Maja: Z dziejów oddziału AL 'Świt' na Kielecczyźnie," *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały,* vol. 7 (2011): 170–210; English translation: Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, "An AL Unit and Its Attitude toward Jews: The Trial of Tadeusz Maj," *Yad Vashem Studies,* vol. 40, no. 1 (2012): 75–118. On murders of Jewish partisans in the vicinity of Karpiówka near

murdered Jews who unwittingly joined its ranks in the vicinity of Karpiówka near Kraśnik, in the Lublin district.[239] It was also the case that some partisan units of the Home Army, National Armed Forces, and Peasant Battalions killed a number of Jews. However, many of those deaths occurred in the context of the measures taken to eradicate the plague of banditry that increasingly spread throughout the Polish countryside.

The Polish Underground Takes Measures Against Banditry

War demoralizes. Such was the state of anarchy brought on by the German occupation and encouraged by the Soviets. The claim that Home Army Commander General Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski, under the guise of fighting banditry, issued an order—misidentified as Order 116 of September 15, 1943—calling on Home Army units to kill Jews who were hiding in the forests from the Nazis is patently false. As historians Stanislaus Blejwas and John Lowell Armstrong have shown, the actual text of the real Order 116 makes no mention of Jews or Jewish partisans whatsoever. The impugned document is in fact Organizational Report No. 220 of August 31, 1943, which does mention measures against armed gangs, including Soviet partisan detachments and "ordinary gangs of robbers," who commit robberies and murder. There is, however, only one reference to Jews in that document: "Among the perpetrators there are not only men, but also women, in particular Jewish women …"[240] So not only do critics of the Home Army quote the wrong text, the

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Kraśnik, in the Lublin district, carried out by the People's Guard unit (misidentified by the author as a Home Army unit) under the command of Leon Plichta, see Edelstein, *Tzadikim in Sodom (Righteous Gentiles),* 38–39. On murders of Jewish partisans near Wola Czołnowska and Białki Górne, in the Lublin district, carried out by People's Gaurd units under the command of Władysław Sienkiewicz, see Sulej, *Zdrada i zbrodnia,* 97–103. Members of the "Grunwald" brigade of the People's Army murdered three Jews near Raków, in Kielce province, in July 1944. See Sławomir Cenckiewicz and Piotr Woyciechowski, "Szkic do biografii Sławomira Petelickiego (1946–2012): Genealogia, sowieckie korzenie i życie skrywane," *Glaukopis,* no. 28 (2013): 46–66, here at 54–56. According to Robert Kuwałek, "Żydowski ruch oporu," *Strona o Żydach lubelskich,* Internet: <http://www.jews-lublin.net>, a Communist partisan group under the command of Lieutenant Karl Herzenberg, who escaped from a German POW camp, murdered a group of Jews led by Abraham Braun.

Notwithstanding this overwhelming, well-documented evidence, the People's Guard (later transformed into the People's Army) is touted in Holocaust literature as being "accepting" of Jews, which it was, but little if anything is said about the many murders of Jews it committed. For example, Christopher Browning perpetuates the myth that, unlike the Home Army and National Armed Forces, who are accused of robbing and murdering Jews (which sometimes did occur), the Communist underground welcomed them, while ignoring the many murders of Jews by the People's Guard in the vicinity of Starachowice. See Browning, *Remembering Survival,* 252: "While a few partisan groups in the forest—usually those associated with the AL (*Armia Ludowa,* the Communist-oriented underground)—would accept Jews, those associated with the AK (the conservative nationalist underground Home Army) usually rejected them. More dangerously, some AK units and especially extremist units associated with the notorious National Armed Forces (NSZ) would either rob Jews, or simply kill them outright."

[239] Edelstein, *Tzadikim in Sodom (Righteous Gentiles),* 38–39. Edelstein misidentifies the unit as a Home Army one.

[240] See Stanislaus A. Blejwas's reply in the exchange, "Polemic as History: Shmuel Krakowski, *The War of the Doomed. Jewish Armed Resistance in Poland, 1942–1944," Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies,* vol. 4 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell for the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, 1989), 354–69. The text of Order No. 116 (issued on September 15, 1943), in the Polish original, is reproduced in Pełczyński et al., eds., *Armia Krajowa w dokumentach 1939–1945,* vol. 6 (London: Studium Polskiej Podziemnej, 1989), 347–48. See also Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza,* 280–81. An English translation can be found in Peter D. Stachura, *Poland, 1918–1945: An Interpretive and Documentary History of the Second Republic* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 139–40, and is reproduced below:

document they do quote (and indeed misquote)—Organizational Report no. 220—does not say what they claim: it merely mentions that there were Jewish women among the bandit groups roaming the Polish countryside. This is nowhere near a direct order to kill Jews, but historians such as Shmuel Krakowski tried to get around that difficulty by asserting, "The reference to Jewish women served under the circumstances as a veiled indication that Jewish partisan units were also to be met by force."[241] As a penetrating study based on the experience of Jews who served in the Home Army concludes, there is little evidence to support the claim that commanding officers interpreted the order in the manner alleged by Krakowski. Most members had most likely never heard of the order. The Jews interviewed for the study did not recall being told to attack or kill Jews that they encountered.[242]

The confusion of documents is fatal to Krakowski's argument. While Order 116 (the one that did not mention Jews) went *down* the chain of command to Bór-Komorowski's subordinates, Organizational Report no. 220 went *up* the chain of command to London. It was prepared for the Polish government in exile and was not as an order to the AK commanders in the field. Thus the "veiled indication" of the reference to Jewish women was never seen by the subordinates to whom it was supposedly directed, and who would have been the ones to act upon it. In short, Bór-Komorowski's order was directed against bandits and others who committed armed robbery, and not specifically against Jews or Jewish partisans, or Soviet partisans for that matter, and spared no one—not even members of the Home Army.[243] Not only were General Bór-Komorowski's instructions not intended as a weapon to strike at Jews, but also they

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> Instructions Regarding the Preservation of Security in Local Areas:
> I. Security and order do not prevail in all regions or do not prevail to a satisfactory extent. The local population is subject to theft, intimidation, violence and, quite often, loss of life at the hands of gangs of various origin. The occupying power [i.e., the Germans] has failed to address this situation. In general, the occupying power represses the innocent local population, which is tormented by bandits. This situation threatens our interests and plans. The Home Army must take measures to improve the state of public security in the provinces.
> II. I instruct all regional and district commanders to take action where necessary against plundering or subversive bandit elements.
> III. Each action must be decisive and aimed at suppressing lawlessness. Action should be taken only against groups which are particularly causing trouble for the local population and the Home Army Command, that is, those who murder, rape and rob.
> IV. Action should be taken that will eliminate gang leaders and agitators, rather than entire gangs. Every action must be organised and carried out in complete secrecy …
> V. Regional and District Home Army commanders will secure the support and co-operation of the local population in the fight against banditry …

[241] Gutman and Krakowski, *Unequal Victims,* 124. Krakowski adds: "It is a proven fact, that in many units of the Home Army the order quoted was understood to define the Jewish partisans as outlaws." However, he provides no references for this claim. Another line of argument is that the reference in the report to "Soviet partisan detachments" rendered the order anti-Semitic because many Poles made a direct correlation between Jews and Communists.

[242] Amy Sara Davis Cores, *Jews in the Armia Krajowa,* Thesis (M.A.), Florida State University, April 2000, 79–80.

[243] John Lowell Armstrong, "The Polish Underground and the Jews: A Reassessment of Home Army Commander Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski's Order 116 Against Banditry," *The Slavonic and East European Review,* vol. 72, no. 2 (April 1994): 259–76. For a more recent and nuanced treatment of this subject in Polish see Adam Puławski, "Postrzeganie żydowskich oddziałów partyzanckich przez Armię Krajową i Delegaturę Rządu RP na Kraj," *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość,* no. 2 (2003): 271–300; and Janusz Marszalec, "Polskie Państwo Podziemne wobec komunistów polskich 1939–1944," in Chinciński, *Przemoc i dzień powszedni w okupowanej Polsce,* 408.

directed the armed underground to target groups engaged in particularly violent crimes with a view to eliminating their leaders and agitators and not the entire group. Specifically, the order to concentrate on leaders is inconsistent with any alleged intent to wipe out entire Jewish partisan units. Moreover, in many cases, the Home Army took harsh punitive measures against its own members who engaged in criminality[244]; they also issued warnings to Jews caught robbing Polish farmers.[245]

In February 1943, an order issued by General Stefan Rowecki ("Grot"), Commander-in-Chief of the Home Army, called on district commanders of the Home Army to give assistance to the Jewish underground in those ghettos where they wish to undertake armed resistance against the Germans.[246] A subsequent order issued by Rowecki, sometime before his arrest by the Germans in June 1943, helps to explain the Home Army's attitude toward Jewish partisans. That order reads in part:

> The participation of the Jews in the resistance to be as follows:
>
> 1. My order of February 1943 regarding giving assistance to Jews in ghettos wishing to fight still stands.
> 2. I allow the formation of Jewish fighting groups from elements that are disposed patriotically (Bund, Zionists). These groups are not to be used in diversionary or partisan actions, but are to be prepared for the uprising.
> 3. I allocate money for that purpose, i.e., upkeep of Jewish groups, under the control of the central commission.
> 4. Arms purchased for the Jewish groups and defence of closed concentrations of Jews are to be stored in secured places, and to be provided in times of readiness.[247]

One historian has made the following assessment of the above-mentioned orders:

> Rowecki's directions, in this order, correspond with the goals and capabilities of the Home Army in 1943. Commander in Chief Rowecki issued this order before Komorowski's alleged anti-Semitic order of September 1943. It appears that the Commanders-in-Chief rather than the government-in-

[244] In the Radzyń Podlaski district Home Army members found operating in a Polish bandit group were court martialled and shot. After being caught stealing on two separate occasions, members of another unit were flogged the first time, and then executed by firing squad in front of the rest of their unit. Stefan Łukasiewicz, a member of yet another unit, was executed in front of the other men of his unit for raping and murdering a Jewish woman. See Jarosław Kopiński, "Problem bandytyzmu wśród żołnierzy AK-WiN Inspektoratu Rejonowego Radzyń Podlaski," in Tomasz Strzembosz, ed., *Problemy bandytyzmu w okupowanej Polsce w latach 1939–1947* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, 2003), 141. One of the most notorious gangs was the Kiełbasa gang which operated in the vicinity of Janów Lubelski. See Andrzej Albiniak, "Pomiędzy wsią a małym miasteczkiem: Wspomnienie i pamięć o Żydach wiejskich z Lubelszczyzny," in Sitarek, Trębacz, and Wiatr, eds., *Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji*, 401–2.

[245] See, for example, Schutzman, *Wierzbnik-Starachowitz*, 333ff. (David Sali), 381f. (Avraham Shiner).

[246] Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 74, 203. The February 1943 order has been lost but it is referred to in other orders and reports.

[247] Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 74, as cited in Bernard Mark, *Powstanie w getcie warszawskim: Nowe uzupełnione wydanie i zbiór dokumentów* (Warsaw: "Idisz Buch," 1963), 347–48.

exile initiated both of these orders. There is no evidence I have seen to suggest that Komorowski disregarded this order or that any later orders directly countermand Rowecki's order.

Rowecki's order not only contradicts the argument that the AK was anti-Semitic, but also provides evidence to suggest that the Home Army actively supported Jewish armed resistance.[248]

After a thorough investigation of the sources and conditions in German-occupied Poland, John Lowell Armstrong argues compellingly that the measures taken by the Polish underground authorities to combat banditry were entirely legitimate. Given the extent of that scourge, policing the countryside and eradicating banditry became important functions that the Home Army had to undertake to maintain a semblance of law and order. According to Armstrong,

Therefore, it is clear from the foregoing that Order 116 [of September 15, 1943] and other Home Army Orders against banditry were fully justified in the face of rampant robberies. As a result of these orders, the AK generally tried hard to put an end to banditry and robbery, not sparing ethnic Poles or even members of its own ranks in this struggle. The question becomes, then, whether or not Jews engaged in banditry, and, if they did, how did the Home Army react to this?

Most Jewish historians, Krakowski and Ainsztein included, adamantly reject any suggestion of Jewish involvement in robberies of the Polish population. In Krakowski's case, this position is so stringent that he even ludicrously accuses Emmanuel Ringelblum of being under the influence of Polish 'propaganda' when Ringelblum writes that Jews trying to survive in the forest were 'condemned to the life of bandits who have to live by robbery'. Actually, there were three ways in which Jews committed armed robbery of the Polish population during the Second World War: as members of partisan units, in spontaneously formed groups not associated with any organization in order to survive, and in mixed Polish-Jewish professional bandit gangs. … [Copious examples follow. Armstrong also cites a Bund report that expresses concern about "wildcat groups" composed of Jews "which are looting the countryside." Moreover, as we have seen in this study, there were also bandit groups made up exclusively of Jews.—*M.P.*]

In line with its basically uncompromising stand against banditry, the AK treated Jews who robbed with the same severity as it did Poles. Specific examples of death sentences carried out on Jews for robbery are found in Polish underground documents. For example, in a report on the Home Army's diversionary activities for August 1943, Bór-Komorowski noted that 'for terrorist acts against the Polish population nine Jewish robber gangs were liquidated, killing seventy-six bandits'. Another instance of the execution of Jews for robbery is found in a summary of actions carried out during the German occupation by a BCh [*Bataliony Chłopskie*—Peasant Battalions[249]] unit in the

[248] Amy Sara Davis Cores, *Jews in the Armia Krajowa*, Thesis (M.A.), Florida State University, April 2000, 82.

[249] The Peasant Battalions were not an anti-Semitic formation as such and many Jews fought in their ranks. See Reuben Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe*, 416–17; Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, eds., *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 276–77, 280–81, 725, 852; Janusz Gmitruk, *Ku zwycięstwu: Konspiracyjny ruch ludowy na Kielecczyźnie 1939–1945*, 3rd revised edition (Warsaw: Muzeum Historii Polskiego Ruchu Ludowego, 2003), 219–22; Gutman and Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, 693; Aleksandra Bańkowska, "Polish Partisan Formations during 1942–1944 in Jewish Testimonies," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials*, vol. 1 (2008): 116–17. The commanders of the Kraków and Białystok regions issued instructions to the

> Hrubieszów area. Here the Peasant Battalions shot a group of thirteen Jews for banditry. Certainly, these actions were severe, but they were not *a priori* anti-Semitic, as the Home Army generally treated all who robbed with the same harsh justice. …
>
> In the final analysis, Order 116 was aimed against bandits of all types without regard to nationality, including Jewish ones and those in the AK. The order, and others against banditry, were fully justified by the plague of robbery raging in German-occupied Poland. Although Order 116 was draconian, it was not intended to unleash a war against Jews and did not do so.[250]

Historian John Radziłowski provides the following description of the context in which the anti-banditry measures were implemented:

> The all-consuming brutalization that engulfed this region [i.e., northeastern Poland] affected all ethnic groups and all aprtisan forces. Yet, it was the AK that by the very nature of its organization suffered the most from this problem, because it directly undermined the Poles' capacity for continued resistance by destroying, weakening, or demoralizing the rural population on which they relied for supplies and from which they recruited most of their members. The very active stance taken by the AK's main command against banditry stemmed first and foremost from practical

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field to assist Jews, and such help was forthcoming. See Elżbieta Rączy, "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w latach drugiej wojny światowej na Rzeszowszczyźnie," in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945,* 905–907; "Pomocy działaczy ludowych i organizacji BCh dla ludności żydowskiej w okolicach Białegostoku w latach 1941–1943," *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego,* no. 1 (1974): 127–32, here at 132. Members of the Peasant Battalions provided food, false identity documents, and weapons and ammunition to the Jewish underground in Zawiercie, Upper Silesia. See Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945,* vol. 2, Part A, 175. The record of the Polish Socialist underground (the so-called Polish People's Army or *Armia Ludowa*) is uniformly favourable. See Aleksandra Bańkowska, "Polish Partisan Formations during 1942–1944 in Jewish Testimonies," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials*, vol. 1 (2008): 117. *M.P.*

[250] Armstrong, "The Polish Underground and the Jews: A Reassessment of Home Army Commander Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski's Order 116 Against Banditry," *The Slavonic and East European Review,* vol. 72, no. 2 (April 1994): 272, 275–76. Armstrong states that "cases of AK attacks on Jews, apart from the execution of Jews who robbed, were also the result of local officers and soldiers' decisions and did not result from any order from the Home Army's Central Command." In closing, Armstrong imparts important advice that Holocaust historians would do well to heed: "Conflicts between Jews in the forest and the AK, which resulted in part from anti-Semitism, seem to have occurred due to local conditions and decisions at the local level. The in-depth examination of these local conflicts, using all existing documentation, is an avenue which needs to be pursued further by historians examining the Home Army's complicated and often tragic relationship with Jews." Armstrong's impartial and penetrating analysis merits careful reading and emulation by students of this topic. Unfortunately, Shmuel Krakowski appears to have ignored this important milestone and continues to misquote and misinterpret Bór-Komorowski's order of September 15, 1943. See Shmuel Krakowski, "The Polish Underground and the Jews in the Years of the Second World War," in Bankier and Gutman, eds., *Nazi Europe and the Final Solution,* 226. For an important discussion of the topic of banditry and its impact on relations between Jews and Poles, see Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918–1955,* 327–47; Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets,* 153–55, 179, 188, 196–98, 218, 431; Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza,* 245–75, 279–82. Banditry did not come to an end with the entry of the Soviet forces in 1944. For a discussion of that topic after the Soviet "liberation" see Wnuk, *Lubelski Okręg AK DSZ i WiN, 1944–1947,* 76–77. Jewish Communist historians such as Maria Turlejska, Bogdan Hillebrandt and Ryszard Nazarewicz endorsed wartime Communist charges that the Home Army used the struggle against banditry in general, and specifically Order 116, as a cover to attack Communists and Jews. See Armstrong, "The Polish Underground and the Jews: A Reassessment of Home Army Commander Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski's Order 116 Against Banditry," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 72, no. 2 (April 1994): 260 n.2.

considerations and was a quick way to gain the trust of the hard-pressed peasants, who certainly preferred to support one forest band than half a dozen.[251]

Historian Teresa Prekerowa also takes issue with the charge that the measures against banditry implemented by the Home Army were directed at Jews as such.

> Neither openly nor in a camouflaged way did the London underground authorities ever take a stand against the Jews … The Home Army commander's order against banditry was properly understood by those at lower levels. The commander [Aleksander Krzyżanowski ("Wilk")] of the Wilno and Nowogródek districts (i.e., those regions where the inhabitants felt the "economic actions" of the Jewish partisans) most severely issued orders to his units to protect the population regardless of whether "the bandits were Poles, Germans, Russians, Lithuanians, Latvians or Uzbeks." Jews were not mentioned in this list.[252]

As a parallel measure, the AK regional commander of the Wilno district, (then) Lieutenant-Colonel Aleksander Krzyżanowski ("Wilk"), issued an order in April 1944 forbidding mistreatment of the civilian population. That order explicitly included Jews as coming under the protection of the Home Army. Krzyżanowski, who after the war was recognized by Yad Vashem as a "Righteous Gentile," delineated a clear code of conduct that his soldiers were expected to adhere to:

1. The civilian population, regardless of nationality or religion (Polish, Lithuanian, Belorussian, Jewish, Catholic, Orthodox), has to be treated on the same footing and justly. There are to be no abuses directed at the civilian population. Their lives and property must be protected by the Polish Army. …
2. In the event of necessity only food staples are to be requisitioned from the civilian population, for fair payment. Food and supplies should as a rule only be acquired from nationalized estates [i.e., Polish estates seized by the occupying authorities—*M.P.*], taking only necessary items and provisions for which receipts should be issued. The deliberate destruction of property and inventory is forbidden.
3. …
4. Prisoners of war must be treated properly, in accordance with the requirements of international law. A wounded enemy must be attended to and left in the care of the local population. Any

[251] John Radziłowski, "Ejszyszki and Its Neighbors," *Glaukopis*, no. 1 (2003): 290.

[252] Teresa Prekerowa, "Wojna i okupacja," in Tomaszewski, *Najnowsze dzieje Żydów w Polsce—w zarysie (do 1950 roku)*, 368. The order in question is reproduced in Andrzej Chmielarz, Kazimierz Krajewski, Tomasz Łabuszewski, and Henryk Piskunowicz, *NKWD o polskim podziemiu 1944–1948: Konspiracja polska na Nowogródczyźnie i Grodzieńszczyźnie* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, 1997), 203–204. For a description of some of the measures taken against banditry in the Nowogródek region and directed primarily against Soviet partisans see Boradyn, "Stosunki Armii Krajowej z partyzantką sowiecką na Nowogródczyźnie," in Boradyn, ed., *Armia Krajowa na Nowogródczyźnie i Wileńszczyźnie (1941–1945)*, 113.

Polish soldier who mistreats a prisoner of war or an injured enemy will be punished by up to and including death.

5. Prisoners of war or those arrested for crimes committed against the Polish Army or civilian population must be brought before the Special Army Court and punished on the basis of a court verdict.
6. Every captured informer, spy, traitor, etc. must [only] be sentenced to death by the Special Army Court. I emphatically forbid lynching even on the basis of eyewitness testimony.[253]

As we have seen in Part One, Home Army commanders in other parts of occupied Poland issued orders to their subordinates to punish those who assisted the Germans in hunting down Jews and published warnings to the local population in Home Army communiqués.

Home Army reports confirm that many marauders, some Jews among them, were eliminated in the Wilno region, but those primarily pursuing the bands of robbers were the Germans and Lithuanian police.[254] As pointed out by historian Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, however, far more Poles (including Home Army members) and members of others groups were executed by the Home Army in the fight against banditry and collaborators than Jews.[255] Some critics of Bór-Komorowski tend to assume that all Jews were innocent of banditry, merely trying to survive. Many undoubtedly were innocent, but it is a matter of record that others were guilty of banditry. In his detailed study of one Polish county (*powiat*), Janów Lubelski, Chodakiewicz quotes a clandestine report of a fairly common occurrence:

> A group of 300 people, mostly Jews, roams in the environs of Kraśnik. The group is of a bandit character [and] it distinguished itself with cruelty during attacks. On May 15 [1943] the band raided a few better off families in Kraśnik, robbed them completely, tormenting the victims and kidnapping with it [a number] of young women. This fact created panic in the city, so that women do not sleep at home at night.[256]

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[253] The entire order (no. 5), issued on April 12, 1944 by Aleksander Krzyżanowski ("Wilk"), commander of the Wilno district of the Home Army, is reproduced in Korab-Żebryk, *Biała księga w obronie Armii Krajowej na Wileńszczyźnie,* 26–27. See also Tarka, *Komendant Wilk,* 66–70.

[254] Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1938–1955,* 334.

[255] Chodakiewicz, *Tajne oblicze GL-AL i PPR,* vol. 2, 35; Chodakiewicz, *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne,* 321 n. 209; Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918-1955,* 334–35. For additional confirmation, see Armstrong, "The Polish Underground and the Jews: A Reassessment of Home Army Commander Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski's Order 116 Against Banditry," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 72, no. 2 (April 1994): 262, 271–72; Krzysztof Lesiakowski, "Tablica 'utrwalaczy władzy ludowej,'" *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 2 (February 2004): 58–60.

[256] Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets,* 155. Chodakiewicz notes that the pro-London underground may have killed about 50 Jews in Janów Lubelski county, mostly those perceived as bandits robbing Polish peasants, or as part of the Communist partisan movement.

Likewise, the National Armed Forces and the Peasant Battalions, which also issued instructions to stamp out banditry, did not target Jews but primarily ethnic Polish bandits in their war against banditry.[257] Moreover, Soviet, Polish Communist and Jewish partisans also carried out death sentences on bandits.[258] While doubtless there were excesses on the Polish side, most of those were attributable to bandits who often passed themselves off as members of the Polish armed underground or joined the communist People's Guard.[259] Occasionally, the aggressors were members of or people loosely connected to the Home Army.

Szoszana Dezent (later Raczyńska), a young Jewish woman from Wilno who found refuge with the Raczyński family, proprietors of a small estate in Wiegielino, between the towns of Podbrodzie and Niemenczyn, recalls one such incident amid the extensive help she received from the local Polish population.

> Stefan [Raczyński] drove me to his father's sister, far away, and he said that, because the young ones were in danger, since both the Germans and Lithuanians were killing them [Lithuanian collaborators had staged raids on Polish homesteads—*M.P.*], he would seek shelter for both him and me.
>
> And there was hardship again. Armed looters, some of them dressed in Polish uniforms, were attacking peasant houses and they were taking food as well as valuable things in order to have money for vodka. Such were the times, the law did not function. The war was the law.
>
> And they caught Stefan and me. They thought it out at once that Stefan had got away from somewhere, since he wasn't from those parts, and that I was a Jewess he was protecting. They put me against the wall and wanted to shoot me, and they beat Stefan up. He kept repeating that it wasn't true that I was Jewish.
>
> And Aunt ran to the vicar, who lived nearby, and told him that there was trouble brewing, because they wanted to shoot Stefan. The priest followed her immediately to the farm, looked at those bandits and asked, 'And what are you doing here?'
>
> 'We want to cook this little yid's goose,' they said.

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[257] On December 1, 1942, NSZ commander Ignacy Oziewicz ("Czesław") issued instructions concerning banditry analogous to those issued by the Home Army, namely "Instrukcja Akcji Specjalnej Nr 1," and the Peasant Battalions did likewise. Neither of these instructions targeted Jew. See Mariusz Bechta and Leszek Żebrowski, eds., *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne na Podlasiu,* vol. 3: *Opracowania, wspomnienia i dokumenty* (Biała Podlaska: Rekonkwista, 2003), 15–18; Gontarczyk, *Polska Partia Robotnicza,* 281 n.13. Piotr Kosubudzki, a member of the National Armed Forces (NSZ), describes how his unit destroyed a group of bandits led by one Kwaśniewski, which had preyed on Poles pretending to be NSZ. See Piotr Kosobudzki, *Przez druty, kraty i kajdany: Wspomnienia partyzanta NSZ* (Wrocław: Nortom, 1997), 137–40. Mentioned earlier was the NSZ execution in Borów, on August 9, 1943, of a People's Guard unit composed mostly of local Polish bandits and some Jews. Mieczysław Edward Szpyra, *Moja wojna z Hitlerem, Banderą i Stalinem* (Lublin: Norbertinum, 2001), 53–57, refers to a special squad of the Peasant Battalions that eliminated notorious bandits in the vicinity of Tomaszów Lubelski. For more information about the functioning of these execution squads see Wilamowski, *Srebrniki Judasza,* 52–54.

[258] See, for example, Armstrong, "The Polish Underground and the Jews: A Reassessment of Home Army Commander Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski's Order 116 Against Banditry," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 72, no. 2 (April 1994): 271 n.31, as well as the examples noted in this book (e.g., Bielski's unit).

[259] Piotr Gontarczyk's penetrating and path-breaking study, *Polska Partia Robotnicza: Droga do władzy 1941–44* (Warsaw: Fronda, 2003), provides ample evidence of this phenomenon.

> ‘She’s not a Jewess. I baptized her myself. And Stefan is a boy of our parish,’ said the priest. [These statements were untrue.—*M.P.*]
>
> And thus the priest saved our lives. Later, we learnt that those looters, who posed as freedom fighters, got into trouble, because news spread that they had attacked innocent people and that the priest had had to intervene. Their commander demoted them and they got imprisoned, or something like that.
>
> From there we went to Stefan’s mother’s brother, to another parish, because we did not want to cause his aunt any more trouble. In fact Stefan had been born there, his birth certificate had been issued there.
>
> What wonderful people they were, the uncle and his wife.[260]

However, no amount of evidence of what Polish directives actually say, or of the participation of Jewish partisans in Soviet operations against Polish partisans or the participation of Jews in assaults on the Polish civilian population, seem to have an impact on Holocaust historians who write about the activities of “White Poles.” Such considerations are summarily dismissed even by moderates such as Nechama Tec, who claims matter-of-factly that, “In line with Bor-Komorowski’s directive, the White Poles were using Jews as shooting targets.”[261] She offers scant, if any, evidence to support her claim. Nor is she able to put forward any compelling proof of her allegation that “Unprotected small groups of Jewish civilians in bunkers or Jews who were roaming the countryside were attacked and killed” by Polish partisans.[262]

The problem of providing sustenance for Jews escaping and hiding from the Germans was one difficult of solution; indeed, there was no general solution. The role of the Home Army in providing one was rather

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[260] Account of Szoszana Raczyńska in Isakiewicz, *Harmonica,* 96. See also Gutman and Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 5: *Poland,* Part 2, 656–57. Some time toward the end of 1944, Stefan Raczyński was rounded up by the NKVD along with many other Poles from the area and imprisoned. Miraculously, he gained his release only after repeated intercessions by Szoszana Dezent (whom he later married), who started a petition which some Jewish survivors whom Stefan had helped agreed to sign. The Raczyński family’s property was confiscated by the Soviets. See Isakiewicz, *Harmonica,* 96–98. Another similar incident involved a group of Jews, at least seven of them, who were sheltered by Józef and Jadwiga Dąbrowski on an isolated farmstead in Gałganiszki near Kamionka, not far from Niemenczyn. Since the Dąbrowski family was large and could not feed these additional people, the Jewish charges would steal food and rob farmers in the vicinity. When word of this reached the Polish underground, a group of Home Army men arrived at the Dąbrowski farm and ordered the Jews out of their shelter. Apparently, the host was beaten and his horse and wagon were seized. When the Jews were being led away, a priest who accompanied the partisans arrived and persuaded them not to harm the Jews. The Jews returned to their hideout and remained there until early 1944, when most of them left for alternative hiding places. The account of the Dąbrowskis’ rescue in Gutman, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust,* vol. 10: *Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005),* volume II, 544, downplays the aspect of retaliation for robbery.

[261] Tec, *Defiance,* 153. Shmuel Krakowski, whom she refers to, simply lists a series of altercations between Polish and Jewish partisans, without more, as alleged proof that “Nearly all the Jewish partisan units of Wilno and Nowogrodek districts were at one time or another the targets of Home Army attacks.” See Gutman and Krakowski, *Unequal Victims,* 131. See also Yehuda Bauer, *The Holocaust in Historical Perspective* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), 58, 162 n.8, for a similar point of view.

[262] Tec, *Defiance,* 152. In support, Tec refers to Shalom Cholawski, *Soldiers from the Ghetto,* 162, who claims that at the beginning of September 1943, Poles in the woods received orders to attack Jews and Russians, but as we have seen, there was no such order. Cholawski’s reference to an attack on a Jewish group of partisans has been discussed earlier, and most likely refers to an attack on marauders, and not Jews who were roaming the countryside.

circumscribed: it was a military organization, not a rescue organization like Żegota, the Polish underground Council for Aid to Jews. It did not provide food for Jews, but it did not provide for non-Jewish Poles on the run either. The Home Army was in the business of taking foodstuffs for its own use, not distributing them. Jewish demands that it be otherwise (such as those advanced by Adolf Berman and Leon Feiner of Jan Stanisław Jankowski, the delegate of the government in exile in the area of the *Generalgouvernement*) were generally impossible to fulfil, but the lack of success is attributed to anti-Semitism.

Jewish commentators also tend to overlook a salient fact of clandestine resistance in occupied Poland: the relations (or lack of them) between the Soviet Union and the Polish government in exile in London, to which the Home Army was loyal. At the time under discussion, late 1943 and early 1944, Stalin had already broken off relations with the London Poles, and the Soviet partisan command was moving to suppress the Home Army. For a variety of reasons, most Jewish partisans found themselves affiliated with the Soviets. In order to survive, they had to obey orders from Moscow and participate in anti-Polish actions. Years later, writing their memoirs, some former partisans found it convenient to justify their actions by vilifying Polish villagers and the Home Army.

Finally, it should be noted that robbers and looters were viewed as a scourge by everyone. Even Jews were prepared to eliminate them ruthlessly. Jakub Smakowski, who was part of a ring of smugglers in the Warsaw ghetto, reported that his group killed six Poles found looting in the ghetto in March 1943. After taking their weapons and documents, the Jewish smugglers shot the Poles and dumped their bodies in the basement of a building.[263]

The War Against "Collaborators"

Reprisals in the Wilno and Nowogródek regions for what the Soviet and Jewish partisans perceived to be collaboration with the Germans were plentiful. Since the partisans were virtually powerless against the Germans, their rage and aggression were directed almost exclusively against the civilian population. One female Jewish partisan recalls: "We went to villages and took food. If they betrayed us, the next day the whole village was on fire."[264] A female Jewish partisan took part in killing captured Belorussian peasants suspected collaborating with the Germans:

> When they arrived at the camp, they saw all of their comrades, men and women, standing in a large circle around a ditch. The seven peasants, all men, were sitting at the edge of the ditch. Mitya was at the forefront of the ditch. "You worked for the Nazis," he said simply to the trembling peasants. "And now you shall reap what you sowed." … one of the men got up on his knees and said, "Let me pray to my God." One partisan sneered, "You'll need your prayers." Sonya suddenly took up

[263] Libionka and Weinbaum, *Bohaterowie, hochsztaplerzy, opisywacze*, 434–35 n.93, citing the unpublished account of Jakub Smakowski, *Życie i zmagania,* Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/145.

[264] Account of Aida Brydbord (Chaja Czerczewska), a member of the Kirov otriad, as cited in "Women of Valor: Partisans and Resistance Fighters," Internet: <http://www.interlog.com/~mighty/valor/aida.htm>, originally published in the *Journal of the Center for Holocaust Studies*, vol. 6, no. 4 (spring 1990).

> her rifle and went to the man praying on his knees. She was crying, but the wrath of God was in her eyes. "For my parents … for my sisters and brothers … for the whole Jewish community." She ran her bayonet through the peasant's heart. One by one, the rest of the traitors were bayoneted. Bullets were too precious to waste on them.[265]

Another Jewish partisan, also a woman, openly admits: "We used to kill indiscriminately. We killed off an awful lot of people we knew that were against Jews."[266] Indeed, as another partisan concedes—and this is amply borne out in the accounts that follow, "The need for revenge was uppermost in the thoughts and blood of every Jewish partisan."[267]

As numerous accounts cited in this study show, seeking vengeance—often to fulfill the dying wishes of one's family members to avenge their deaths—is a *leitmotif* that permeates Holocaust memoirs.[268] According to Yehuda Bauer,

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[265] Bobrow and Bobrow, *Voices from the Forest,* 221.

[266] Testimony of Celia K. from Szarkowszczyzna, cited in Greene and Kumar, eds., *Witnesses,* 99–100. See also Celia K. (Celia (Tsila) Kassow (Kasovsky) née Cymmer) Holocaust Testimony (HVT–36), interviewed February 25, 1980, Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimones, Yale University Library.

[267] Aron, *Fallen Leaves,* 147. The author describes, for instance, an assault by Soviet partisans on the small town of Druja in the summer of 1943: "At midday the partisans were still very much occupied. They were searching for hidden Germans and arms. The Jews among them had their own special mission. They sought out German collaborators among their former neighbors who had assisted in killing Jews. The partisans found many of these and shot them openly in the street. They recovered Jewish valuables, such as clothing, silver and jewelry, which the collaborators had stolen from their victims, and loaded these items onto wagons." Ibid., 101. The potential for abuse from such self-styled, random justice is apparent.

[268] In the testimony of a survivor from Częstochowa the word *nekome* (revenge) a few dozen times, almost as a refrain, and the text ends with a repetition of the title: "Revenge is Sweet." See R. Mahler, ed., *Tshentokhover yidn* (New York: United Czestochower Relief Committee and Ladies Auxiliary, 1947), 243–46. Aba Gefen (Weinstein) writes: "The martyrs cried out from the ground to the Lord God, to whom vengeance belongs, to avenge their innocent blood, and to our minds came all our vows, during the three years of hiding, to wreak vengeance on the twentieth-century monsters for their unspeakable crimes." See Aba Gefen, *Defying the Holocaust: A Diplomat's Report* (San Bernardino, Caifornia: The Borgo Press, 1993), 71. Leon Kahn was urged by his father to seek revenge: "He made me promise to avenge the deaths of our family. 'Leibke, you must make a solemn vow that you will avenge all of us. As long as you have breath you must look for the people who killed us and destroy them. … Find Nowicki, the man who betrayed us all, and kill him!" The message was not lost on his son: "Another force had grown within me: hatred. I was consumed by hatred for those who had murdered my family and my friends. I felt a lust to kill that almost drove me out of my mind, and in the months that followed, I found myself becoming judge and executioner of any suspicious characters who crossed our group's path." See Kahn, *No Time To Mourn,* 148, 157. Eisik Rothenberg received a similar message from his father, whose parting words were: "Revenge all, for the Jewish innocent blood which was shed." See Kanc, *Yizkor Book in Memory of Vlodava and Region, Sobibor,* column 85 (English section). Indeed, the foreword to that book echoes that same theme: "The memorial book is … also a trumpet blast that cannot be silenced, calling for revenge for blood that was spilled on the lands of Poland with the active help of the Polish Nazis. … REMEMBER WHAT AMELEK HAS DONE TO YOU! This includes all the Ameleks of the twentieth century, the Poles and the Germans who murder at all times, whose lands are stained with blood …" Ibid., 5. A Jew from Wiszniew writes: "She told me that when their group was taken to be killed, my father left the line, came to her, and asked her to give me his last request, the request of all the martyred brothers, 'Revenge our blood.'" See Cheina Rabinovich, "Vishnevo during the Second World War," in Abramson, *Wiszniew, As It Was and Is No More,* 107ff. Shalom Yoran recalls his brother's words: "Our main mission is to follow Mother's last request: to save ourselves, take revenge on the murderers and their helpers, and to tell the world what happened." See Yoran, *The Defiant,* 98–99. The last words of Leon Salomon's sister were: "never forget and revenge." See the testimony of Leon Salomon, dated June 18, 1990, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, University of Michigan-Dearborn, Internet: <http://holocaust.umd.edu/salomon/>. A

> The chief motivation, and the one that recurs constantly in the testimonies, was a burning desire to avenge the murders of other Jews. Jewish partisans killed, without mercy, any and all Belorussian and Polish policemen and pesants whom they knew had been part of the murder machine or had delivered or denounced hidden or fleeing Jews. … Often some or all of the family of the collaborator was executed as well, and sometimes the farmstead was burnt down, too.[269]

Those driven by vengeance often act compulsively or blindly. Sometimes this revenge would take the form of ritual-like murders of captured German soldiers like those perpetrated by Moshe Sonenson of Ejszyszki, described in Part One of this study, and by Chil Grynszpan of Parczew.[270] The war the Soviet partisans waged against "collaborators," whether real or perceived, also took the lives of hundreds, if not thousands of civilians. Unfortunately, more often than not, those who fell in these reprisals were totally innocent victims and included many children, women, and the elderly. In many cases, the villagers' only crime was cooperating with "White Poles," i.e., Polish partisans.[271] In some cases, actual German

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Jewish woman recalls the following exhortation before she jumped from a death train: "be a father to your only remaining child, and take revenge, *revenge for innocent blood*." See Keila Yevreyski-Kremer, "On the Road to Treblinka," in *Our Hometown Goniondz,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/goniadz/Goniadz.html>; translation of J. Ben-Meir (Treshansky) and A.L. Fayans, eds., *Sefer yizkor Goniadz* (Tel-Aviv: The Committee of Goniondz Association in the U.S.A. and in Israel, 1960), 677ff. A Jew from Skała Podolska recalled the message his father conveyed before he was deported to a death camp: "Fear not for me, dear children. … Only promise me this: that you will save yourselves and one day you will exact revenge." See Tracy, *To Speak For the Silenced,* 107; Norman Salsitz recalls his father's dying plea: "'*Nekuma! Nekuma! Nemt Nekuma!* Revenge! Revenge! Take Revenge!'" See Norman Salsitz with Stanley Kaish, *Three Homelands: Memories of a Jewish Life in Poland, Israel, and America* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 50. Kopel Kolpantizky wrote in his memoir: "We were going to do, as much as possible and without fear or hesitation, what our parents and families would have wanted us to do: continue our revenge. … I recalled the three objectives that I had set for myself when I escaped from the Lahwah [Łachwa] ghetto: 1. Avenge the death of my family, community and people—I accomplished this objective." See Kolpanitzky, *Sentence to Life,* 182–83. Rabbi Alter Pekier of Kleck recalled: "The walls of the synagogue were covered with handwritten messages and prayers written by the Jews before the Germans had escorted them to their death. … Passages from the prayer book such as 'Our Father, our King, avenge the blood of Thy servants that has been shed!' were interspersed with heart-rendering appeals: 'World, why are you silent?' 'Dear Jews, avenge our deaths' and 'Remember! Never forget!'" See Alter Pekier, *From Kletzk to Siberia: A Yeshivah Bachur's Wanderings during the Holocaust* (Brooklyn, New York: Mensorah Publications, 1985), 118. Likewise in Kowel, exhortations calling for revenge were scrawled all over the walls of the synagogue where the Jews were locked up. See Grynberg and Kotowska, eds., *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945,* 576. In a note penned in the Warsaw ghetto during the deportation of Jews to Treblinka in July 1942, Rachel Auerbach wrote: "I want to stay alive … just to be able to see the moment of revenge. REVENGE REVENGE remember." See Samuel Kassow, "The Warsaw Ghetto in the Writings if Rachel Auerbach," in in Glenn Dynner and François Guesnet, eds., *Warsaw: The Jewish Metropolis* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 496. In Polish (Christian) memoirs, by way of contrast, parents usually urged their children *not* to seek revenge for wrongs inflicted on them during the war. See, for example, Marzena Michalczyk, "'Zemstę zostawiać Bogu: Rozmowa z Wiesławą Siedzik-Korzeniową, siostrą sanitariuszki AK Danuty Siedzikówny 'Inki'," *Nasz Dziennik* (Warsaw), Fenruary 8, 2002.

[269] Bauer, *The Death of the Shtetl,* 131.

[270] Ireneusz Caban, ed., *Czas dokonany: Mój udział w tworzeniu i utrwalaniu władzy ludowej na Lubelszczyźnie* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Lubelskie, 1977), 100.

[271] Historian Zygmunt Boradyn estimates that some 500 people were executed by the Soviet partisans for this reason from 1942 until mid–1944 in the Nowogródek region alone. See Boradyn, ed., *Armia Krajowa na Nowogródczyźnie i Wileńszczyźnie (1942–1944) w świetle dokumentów sowieckich,* 46 n.63. For examples of revenge actions against "collaborators" in other parts of Poland, see Ben-Tzion Malik, "Avenged and Paid For," in A. A. Stein, et al., eds.,

collaborators were struck at, occasionally even fellow Jews.[272] In the process, entire families were wiped out. The following accounts relate to the activities of the Bielski partisans. All the victims appear to be Belorussians who had denounced or pursued partisans for taking part in raids on villages.

> The Belorussian [from Obelkowicze, who had allegedly captured a number of Jews and handed them over to the police in Dworzec] knew he was trapped. He pleaded for mercy, then argued that after all he did only what the authorities wanted him to do. He did not make the laws—it was not his fault.
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> Quickly his visitors shot him and the entire family. … Before they left they made a large sign and attached it to the door. In Russian it said" This family was annihilated because it cooperated with the Germans and pursued Jews, signed The Bielski Company."
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> On the way to the Bielski otriad they eliminated another family also guilty of Nazi collaboration and the murder of Jews. There too they left an announcement that these people were shot because they had cooperated in the death of Jews.
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> The success of these undertakings led to other anti-collaborator moves. One involved the Marciniewskis. This was a large Belorussian family who for years worked in the mill that belonged to Chaja's parents in Duża Izwa. … They were also actively pursuing other ghetto runaways.
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> One of the Marciniewski sons became a policeman. Together with his brother-in-law, a forester, he had been catching Jews … Chaja [Bielski] recalls: "The Bielski otriad reacted … one day we waited for Marciniewski, the policeman to come home. We watched the house. When he returned we killed the entire family. … This policeman's brother-in-law was a forester who searched the woods for Jews. … This forester and his family were also eliminated."

Sefer ha-zikaron le-kehilat Kamien Koszyrski ve-ha-seviva (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Kamin Koshirsky and Surroundings in Israel, 1965), 122–25, translated as *Kamen Kashirskiy Book,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Kamen_Kashirskiy/Kamen_Kashirskiy.html>, which describes numerous revenge killings of civilians (one victim was decapitated with an axe) in the vicinity of Kamień Koszyrski, an area in southern Polesia (or northwestern Volhynia) populated by Ukrainians. Several cases of Jews murdered by Soviet partisans, which were not avenged, are recorded by Ben-Zion Malik, as well as by Moshe Paltieli (Plot), "The Impresssions of a Partisan," at 129–30, and Ben Tzion Karsh, "The Judenrat (The Jewish Council)," at 729–38.

[272] Isaac Kowalski, for example, describes the execution of a Jewish schoolmate of his from Wilno named Goldin, who became an informer for the Gestapo and tried to infiltrate the Jewish partisans operating in that area. See Kowalski, *A Secret Press in Nazi Europe,* 310–11; also reproduced in Kowalski, *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance, 1939–1945*, vol. 4 (1991), 406. Isser Schmidt, a Jewish Communist known as Davidovsky, was a special agent sent to the Soviet Jewish Brigade operating in Rudniki forest south of Wilno: "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." See Cohen, *The Avengers,* 121–22. In total, six partisans who had previously been ghetto policemen in Wilno were executed in November 1943 as collaborators, by order of the commanders of their partisan units and the "special department" at the brigade headquarters. They included Natek (Natan) Ring, Vovek Zaltzstein, Lotek Zaltzwasser (Lutek Zalcwasser), Schwarzbard (Szwarcbord), and Szurka Kewes (Kwas). Zaltzstein and Zaltzwasser were accused by two Jewish partisans of having revealed Jewish hideouts and dragging out Jews during the *Aktion* of December 1941. Vitka Kempner states that she later found Zaltzwasser hiding and brought him to the forest so that he might be executed. See the account of Abram Mieszczański, dated June 10, 1947, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/2536; Porat, *The Fall of a Sparrow,* 139, 166; Arad, *In the Shadow of the Red Banner,* 289–90. Isaac Kowalski lists these persons among the Jewish partisans in Rudniki forest. See Kowalski, *A Secret Press in Nazi Europe,* 406–407.

A similar fate befell the Stichkos, a Belorussian family who had worked in the Bielski mill for many years. The Stichkos had also been destroying Jews and trying to eliminate all the Bielskis so that they could become the legitimate owners of the mill. The Bielski partisans shot the entire Stichko family and left their usual notice.[273]

In March 1943, Abram Polonski was scheduled to lead a food mission in the Nowogródek region … Nine young men, Abram and Ruven Polonski, the Szumanskis and others, all good fighters, were going. Alter Titkin was the tenth. …

As planned, the Jewish partisans filled their wagons with all kinds of provisions. When they were ready to turn back they realized that darkness might give way to light earlier than expected and daylight meant danger. They were a few miles from the town of Nowogródek.

In a nearby hutor [near the village of Dobropole] the Polonski brothers had a Belorussian friend, Belorus [Belous]. They went to his place and asked if they could stay over. … The hamlet was attacked. Belorus had informed the police about the presence of partisans in his house. … They were all shot. … The only one to remain alive was Abram [Polonski] who had hidden … At once an axe wielded by one of the Belorus sons came down on his head. …

In two weeks … Asael [Bielski] was in charge of the next step. He collected twenty-four fighters …

At midnight Asael's men surrounded Belorus' house. Four went inside with Asael at the head. As soon as they entered, they announced that this was a visit to avenge the death of their comrades. Four rifles pointed in the direction of the peasant.

Belorus wrestled with the rifles, but was quickly overwhelmed. The rest of the [14-member] family had no more luck—in a few minutes all were dead. One of the fighters, Michael Leibowicz, with Asael's permission, exchanged his jacket for a coat that hung on the wall.

They freed the animals, set the entire farm on fire, and left a note explaining the reason for the attack.[274]

I remember an instance when Bielski called the group of scouts which I was leading and said that there was a peasant in the village of Izveh [Izwa] who was informing the Germans where Jews and partisans were hiding. Our task was to wipe out the whole family.

We went there. Our group consisted of the Lubavitch brothers, Ben-Zion Gulkovitch and Yisrael Salanter (as he was called among the partisans). I knocked on the Christian's door. The Christian's wife opened the door. We left our horses in the forest. The Christian woman and her two children were the only ones in the house. She said that her husband wasn't home. We told her that we were good friends and that if she needed anything she couldn't get because of the war, we would bring

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[273] Tec, *Defiance*, 78.

[274] Ibid., 102–103. See also Tec, *Defiance,* 254 (list of victims); Nirenstein, *A Tower from the Enemy,* 362–64; Kowalski, *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance, 1939–1945,* vol. 4 (1991), 511–13; Rubin, *Against the Tide,* 114, 117, 140. The latter author (Sulia Rubin), like many others, states that the message of revenge ("Take revenge for our innocent blood") was passed on to her by her father. Ibid., 120. According to another source, "on the same night other Partisans went to the farmer's aunts and uncles and burned their homes." See Lubow, *Escape,* 61.

everything for her. She replied that they wanted to build on, and that if we could bring a saw, she would give us whatever we wanted. When we bring the saw, she said, her husband would also be there and we'd have a good drink.

We said goodbye and promised to bring what she needed. We went back to the forest, got on our horses and rode to Stankevitch, to the home of a Christian. We asked him for a saw and promised to return it. He gave it to us. We got back on our horses and left.

We returned to the Gentile woman and I again knocked on the door and knocked on the windowsill with the saw. When you hit something with a saw, it makes a ringing sound. When the Gentile woman heard the sound of the saw, she quickly opened the door. Again the woman with her two children were the only ones at home.

Two of our group of partisans remained standing on the street as guards to make sure the Germans would not attack us. Four of the partisans came into the house: the Lubavitch brothers, Yisrael Salanter and myself. We told her that everything was perfectly fine, but that we'd like to talk to her husband. Seeing that everything was ready, that we brought the saw which we had promised, she opened the window and called her husband.

Each person in our group was assigned a task in advance so that we each knew what we had to do. Yisrael Salanter was to kill her husband. Michl Lubavtich was to kill his wife. I – one daughter and Zalman Lubavitch, the other daughter.

The husband came in. Yisrael Salanter went for his gun. The man was healthy and strong and began wrestling with Yisrael. They both fell down in the middle of the house. Seeing what was happening, I wanted to shoot him with my gun, but I was afraid I might kill Yisrael instead. I turned the gun over and hit him over the head with the wooden part. The wood broke. He let go of Yisrael who took out his pistol and shot him.

The woman begged us not to kill her. She would give us everything she had, but money meant nothing to us. Michl shot her. I shot one daughter who was hiding in bed, and Zalman Lubavitch shot the other daughter.

When we went out of the house, we let the horses and cows out of the stable. Then we set fire to the house and stable. We left a note: "A person who collaborates with the Germans deserves to die like this." We got on our horses and went back to our unit. Our act of revenge against that family caused a great panic in the villages. Christians were afraid to inform the Germans where the partisans were moving around. It was a little better for us; it was easier to be in the forest.

Bielski sent out a group of partisans with good guns to perform an operation, and the group carried out what they had to do. This was done during the day and they couldn't go back to their base during the day because the Germans were moving about on the roads. They (the partisans) came to a peasant's hut. His last name was Bielorus and was known to the group. This was a group of the best men in the unit. They left their wagon in the yard. The Christian gave them a fine welcome. The group was exhausted and they lay down to rest.

The Christian's daughter asked to go out to milk the cows. They let her leave. After all, they knew the Christian and she went out. Novogrudek [Nowogródek] wasn't far away and she informed the Germans.

Germans arrived, surrounded the entire hut and killed everyone. A miracle occurred when Polanski hid in the henhouse. (Christians had big ovens, beneath which was the henhouse.) Seeing that everything had become quiet, he crawled out of the henhouse and called out to the White Russian, who was standing there alarmed, seeing everyone lying there dead.

"What do you think? We'll keep quiet about your part in this?"

As soon as he said this, the Gentile took an axe and killed him, too, the last of the group of Jewish partisans.

Not far away was Vishnievski's group, which found out about this. Bielski called together the unit and announced that we shouldn't move about in the villages.

One of Vishnievski's group came and said that he knew where the group was killed. There were the two Bielorus brothers who informed on the Jews and, on account of them, the group of partisans was killed.

The Bielorus family knew that we wouldn't keep quiet, so they moved to Novogrudek and their hut remained empty. Later, Bielorus returned to his hut, seeing that the partisans were no longer coming into the area (and that was due to Bielski's order) and fearing that their crops would die if their fields weren't cultivated because it was now summer.

Vishnievski's group found out when he came back and warned us. A group of 25 men was selected including myself. Pesach Friedberg and our commissary were in our group. Bielski's brother Asael was the leader of the group. The group had to take revenge.

On our way to the Bielorus house, we found out that a boy from Korelitz was killed when a Christian informed on him. The boy was running through the villages and stole a bucket from that Christian. The Gentile went to the ghetto in Novogrudek. They lined up the Jews and the Gentile had to identify the boy. He in fact recognized him (I don't remember the family name, but I knew they came from Korelitz [Korelicze]) and the Germans shot him. We received an order from Asael to burn down the house and kill the Gentiles. We carried out the task before going to the Bielorus house.

When we came to the Bielorus house, Bielski gave an order as to who was to go into the house and who was to keep watch to make sure that no one would attack us.

I was among those who were to keep guard on the street. When our men knocked on the door, no one answered. They forced the door open and found Bielorus. In his pocket was a letter of commendation, praising him for informing on a Jew for which he was entitled to receive a certain sum of money from the district commissary of Novogrudek. They took the letter and wrote a protocol as to why they had come and were carrying out the sentence. Then they shot the whole family and let the cows and horses out of stable before setting the house on fire.

On the way back, we left notes on all the posts explaining why we carried out the act of revenge against the two Bielorus brothers and their families. They were being paid back for having turned the group of partisans over to the Germans. The Christians for the surrounding places were now frightened. We instilled fear in them.[275]

[275] Ben-Ir, "On the Brink of Destruction," in Walzer-Fass, *Korelits*, 212ff.

> They [partisans] had gone for supplies, and, on the way back, stopped on a farm [to rob]. The peasant somehow notified the local police, and all but one of the boys was killed in the bitter, short battle that ensued. …
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> Our commanders Yelski [Bielski] vowed revenge … the partisans waited patiently for about three months until the farmer relaxed … Then the whole unit struck out; nothing was left of the farmer or his family. Even the livestock was burned. I am glad no women were allowed to go along! I couldn't face it or kill the children …[276]

> Several testimonies tell us about revenge exacted by Jewish partisans on local collaborators who were responsible for murdering Jews. This extended to the families of the collaborators as well. Thus, at an early stage, the Bielskis took bloody revenge on a Belorussian family that had betrayed two Jewish girls to the Germans; they killed all of the offender's family—approximately twelve people. In one case, reported by Haim Kravietz, Jews hid with a man called Ivan Tzwirkes, who had a Jewish wife who had converted to Christianity. Tzwirkes betrayed Jews to the Germans, whereupon the Bielskis caught him and told him to say goodbye to his wife as he was going to be shot. As a result, they squeezed the names of more collaborators out of him, and then killed most of the people he had named. Tzwirkes was permitted to return to his family (probably because of his Jewish wife).[277]

The following reports come from the mixed Belorussian-Polish area to the north and east of Wilno:

> We were driven, eager to defy death and wreak revenge. We took our revenge deliberately and thoroughly. In the vicinity of Jody we were known and feared by all those who had harmed Jews. Many of them did not survive the war, thanks to us. … while we were hiding with the farmers [near Słobodka] we learned that several local farmers had betrayed Jews and others had killed them. That night we went out and "took care" of them. We then approached another farmer who begged us not to take his horse. He revealed to us a Jew who was hiding in his barn. The Jewish man's name was Welfke and he came from the town of Braslaw [Brasław]. He told us about some neighbours who had murdered his family. We "took care" of them immediately. …
>
> For Jewish partisans it was time to take revenge for the tens of thousands of local Jewish men, women and children who were slaughtered by the Nazis and their collaborators. We could not take full enough advantage of the opportunity.[278]

> Each informant would, sooner or later, get caught and was shot. Often his house would be set afire with his family inside.[279]

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[276] Rubin, *Against the Tide*, 117.

[277] Bauer, "Nowogródek—The Story of a *Shtetl*," *Yad Vashem Studies,* vol. 35, no. 2 (2007): 57.

[278] Silverman, *From Victims to Victors,* 160, 205. Additional examples of revenge murders carried out in this area are found in Machnes and Klinov, eds., *Darkness and Desolation,* 578–82.

The [Polish] farmer [in whose house we were staying] said he knew nothing about [the fate of a Jewish guard found dead at his post in the village] but that his son a partisan, came on furlough. The son, too, said that he had heard nothing of what had happened. … I asked permission to arrest the farmer a second time, and with him his wife, daughter and son.

I started to question them again … I was particularly hard on the father. I hit him, and forced him to talk. … it was found that the partisan son had gone to the watchman in the dark … the whole family was taken out and killed.[280]

During October 1942, Zalman [Katz from Dzisna] and Moishe joined a [Soviet] partisan brigade, commanded by a killer and anti-Semite by the name of Kanapelka. There were only three other Jews in Kanapelka's brigade of twenty-five, and Kanapelka never considered the Jews an integral part of his campaign at that time. … After two months with Kanapelka, they became disenchanted with him, and when they heard of another partisan brigade that was more to their liking, with more Jews, they left Kanapelka's brigade …

The new partisan brigade was a more disciplined band, run by a Russian commander called Polikov. His brigade of 125 men were primarily Jews from the surrounding ghettos …

Feverish, Zalman … arrived at the partisan camp, where he told Polikov about the betrayal of the two [Belorussian] Zurawski bothers. He requested permission to return with several men to punish the two brothers. Polikov agreed …

Zalman ordered the brothers outside. They begged for mercy, but Zalman had too much hate in him to consider anything but revenge. He pushed them against the wall of the house, moved back, turned and raised his machine gun in their direction. Cowering against the wall … he fired a short burst into their bodies. They slumped to the ground. Without looking at the bodies, he and the four partisans returned to the forest. … The death of the brothers only opened the wound for further revenge. He needed to find Joseph Juszkevitz, [the Chief of Police of Dzisna] and remove him from this world. His revenge had to be complete. …

Zalman learned a price had been put on his head by Kanapelka for killing the Zurawski brothers. Kanapelka ordered David Pintzov, a Jewish partisan, to take several of the men and hunt Zalman down. …

Kanapelka went into Polikov's camp with eighteen men and took Polikov hostage. … The following day, Kanapelka executed Commander Polikov. …

After hearing Zalman, the commander-in-chief ordered Kanapelka's arrest. He was returned to the main camp, tried by his peers and removed from his command. As a result of his previous exploits, his life was spared, but he was demoted without rank to be a fighter and the brigade was given another commander.

After the war, Kanapelka was honoured by the Soviet government for his services as a partisan.[281]

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[279] Account of Szmerke Kaczerginski from the Lake Narocz area, in Kowalski, *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance, 1939–1945,* vol. 3 (1986), 501. See also ibid., vol. 4 (1991), 413, 475–76.

[280] Account of Zussya Solsky, in ibid., vol. 4 (1991): 452–53. This incident followed a clash between the Home Army and Kirov Brigade near Olchówka, in which, allegedly, "about 50 White Poles fell."

We decided to avenge one of the two gentiles that brought the Germans to the Tzintzivi [sic] forest and caused the battle where our friend Eliyahu Alperovich was killed. We knew their names. One was the forrester [sic] Silak and the other was a polish [sic] man by the name Bovsovski [sic] that served the Germans as an informant. He lived in the village Torovishnitza. Yitzhak, some Christian partisans and I went to the Vishna [sic] village and asked where Boshovitski [sic] lives. Everyone was scared to let us know. We went to the soltis [sic, *sołtys*], the head of the village and we asked where Boshovotski [sic] lives. He answered that he left the village. Yitzkale took the Soltis to the barn and told him to tell them where he was or he would shoot him. He took a gun to his head. The daughter of the Saltis [sic] came out of the house and began begging her father's life … Yitzkale started hitting the Soltis with the rifle but he refused to talk. Finally the daughter could not take it any more and told us where Boshivski [sic] lived. We threatened them that if they would make a sound we would burn the whole village.

We approached Bovoshiski's [sic] house that was located in the center of the village. … Boshovoski [sic] became pale and begged for his life. He claimed he was not the one to take the Germans to the woods and how he helped the Kurenitz [Kurzeniec] Jews after the slaughter. Yitzhak said "bring out all the possessions you have that belong to the Jews, if you do that we will not kill you." Boshovoski [sic] started bringing out all kind [sic] of leather goods like boots and clothes. … We told him to bring out all the weapons he had. He swore he only had one gun. We hit him with the gun. … We told his family to stand near the wall with their hands up. When he saw their death was coming he reached for the table, moved it, and from under the floor he took out one rifle, two guns and ammunition. One of the partisans kept the family members inside the house, we took the weapons and bag and put it on a sled. Yitzkale took his gun and shot Boshoviski. We took their kerosene lamps and lit the house on fire but we left the rest of the family untouched.

Next we took the Soltis and his daughter to Luban where the main German headquarters was located. We beat up the Soltis and then released him saying, "Go and tell the Germans in Luban [Lubań] that the partisans were here and they are Jews from Kurenitz." …

At the end of May [1944], Botziko the head of the special unit gave an order to kill the forrester [sic] Silac [sic] … We met at his house. … I won't give you the gory details but we did what we had to do and this "lowest of the low" got his punishment.[282]

The group [led by Shepsl Sheftel] knew that the peasant Lastun, from the settlement of Strizshenat, had turned Freydl Vismonski (Labata's) into the gendarme [sic]. … On January 22, 1943, the group went to Lastun at night … They took him about 300 meters from the settlement, near a wood [sic] … After he had confessed to the crime, they shot him and placed a note in his hat that anyone who turned Jews over to German hands could not avoid their proper revenge at the hands of the Jewish partisans. …

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[281] Abram, *The Light After the Dark*, 21, 24–28.

[282] Account of Zalman Uri Gurevitz in Meyerowitz, ed. *The Scroll of Kurzeniac.*

One dark night they traveled to the house of the forest watchman Butshel, who had, it was said, appeared voluntarily on the day of the big slaughter (12 May 1942) near the pits at Stonevitsh, and asked the Germans to allow him to help kill the Jews. Butshel escaped through a window and they had to be satisfied with confiscating all his possessions.

They also carried off everything that they found in Shaliapke's house, he whose hut was near the Stonevitsh pit-graves. Shaliapke himself had succeeded in fleeing. They gave the collected belongings to the Russian partisan detachment by the name of "Stalin", which promised to include the whole group in their detachment.

They confiscated the stolen Jewish possessions from the peasants and prepared for bigger acts of revenge, murder and robbery.

Later the names of the three goyim who had led the Germans to the partisans in the forest were discovered. They were brought to the detachment and shot. Their possessions were confiscated.[283]

The following reports are from predominantly Belorussian areas near Baranowicze:

On January 15 [1943], by order of the chief of staff, our group burned several houses in the village of Suchinka, homes of peasants who were German informers. Two days later, our patrol captured three carriages carrying peasants, three of whom we recognized as the biggest criminals in Byten [Byteń]. They had robbed, killed and terrorized the Jews in the ghetto. When we took them to the chief of staff, they confessed to being spies for the Germans. They were shot immediately and we were praised for our efficiency.[284]

As we walked [through the woods near Byteń], we saw the corpses of White Russian policemen who had collaborated with the Germans. Tied to trees, their tongues torn out and their genitals burned by fires, they had been treated by partisans the same way the Germans had treated captured partisans.[285]

The next morning I joined a group of partisans in an action against the German murderers in a village. I was overwhelmed with hatred and great desire to kill Germans. … It was a complete surprise attack, some of the Germans jumped from windows naked. We were able to capture a number of them, and brought them to the forest. We were overwhelmed with a consuming desire for revenge, that are actually jostled, fought each other, to get at the Germans first ….[286]

[283] Account of Meyshe Kaganovitsh in Kaganovich, *In Memory of the Jewish Community of Ivye.*

[284] Bar Oni, *The Vapor*, 89.

[285] Ibid., 101.

[286] "A Ten-Years-Young Partisan," in Kowalski, *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance, 1939–1945,* vol. 2 (1985), 598.

We found a small group of three German soldiers and two Polish policemen. They were moving slowly toward us, unarmed, and with their hands clasped behind their necks. … We handcuffed them to each other and some of our men took them back to our [i.e., Zorin's] camp. … As soon as those prisoners were spotted, the shouting intensified. The angry *atrad* [*otriad*] members immediately surrounded the new prisoners. …

I still remembered my mother's last words … "Tell Rochelle to take *nekome*—revenge. Revenge!" …

We didn't have either the physical capacity or the will to keep prisoners of war. Everybody was full of wild anger toward the Nazis and their Polish collaborators.

Everyone started beating them—with rifle butts, fists, boots. We beat them to mush. I remember that they were lying on the ground just barely breathing. And I … came up to one of the German officers who had his legs spread. I started to kick him again and again in the groin. …

It wasn't just me. The majority of the *atrad* members who were there participated. The Polish policemen might have received the most blows. We all knew that often the Polish collaborators had been crueler than the Germans. It felt like a mitzvah [righteous deed] for everyone to go in and give any of the prisoners a punch. To get the anger out at last.

When I think back, I'm not sorry for what I did.[287]

During the final days of the war, Russian and Jewish partisan groups in the Nalibocka [Naliboki] Forest captured some of the retreating German soldiers. But I don't think that any of the groups kept prisoners. For all of the groups, but especially for the Jewish partisans, the greatest interest was in capturing Gestapo and SS personnel. … No one felt sorry for the SS men and they were usually beaten severely and then killed.[288]

One day three young Germans were captured—indeed, very young—about 16–17 years old. They wore black uniforms and were armed. They were brought into headquarters for questioning. No one opened his mouth. No persuasion including physical persuasion worked. They were silent … Then it was decided to assemble all the Jews in the camp and conduct a public investigation together with a lynching.

Young and old consumed their anger on the first one being questioned. Little Yossi (about 3) came with his grandfather and beat the criminal with his cane, shouting: Revenge! For my mother! For my father! It was a horrible sight that embodied in one minute all the depth of the terrible holocaust of the Jewish people. The young Nazi did not surrender until the last moment. The other

[287] Sutin, *Jack and Rochelle,* 141–43. In this poorly researched and often crudely written memoir, the authors continually refer to the Belorussian police force as being composed exclusively of Poles, whereas the vast majority of the police were in fact ethnic Belorussians, as Oswald Rufeisen points out. See, Tec, *In the Lion's Den,* 64. After the war, Rochelle Sutin's uncle, who had survived posing as the husband of a Polish woman, "was in the process of making himself a wealthy man again" by taking over a large abandoned farm and accumulating livestock seized by Russian soldiers in exchange for vodka. Ibid., 151–52. Meanwhile, Jack Sutin was able to avoid being drafted into the Soviet army by posing as a dentist in Mir ("Some of the farmers would come in and I would drill their teeth. I didn't have the slightest idea of what I was doing"), and later in Łódź (at pp. 157, 167).

[288] Sutin, *Jack and Rochelle,* 147.

> two who had witnessed what had happened did not beg for mercy. … As for me—I ran away because I could no longer bear the sight of another deed of vengeance.[289]
>
> Tasks changed, the partisans were hunting the Germans and the Germans tried to sneak out. … they tasted the taste of revenge. The Germans were like hunted animals …
>
> Four German prisoners were brought in front of the camp's commanders. Three were young and the fourth who was older, was crying. … They were executed in the camp in front of all. Bursts of anger and revenge took hold of the people; it was so overwhelming that I prefer not to describe them.[290]
>
> Pandemonium broke out when four German soldiers were captured. After the lawyer Solomon Wolkowyski and the other commanders interrogated them in the *shtab* [headquarters], they were released into the central square of the camp.
>
> A furious mob gathered around them. "look at us, we are Jews!" one man shouted. "Do you know what you did too us?"
>
> Children spat and screamed about their dead parents. Wailing women slapped and cursed at them. Eighty-year-old Shmuel Pupko repeatedly struck each of the Germans with a large stick. …
>
> The beatings went on for nearly two hours; then the Germans were thrown into an open pit. They died in a hail of bullets.
>
> The executions proved emotionally wrenching, opening up rage that had been perhaps only barely contained. People swilled large quantities of vodka and began scouring the woods for Germans, itching to take further revenge for all that had been visited upon them.[291]
>
> Three S.S. men had been caught … Things got out of control as women and children threw themselves at the Nazis and killed them brutally. … The sight of these three bodies was so horible, I threw up near a tree …[292]

As one Jewish woman attached to the Bielski partisans put it, "We did not take one German prisoner. They were all killed on the spot." Mikhail Treister, a Jew from Minsk who joined up with the Bielski partisans in Naliboki forest, readily admitted that all captured German soldiers were killed, often with knives and stones.[293] Another woman attached to that same unit boasted: "If there were gentiles with the Germans, they knew they had to kill them."[294] Yechiel Silber recalls the fate of three German soldiers, one

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[289] Ettinger, *From the Lida Ghetto to the Bielski Partisans,* 66–67.

[290] Samuel Amarant, "The Partisans' Company of Tuvia Belski," in Yerushalmi, *Navaredok Memorial Book,* 333ff.

[291] Duffy, *The Bielski Brothers,* 255.

[292] Rubin, *Against the Tide,* 165.

[293] Treister's testimony was recorded in Phillip Alloy's documentary film "Interviews from the Underground: Eyewitness Accounts of Russia's World War II Jewish Resistance Movement."

[294] These statements were made in 1993 by the wife of one of the Bielski brothers and by Sulia Rubin, respectively, in

of whom was wounded, who were captured by a Soviet scouting party and brought to Naliboki forest to stand trial.

> The three Germans were brought to them so that they could take revenge upon them. The commander himself gave over the three Germans to the Bielski headquarters as a present. …
>
> Bielski immediately called together the 1,500 Jews and said to the Germans:
>
> "Here are the Jews with whom you made a great error, intending that you would do to the Jews whatever you want. Now they are here, and they want to take revenge upon you."
>
> The woman Gittel Barkowski was the first to take revenge upon the German who had murdered her daughter. The other Jews carried out the sentence upon the other two.[295]

The abuse of German prisoners of war became so flagrant that, in some cases, even the Soviet command, who was not known for their humanitarianism, felt compelled to intervene.

> As soon we found Germans hiding or anything and they surendered, we don't obey the law. We would take them out in the field and kill them. … there was an order issued that the partisans are no longer to kill the Germans who are surrendering, because it's against the law. It was bring them—and a camp was started with POWs. It was sort of a defeating purpose to us, that command, but we had to obey the order.[296]

> It took ten days to free Grodno. There were many German snipers around, shooting at anything that moved. We searched for them from house to house. In one house my Jewish friends and I found three Gestapo soldiers hiding in a pile of straw. It was a pleasure to tell these Nazis, who were pleading for their lives, that they had ben captured by three Jews, and ghetto survivors at that. To our regret, we weren't permitted to kill them. Later, at the POW camp, when we were asked how our prisoners had been so badly beaten, we told our commander the Nazis hadn't appreciated being captured by Jews.[297]

The following events occurred in the vicinity of Lipiczany forest:

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the documentary film "The Bielsky Brothers: The Unknown Partisans" (Soma Productions; reissued in 1996 by Films for the Humanities & Sciences). In that film, a gloating, and even chuckling, Boris Rubin described the fate of eight to ten Ukrainians who were captured and brought into the forest. Grenades were put in the captives' hands, one by one; after one body was torn apart by the explosion, the remaining prisoners were ordered to bury it, and so on, until they were all murdered off. Another partisan added: "But no one was ever tortured. They got paid well."

[295] Yechiel Silber, "The Partisans of Sochaczew," in Sztejn (Shtayn, Stein) and Wejszman (Vaysman, Weissman), eds., *Pinkas Sokhatshev*, 514ff.

[296] Interview with Harold Zissman, May 24, 1995, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.

[297] Zissman, *The Warriors*, 158.

> I remember a particular Jewish partisan returning to the hospital after a completed food mission. He recounted the story of a German officer who had been captured and brought back to the forest. Awaiting his execution, he requested not to be killed by a Jew. The executioner tied his hands and feet, identified himself as a Jew, and proceeded to chop off the officer's head with an ax. Another similar event involved the capture and disposition of a German officer by a Jewish partisan who had lost his entire family in Nazi ghetto massacres. Bitter with rage, he tied the German to a tree, gagged him, and cut off large pieces of his flesh with a sharp knife. As he did so, he declared in Yiddish, "This slice is for my mother, this one for my father, this one for my wife, these two for my children," and so on. Within every Jew was a desire to reap vengeance for the heinous acts the Germans had committed against his family.[298]

Even bystanders were not spared. The following report is from a predominantly Belorussian area near Mołodeczno, where Jews targeted villagers who looted abandoned Jewish property (a common practice during any war or civil disturbance, even in the United States):

> Now, while he had been with the partisans, on several occasions Jewish partisans—Jewish partisans from his town—saved the lives of their commanders; the commanders had been injured and the Jews, who knew the area well, found a place for them … in short, there was a situation of personal indebtedness, and the Jews from Gorodok [Gródek] asked their commanders to come and burn down the town. A friend of my father's, from the same town, told me that when they were all rounded up to the ghetto, the neighbours came and started to loot everything: the duvets, the property, they took everything. And he said to the neighbour's son: 'If I come out of this alive, we'll come back and kill you.' And this is what they did. Thirteen people were killed in the action.[299]

According to a Jewish account, Jewish partisans persuaded the leader of their Soviet partisan unit to burn down the entire town of Wiszniew, a small town near Wołożyn inhabited by Poles and Belorussians, as collective punishment for the looting of abandoned Jewish property by some of the local population and to take revenge in blood against some alleged collaborators.

> Jan Stankovicz [Stankiewicz] lived at the end of Karve Street. He was a carpenter and all his life was spent mingling with the Jews, just like the rest of the Christian neighbors. As soon as the Germans arrived they put him in charge. Immediately he changed his skin and united with the Germans in all their cruelty towards the Jews. He was the one who advised the Germans about the Satanic action near the house. When they took the martyrs to be killed, he stood with his rifle on top of the Church and shot whoever tried to escape. Such an evil man was clearly the first one who we wanted to get revenge on.

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[298] Brysk, *Amidst the Shadows of Trees,* 89.

[299] Tamar Fox, *Inherited Memories: Israeli Children of Holocaust Survivors* (London and New York: Cassell, 1999), 68.

Those days we would sit with the rest of the Vishnevan partisans in the forest and talk about the day of the annihilation of the Vishnevo [Wiszniew] community and the last words of Riva Bashka while she was taken to be burned. She yelled, “Brothers, may each one of you who will survive remember to avenge our spilled blood.” We made a decision to fulfill her last request. We approached the head of the brigade and he responded positively. He sent a company of 200 people headed by the Vishnevan Jewish partisans with a large amount of weapons, as much as we could carry. We arrived one evening at the outskirts of the town and we sent scouts. Our aim was to first catch Stankovicz and Turinsky [Targoński] alive and bring them to the forest. We put groups of two or three people in different stations surrounding the town and started our action.

I, together with Noah Podbersky and a few other partisans, entered the house of Torinsky [Targoński] at Vilna St., the old house of Elie Yakov Zusman. We checked in all the rooms but couldn’t find him, but realized that he must be nearby since the bed where he slept was still warm and his clothes and boots were on a chair by the bed. It was very clear that he just left the house. We looked everywhere in every corner, but couldn’t find him. Finally we went to the basement and saw him. He stood with his underwear, hiding at the entrance. We didn’t wait. We hit him with the edges of our rifles and he fell to the ground. We started beating him and started getting all the pain that was inside us and we yelled, “For the blood of our fathers and dears ones you spilled.” Finally when he lay there unconscious, we took him upstairs to the house of Fabish Lieberman where we all gathered. We gave him to the other partisans and returned to Karve St.

I must explain that before we came to town we cut all the telephone lines so the entire town was now in our hands. Now we went to the house of Stankovicz. At first we couldn’t find him in his house or his neighbor's house, but finally we found him in the attic, hidden behind a haystack. We took him down and started beating him with our rifles. When he fell unconscious, bleeding from all the beatings, we took him to our central rallying point. The third we wanted was the pharmacist, Pobol, but with him we only beat him, and when he fainted we let go. From his house we took medicine and food and continued. We went through the entire town, which now only had Christians, living there. We took food, cows, flour, bread, potatoes, pigs, and we put it all in the wagons that we took from the yards and returned to the forest. We went to Boktova and there we rested for a day. In the evening we went to Bartinova, a village near the Berzino [Berezyna] River in the thick forest where the rest of the partisans were located. There we had a field trial and they all received death sentences and were shot. After we left the area their families came and took their bodies.

But this was not enough. The houses of Vishnevo were still standing and the Christians who hated us and had helped the killing of our dear ones lived there in their houses (taken from the Jews). The need to get revenge burned inside us and didn't let us rest, so we decided to go back to town. This was a few months later. We announced our decision to our officer by the name of Podrin. We let him know that in Vishnevo there was not one Jew and that the Christians took their homes and were collaborating with the Nazis and that their living there endangered partisans. So we wanted to do something about it, and again he agreed with us. After some consultation we organized a brigade of 300 people, and late at night we came to town. First we burned the big

synagogue where they now kept their carpentry. We ordered ten people to get out of their homes and to bring hay and all other sorts of kindling and to set fire to all four sides of the town. They did as they were ordered and after two hours the entire town was on fire while all the Christians were running away half-naked. The fire could be seen from afar in the darkness. The German camp in Vojgany could see very clearly what was happening but fearing us they chose to stay in the camp. Once all the houses of the town turned to dust, in some cases along with the residents, we left the place that once was called our hometown. Before we left we took a large amount of food and we turned to the forest.

The people from Vishnevo who took part in this action was Cheina R., B-M Rubin, Zuska Podversky, Noah Podversky [Podberesky], Kokin, Daliyahu Dudman, and Yosef Pushkin from Ravzevich who was second in command to Kodrin. I must say one more thing about fear of the Germans for the partisans: one of our aims was to scare the Polish and Belorussian collaborators who served the Germans and took part in all their missions. We talked to them, and told them that if they did not stop collaborating with the enemy we would take it out on their families. One of these men was in the police in Vishnevo and lived in Vojgany [Wojgany]. Many times we warned him. When we saw that he was not listening and continued to endanger the partisans, we decided to do what we said we would do to him, so one summer night we came on horses to Vojgany. We put the horses some distance and came near his house, which was next door to the SS house. We threw a few grenades at the house, and the house was destroyed with all its occupants. In spite of the fact that the Germans saw everything, they didn't move. Only after we finished with the action and started riding our horses back to our camp did they start shooting, but we were already back in the forest.[300]

A non-Jewish eyewitness, however, provides a somewhat different description of the fate of the aforementioned Belorussian policeman from Wojgany and his family:

Very early one morning the partisans sent members of their underground to his home in the village of Vojgany. Vojganica however, having left his house earlier that evening was safely far away looking for partisan sympathizers when the fatal knock came to his front door.

Although he displayed little concern for any possible acts of retaliation, the force that was applied to the knock at Vojganica's door did alarm his wife. But certainly she couldn't have expected that outside the door, stood the men that would soon execute her and her entire family. Except for her small 2-year-old daughter.

[300] Ziska Podbersky, "Revenge," in Abramson, *Wiszniew, As It Was and Is No More*, 148–49. See also Podberesky, *Never the Last Road,* 81–87. Fortunately, in the process of torching the town, the partisans did not kill the Jewish children sheltered in the orphanage run by the Daughters of Mary Immaculate, which had accepted two Jewish foundlings, ages two and three, and a 13-year-old Jewish boy. The children were returned to their families safely after the Germans left the area. See Zofia Gutt, "Córki Maryi Niepokalanej," in *Żeńskie zgromadzenia zakonne w Polsce 1939–1947* (Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 1991), vol. 6, 143–44. The dates of these various actions against Wiszniew are not given in the Jewish sources. According to Polish sources, the Targoński brothers were seized and executed on August 15, 1943. See Krajewski, *Na Ziemi Nowogródzkiej,* 276. That source records numerous killings of civilians by the Soviet partisans in this area. Ibid.

Knowing that not answering the door wouldn't even be an option, she quickly grabbed some blankets and pillows that were in her reach and spread them out to cover over her youngest 2-year-old daughter who was fast asleep in her mother's bed.

The news of Vojganica's family being murdered spread quickly through the village. Neighbors heard gun fire early that morning and decided to check the neighborhood. The door to Vojganica's home was left open and that is when they discovered the murders. At the door they found his wife in a pool of blood. She was stabbed with a bayonet. Both of his sons seven and twelve were shot in the ear as they slept. A twenty years old niece was beaten and shot near the boy's bed, she was there to help with the sick grandfather. Both the grandmother and grandfather were shot in their bedroom. According to the neighbors, the grandfather was already on his deathbed when he was shot. The little two-year-old girl slept through the whole incident and survived or she was spared on purpose. The neighbors removed her to one of their homes.

… When we got there we had a short distance to walk to Vojganica's home.

Some of Vojganica's neighbors were already in the house when we arrived. They cleaned and dressed both bodies of the dead grandparents. Then the bodies were laid out on an evenly stacked pile of straw that was laid on the floor like a mat, covering the full length of the wall.

They had the mother in a wooden tub outside, bathing her dead body. When they finished, they dressed her and placed her next to her parents. As they did this to all the bodies the men were outside building the coffins.

I could feel the thick air of death around me once again. A lingering uncomfortable presence that is usually only felt where massive violence or emotional torment has occurred.

Most of the bodies that mother and I saw in Vojganica's home that day, were grotesquely positioned in unnatural twisted states. As if death had frozen their bodies in the exact moment that they made the last and final attempt to fight for their lives.

On the table, the partisan's left a note for Vojganica telling him that the execution of his family was an act of revenge. A result of what happens to traitors or to those that give their loyalty over to the Germans. The note went on to warn Vojganica that he would be next to die.[301]

This eyewitness reiterated in another statement:

There was no SS house next to Vojganica's house. …

There were no Germans firing at the partisans when they left. There were no Germans in the area at all with the exception of the ones that ran the train station in Vojgany and Vojganica was not at home that night. He was hunting for partisans.

He attended the funeral for his family escorted by Germans and the police. They were buried on the left side of the cemetery in the village of Bogdanovo [Bogdanowo]. Vojganica was shot later by one of his own men while hunting for partisans and was buried later with his family. …

A hand grenade or grenades were never thrown at the house. All but Vojganica's wife who was bayoneted were shot. The two boys were shot each in the ear. The older girl was shot and mutilated

[301] Charles Straczynski, "The Vacation I Am Trying To Forget: A True Story," posted on the Internet at: <http://www.eilatgordinlevitan.com/vishnevo/v_pages/vstories_forget.html>.

> when they partisans tried to pull her off the large oven. The little girl survived when her mother covered her with pillows as she slept. The rest of them were shot also. I wrote about this in the old story … which was written over 50 years ago. I don't know about the rest of the story of the partisans' revenge but I can't imagine why wasn't the Vojganica story told truthfully. Maybe the partisans were ashamed that they killed that family that was innocent of wrongdoing and claim that they used hand grenades to make killing all of them, at one time, look less terrible. Vojganica was not at home but killed weeks later. I hate to dispute … I don't care what happened to Vojganica: he deserved what he got, but were the children responsible for the sins of their father?[302]

A testimony from the mixed Polish-Belorussian area around Miadzioł and Dołhinów is particularly explicit about acts of revenge directed at local "collaborators," some of whom were merely looters and others who simply did not want to stand by and see their own property pilfered. Yakov Segalchick, who headed a Jewish sub-unit of the "Avenger of the People" (*Narodnyi mstitel*) Soviet partisan detachment, describes a number of expeditions he led.

> The next day, a small detachment headed by the officer Mayelnikov, went for non-military operations, meaning they appropriated food from the peasants for the atriad [otriad]. We came to the ranch [farm] of Borosky [Borowski?] in Sharkovichzina [Szarkowszczyzna] near the town of Hatzinzin [Chocieńczyce] … We confiscated many supplies; cheese and other dairy products, flour, grains, all in large amounts. We harnessed two horses to wagons and filled them with supplies. We also took five cows and a huge bull, and like that we returned to the base. We were all in a good mood and we ate as much as our hearts desired. Not only did we bring back a large amount of supplies, but we started feeling that we had gotten some revenge over an anti-Semitic landowner. …
>
> We went back to the first farmhouse that had told us of the "partisans" who had demanded gold and money from the farmers, while threatening they would burn the houses and kill the people. Although it was 2 in the morning, we woke the farmer and asked him to identify the men. He said that only yesterday these men had threatened him … We took them out and … decided to give the men death sentences. We took them to the forest and shot them …
>
> During the retreat [from Miadzioł] I passed by a house where a woman who we called Litovka lived. … The day the 22 young men were killed, she ran all over the streets yelling, "Now the day of revenge on the Jews has come! Let's kill them all so they won't contaminate the town!" I couldn't let it go. I turned back to her house, feeling waves of anger invading my body, preventing me from following the order to immediately retreat. I yelled to open the door and she opened it. I shot her immediately. She fell at the entrance of the house, dropping in a huge puddle of blood. …
>
> The need to get revenge on all the killers without uniforms who were running free, people who were our neighbors in yesteryear then who later became our killers, could not let go of me. So I

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[302] Charles Straczynski, correspondence, posted on the Internet at: <http://www.eilatgordinlevitan.com/vishnevo/v_pages/vstories_gdaliyau.html>.

used every free day I had to get revenge. First, I asked the commissar to let me find the killers in the village Kamyin [Kamień]. …

I took with me ten fighters, and we arrived at Kamyin around midnight, but when we knocked on the door of Ruzietski's house, only an old woman was there. … So instead we went to the Novtisky families. They were the people who took the clothes off the dead people they found in Myadel [Miadzioł]. When they opened the door we ordered them to put lights on and to return everything that they took off the dead Jewish bodies. At first they denied everything, but after we beat them, they started returning things. They brought from the storage place behind the oven clothes that were stained with blood, boots of little children, dresses of women. So we started beating them harder and harder. Three of them we found out later died from the wounds.

A few weeks later, we got revenge on the killer in the village of Dubricka by the name Ignolia. His crime was that in the summer of 1942 he encountered a young Jewish woman from Dolhinov [Dołhinów] … She had escaped from the ghetto, and when he caught her he beat her up, stole her money, tied her up and tortured her. Then he took her to Dolhinov and gave her to the Germans … In February of 1943 we knocked on the door of the killer … I ordered him to get up, but he said he was sick with typhus and could not get up. Menashe Kaye and I pulled him by his hair and David Glasser started counting while we beat him with rubber bats while I explained to him why were giving to him this punishment. The next day we found out that [the police] took the killer and his daughter to the hospital in Dolhinov but Ignolia died a day later. …

Now that I was the head of the hospital unit, I was pretty much in control and I could do whatever I wished, so I decided to take revenge on more of the killers. First on my mind was once again Jan Ruzetski in the village of Kamyin. … I took a rope and tied his hands behind his back and took him to a villager in Bakunin [Bakunik?] and asked him if he knew if this was the guy who called the Germans from Dolhinov. He and everyone else in the area said that this was the one … I said to him, "You can choose your death. If you will confess immediately we will shoot you. If not, we will cut your flesh off." He kept quiet, so we took him to the river … I gave an order to tie his legs and open his hands which were blackened by the rope. We threw the other side of the rope on the top of a pine tree and pulled it up. So now he was tied to the tree upside down. We collected some of the torn pieces of clothing taken from the Jews … We gathered some dry sticks lit them on fire. In a few minutes, he turned into a flaming torch. He was burned next to his victims' graveyard. We stuck a document to the burnt pine tree that said, "Revenge of the People."

A few days later we visited the village Parodnik [Porodnik?] near Kriviczi [Krzywicze]. … Despite the danger we decided we must take care of the killers, the brothers Mamek Skorot (or Mamek and Skorot?). Avraham Friedman, Bianish Kuzenitz. Zanka Muhammad, and Dinka Treykovski went with me. We came to the first house of the village … Immediately the door opened … They tried to deny it, we kept beating them. We only beat the two men; the women and children we left alone. …

Now we had to find the killers of the Jews of Dolhinov: Mikhail Proclowicz and the evil brothers Tarahovitz … One clear and cold night in December of 1943, Gershon Yafeh and Biyanish Kuzinitz and Dimka Traikovsky went with me on a sled. As we knocked on his window he opened his door … He begged us not to shoot him, but he saw that his death was coming. I asked him how many Jews had he killed and where were all the possessions that he had stolen from his victims. I

ordered him to return everything, saying, "If you will return all that we want, we won't kill you. We'll just beat you up."

He called his wife and told her to return all the possessions from the hideout … we found a large amount of robbed possessions about a hundred meters from the house. I became furious. … I started cursing at him violently and uncontrollably. I was crazed. "You must take responsibility and die the death due to an evil and wretched person." I shot him in his head and he dropped dead.

Now it came to the most important mission, the hunt for the biggest murderers, the brothers Tarhovitz. I had a personal vendetta against them. The blood of my mother was on their hands. … At 11 at night [in the middle of February 1944] we arrived near the large home of the Taharovitz brothers [in Dołhinów]. .. We ordered them to open the door … I ordered six of the troops with me to take all the livestock out of the cowshed and stable and to herd them in the direction of the forest. Four men took on the sled all the possessions in the house. … Before we left, I ordered the Taharovicz brothers to go outside. They were dressed only in their underwear and barefoot … I made them run in the freezing winter night. … we shot the two killers dead.[303]

Segalchick's memoir also illustrates the transition that occurred after the Soviet "liberation," when many former partisans became full-fledged henchmen of the NKVD, and belies the claim that Jewish consciousness was incompatible with loyalty to the Soviet state.

I returned to my hometown of Dolhinov [Dołhinów], which was now "Free of Jews", together with a few of my fighting comrades. Most of the town had been burned and there was not one Jew left. …

Alone, I walked along the ruins. … Like this we walked around, a small number of Jews, members of the partisans. The Jews who immediately returned to town were Leib Shreibman, Leibl Flant, Avraham Friedman, Gershon Lankin, and David Mirman. A few days later arrived Yitzhak Radoshkovicz and David Kazdan from Plashensitz [Pleszczenice], followed by others. Already in the first days we organized a Battalion of Punishment ["destruction battalion" or *istrebitelnye batal'ony* attached to the NKVD–*M.P.*]. I was head of it and we looked for the Nazis and their collaborators. Now it was their turn to run and hide. Leibl Flant was appointed as head of the police. Many from the gendarme and the collaborators and Gestapo people were now hiding in the forests. Originally when we recognized Gestapo people we shot them, but soon the authorities ordered us not to shoot them, telling us that we would pay dearly for such things. Now everyone had to be put through a trial, so we changed the system. In Kriviczi [Krzywicze] there was a prosecutor from the NKVD so we followed the new orders and brought the criminals and killers to trials. We had good communication with the NKVD prosecutor, which made our job easy. …

[303] Yakov Segalchick, "Eternal Testament: Memoirs of a Partisan," in Chrust and Bar-Razon, eds., *Esh tamid-yizkor le-Dolhinow*, 274ff.; English translation, *Eternal Flame: In Memory of Dolhinow*, posted on the Internet at: <www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/dolginovo/dolginovo.html> and <http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/myadel/eternal_testament htm>. According to Jofe Gerszon, who was part of a group of 24 Jews that escaped from the Dołhinów ghetto in February 1942 and included Segalchick, their armed group immediately started to take food from the farmers by force. See the testimony of Jofe Gerszon, June 20, 1959, Yad Vashem Archives, 03/1293.

> Meanwhile I continued my work with the NKVD in the town. Slowly there were ten families that returned to town. … As they came, everyone had a strong desire to leave the area to go to Poland, which was a gateway to other destinations. There was an agreement with Poland and the Soviet Union that anyone who was a former Polish citizen [actually only ethnic Poles and Jews were covered under the agreement—*M.P.*] would be allowed to now leave the Soviet Union to go to Poland, so everyone went there, but no one thought of staying in Poland. It was just a station on the way to other places. …
>
> Until 1948 I served in the NKVD that was led by Goroshkov. I as well as other Jews were treated very fairly and with much trust by the management of the NKVD in the area as well as in Minsk (the Belarus capital). This allowed us to keep a political reputation that was squeaky clean. On the other hand, the local militia showed clear signs of anti-Semitism, but our relations with the NKVD prevented us from experiencing any direct harm from this anti-Semitism.[304]

The following operations, carried out by Jewish partisans encamped in Rudniki forest, show the confusion that reigned. Chaim Lazar describes a foray in the Lithuanian village of Dajnowo near the end of December 1943. After posting guards at either end of the village, the partisans divided into groups, entered the peasants' homes to confiscate food and loaded the wagons. Shots were heard at the end of the village and Danke Lubotski, a fellow partisan, was killed. The suspect, allegedly a Polish visitor named Andreuszkewicz [sic], but in fact a Lithuanian police informer,[305] was apprehended and taken to the camp and turned over to the Special Affairs Division of the NKVD. After an investigation he was found guilty and executed. However,

> The next day it came to light that Danke [Lubotski] was actually killed by Lithuanian [i.e., Communist] partisans. The story was as follows: a partisan unit from the Lithuanian camp, headed

[304] Yakov Segalchick, "Eternal Testament: Memoirs of a Partisan," in Chrust and Bar-Razon, eds., *Esh tamid-yizkor le-Dolhinow*, 274ff.; English translation, *Eternal Flame: In Memory of Dolhinow*, posted on the Internet at: <www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/dolginovo/dolginovo.html> and <http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/myadel/eternal_testament htm>. Throughout the Eastern Borderlands, many Jews joined the *istrebitelnye bataľony* or "destruction battalion," which were attached to the NKVD. See, for example, Sender Appelboim, "In the Forests and Villages with the People of Raflovka [Rafałówka] and the Surrounding Area in the Years 1942–1944," *Memorial Book for the Towns of Old Rafalowka, New Rafalowka, Olizarka, Zoludzk and Vicinity*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/rafalovka/Rafalovka.html#TOC25>, translation of Pinhas and Malkah Hagin, eds., *Sefer zikaron le-'ayarot Rafalowka ha-yeshenah, Rafalowka he-hadashah, Olizarka, Zoludzk veha-sevivah* (Tel Aviv, 1996), pp.48–53: "We, the boys aged 16–18, joined the "Istrabitlani [sic] Battalion". Our task in the unit was to catch those who cooperated with the Germans. They were judged and exiled to Siberia." In southeastern Poland (Volhynia and Eastern Galicia), many Poles also entered these formations in order to defend the remnants of the Polish population from continuing assaults by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, whose goal it was to cleanse the area of Poles. See Tomasz Balbus, "Polskie 'istriebitielnyje bataliony' NKWD w latach 1944–1945," *Biuletyn Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 6 (2002): 77–75.

[305] According to Lithuanian police reports which deas with the alleged activities of Polish [sic] partisans the victim was actually named Edvardas Andriuškevičius and was a Lithuanian police collaborator. He was beaten and seized by armed bandits on December 30, 1943, and his fate is given as unknown. These same partisans are said to have returned on January 16 and apprehended Edvardas Andriuškevičius's brother Stasys and Bolius Antulis. See Kazimieras Garšva, et al., eds., *Armija krajova Lietuvoje: Antra dalis* (Vilnius and Kaunas: "Vilnijos" draugija and Lietuvos politinių kalinių ir tremtinių sąjunga, 1999), 270, 272.

> by Naktis, one of the pillars of the Special Affairs Division, came to the village that night to look for Učkoronis, a dangerous Gestapo agent …
>
> The Lithuanians had received information that the wanted agent was in that village and went after him. Seeing light in one of the windows they approached and peeked in. They saw people [i.e., the Jewish partisans] who did not resemble peasants at all. They decided that they were the agent and his aides, and opened fire.[306]

The attitude of Soviet and Jewish partisans toward the Home Army members did not differ substantially from their treatment of the Germans and their collaborators. According to partisan Chaim Lazar, "On the way back they took captive two uniformed and armed officers in the Polish bands. … The two Polish officers were executed."[307]

Civilian Massacres—The Case of Koniuchy

These were by no means the only such reprisals. Often the innocent and defenceless civilian population was targeted outright. In fact, the would-be Soviet "liberators" treated the civilian population no differently than the Nazi German persecutors. Nor did their ultimate designs differ significantly, as both occupiers wanted the complete subjugation of the population and would not tolerate unconformity with the ideology of the totalitarian systems they represented. The first agents of the impending Soviet order were the partisans encamped in the forests. As Timothy Snyder has observed,

> The Jews who became partisans were serving the Soviet regime, and were taking part in a Soviet policy to bring down retributions upon civilians. The partisan war in Belarus was a perversely interactive effort of Hitler and Stalin, who each ignored the laws of war and escalated the conflict behind the front lines. [308]

Israeli historian Dov Levin, who was a member of one of the Jewish partisan units operating under Soviet command, provided the following assessment of the Jewish partisan movement in Rudniki forest[309]—one that is relevant for other parts of Poland as well:

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[306] Lazar, *Destruction and Resistance*, 170–71. Učkoronis was subsequently apprehended and executed after being severely beaten by Jewish partisans. Ibid., 173.

[307] Ibid., 194.

[308] Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 250.

[309] Soviet partisan activity in Rudniki forest began in the summer of 1943, when a group of parachutists set up a base in the area. The first partisan detachment ("Defenders of the Homeland") was led by Fiodor Pushakov, a paratrooper flown in from Moscow; it attracted escaped Soviet POWs but only a few locals. For lack of recruits from among the local population, the Soviet Lithuanian partisan movement initiated contact with the Jews in the Wilno ghetto. With the liquidation of the Wilno ghetto underway, primarily Jewish men of recruitment age started to escape in September 1943. They were directed by Communist intermediaries to Narocz forest (about 50 miles northeast of Wilno) and to Rudniki forest (about 30 miles south of Wilno). The first Jews to arrive in Rudniki forest were 70 members of Yehiel (Ilia) Scheinbaum's Struggle Group, who left the ghetto during the first half of September 1943. It was headed by Nathan Ring, who had been a police officer in the ghetto. They set up their base near the paratroopers, but the latter

Wide-spread social anomie … was mainly apparent in the following forms: (a) exceptional recklessness in fighting, (b) increase in violent treatment of the German prisoners of war, (c) *open*

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rejected their request to join them because most of the Jews were unarmed. The Jewish underground (FPO) members who left the ghetto on the day it was liquidated arrived in the forests in late September and early October. A nucleus of some 150 Jews from the Wilno ghetto were later joined by escapees from the HPK (Heeres Kraftfahrpark) and Kailis labour camps in Wilno and some stragglers from other localities living in the forest. A total of 250 men and women, mostly teenagers and young adults, reached the forest. Although they had brought guns with them when they left the Wilno ghetto, until December 1943 the Jews living in Rudniki forest were totally disorganized. They were taught survival and partisan skills by non-Jewish partisans; however, the latter also stole their boots and weapons. See the testimony of Pesia Bernstein (née Złotnik, then Schenbaum), Yad Vashem Archives, 03/1292. (Pesia Bernstein, the wife of Ilia Scheinbaum, states that a Polish Communist underground organization in Wilno purchased weapons for the Jewish underground and assisted in transporting those weapons from the ghetto to Rudniki forest. See the testimony of Józefa Przewalska, Yad Vashem Archives, 03/3037.) Eventually, the Jewish refugees in Rudniki forest were divided into four partisan units (listed in order of formation), which were subordinated to the Soviet partisan command and incorporated into the Vilnius Brigade (sometimes referred to as the Lithuanian Brigade): "Avenger" (*Mstitel*'), under the command of Abba Kovner; "For Victory" (*Za pobedu*), led by Shmuel Kaplinsky; "Death to Fascism" (*Smert' fashizmu*), commanded by Jacob (Yaakov) Prenner; and "Struggle" (*Bor'ba*), under Aron Aronovich. The four detachments eventually grew to about four hundred partisans, necessitating the assignment of large groups of partisans to carry out "economic operations," which proved to be "hazardous," and "punitive raids against hostile villages." See Arad, *Ghetto in Flames,* 454–60; Levin, *Fighting Back,* 187–88, 196, 198, 205, 277–78; Arad, *In the Shadow of the Red Banner,* 284–91. At the outset, Abba Kovner was the commander of all four detachments, known informally as the Jewish Brigade. In mid–October 1943, Henoch Ziman ("Yurgis"), also went by his Lithuanian name Genrikas Zimanas ("Jurgis"), arrived from Narocz forest with his staff and took over the command of the Soviet-Lithuanian partisan movement in all of "southern Lithuania." Ziman issued an order to the command of the Jewish units to desist from bringing more Jewish groups into the forests, but the order was ignored by the Jewish units. The newly formed brigade had two political commissars, Alfons Stankiewicz and Witold Sienkiewicz ("Margis"), local non-Jewish Communists who were said to be sympathetic to the Jews. Abba Kovner credits the "Lithuanian-Polish command" of local Communists with enabling hundreds of Jews to survive "in a way that, in contrast to other places, was reasonable and at times even respectable." See Porat, *The Fall of a Sparrow,* 165. Izrael Kronik, a member of Kovner's partisan unit, recalled the helpfulness of another Polish commissar named Szumski. See the account of Izrael Kronik, dated May 10, 1960, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/5721. At the beginning of 1944, the Jewish commanders were replaced by Soviet ones, though Jews continued to hold such posts as commissars and deputy commanders, and a few dozen non-Jewish partisans were added to their ranks. One of the newly appointed Soviet commanders, Captain Vasilenko, turned out to be a Jew whose former name was Vasilevsky (his father had been a Zionist activist), but was reportedly "on numerous occasions very hostile to the Jewish Partisans." See Abraham Zeleznikow, "Danke and Imke Lubotzki," in Kowalski, *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance, 1939–1945,* vol. 2 (1985), 416–17. Nonetheless, as Dov Levin explains, "The detachments continued to remain Jewish both in their composition and in their nationalist and cultural character. The presence of a few dozen non-Jews among 420 Jewish partisans in the Vilna [Wilno] detachments made very little difference." See Levin, *Fighting Back,* 205. A tunnel dug out of the HKP labour camp in Wilno was betrayed to the Germans by a Jewish policeman; all those inside were killed, thereby bringing escapes from that camp to a halt. Ibid., 114–15. Anti-Semitism was said to be "rife" in Soviet detachments in Rudniki forest, and several Jews were executed for offences for which non-Jewish offenders got off leniently. At the end of November 1943, members of the Kaunas ghetto underground began arriving in Rudniki forest, and by May 1944 there were about 200 of them, grouped in three battalions of the Kaunas Brigade, primarily "Forward" (*Vperod*) and "Death to the Occupiers" (*Smert' okkupantam*). See Arad, *Ghetto in Flames,* 459; Arad, *In the Shadow of the Red Banner,* 289. Despite being also known as the Lithuanian Brigade, only a small minority of its members were ethnic Lithuanians: its make-up was largely Russian and Jewish, with just a few Poles. According to Isaac Kowalski, because of a lack of willing Lithuanians, Ziman initially recruited partisans from among the Jewish underground in the Wilno ghetto. They joined the ranks of the Soviet partisans in Narocz forest and were later transferred to Rudniki forest. See Kowalski, *A Secret Press in Nazi Europe,* 270–71. According to historian Dina Porat, at the beginning of 1944 there were 1,000 partisans in Rudniki forest; 600 belonged to Jewish units, not counting the Jews in the Lithuanian and Soviet detachments, and 200 more joined the Wilno group in the following months. See Porat, *The Fall of a Sparrow,* 155. According to Yitzhak Arad, there were probably 1,700–2,000 Soviet partisans in Rudniki forest, 30–40 percent of whom were Jewish. He estimates the number of Jewish partisans in Rudniki forest to be about 600–700, most of them from the Wilno and Kaunas ghettos. See Arad, *In the Shadow of the Red Banner,* 292.

> *hate and hostility towards the local population*, (d) total rejection of everything connected with Lithuania [and Poland] …, and (e) occurrences of depression, introversion and mass hysteria.[310]

From the fall of 1943, Soviet partisan units in Rudniki forest, consisting initially of escaped Soviet prisoners of war, grew rapidly as they absorbed Jews who fled from what was left of the ghettos and labour camps in Wilno and Kaunas. Only rarely did they engage in confrontations with the Germans, rather they concentrated on sabotaging railroads and telephone polls. In order to gather supplies, groups of partisans would set out on expeditions to raid the largely destitute countryside. Villagers encountered rapacious and increasingly more hostile bands of armed plunderers who seized large quantities of food, livestock, clothing, utensils, and other provisions. Violent confrontations with villagers, and less frequently with their Home Army protectors, ensued. Kazimierz Sakowicz, who penned a diary describing the massacres of Jews and Poles in the killing fields of Ponary outside Wilno, made the following notations in his diary, setting out the background to the animosity that unfolded in that region:

> More or less until this year (1943) the Jews banded together in the forest behaved correctly. Now, however, in 1943 they have become bandits, attacking individual houses in the villages and even whole villages (Zwierzyniec). They also carry out attacks on the roads. On Sunday, July 11, 1943, Jews stopped and robbed a wagon in Rudnicka Forest on the way through Rudniki. They stole shoes and food and are ruthless. The villagers escaped and begin to defend themselves, turning [marauding] Jews over to the Lithuanians. On Monday, July 12, there was a [German] manhunt in the forest near Sienodwor [Sinodwory] and Nowickiszek [Nowickiszki]. About 30–40 Jews were killed and several Bolsheviks. Several hundred people were hiding in this forest, and there were seventy to eighty Lithuanians and Germans from Ejszyszki with several submachine guns.
>
> Both the Jews and the Bolsheviks were well-armed; they had submachine guns and such like. Despite their numerical superiority the Jews and the Bolsheviks fired a few shots and escaped in panic. This can, perhaps, be explained by the fact that all those Jews and Bolsheviks were mainly escapees from Nacza Forest, where last month they were hunted down by a large number of Lithuanians and Germans from Wilno with three armored cars and several airplanes that bombed the forest. They assumed that it would be the same here, especially because the forest is small; thus they panicked and rushed to escape in several directions: (1) to Butrymance [Butrymańce], where they came upon an ambush, dying [and killed]; the majority, however, went to (2) Stryliszki, or (3) directly to Jurszyski [Jurszyszki]. Some remained here in the forest; I saw them when I was traveling that way, naturally pretending that I do not see anything, and (4) directly to Rudnicka Forest.
>
> They escaped without their caps, some even in their underwear, taking caps from those whom

[310] Dov Levin, "Some Facts and Problems About the Fighting of Lithuanian Jews against the Nazis and Their Collaborators (1941–1945)," in Emanuelis Zingeris, ed., *The Days of Memory: International Conference in Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Liquidation of the Vilnius Ghetto. October 11–16, 1993* (Vilnius: Baltos Lankos, 1995), 276–77. Partisan Anatol Krakowski offers an apologetic version of the partisans' experience: "An attitude filled with moral standards drawn from Jewish traditions characterized our year with the partisans." See Krakowski, *Le Ghetto dans la forêt*, 87.

they chanced upon, and where possible taking their clothes from them. They also carried out robberies, escaping, among other places to Stryliszki. The manhunt occurred at about 5 in the evening. The attacks by Jews were not dictated by necessity, that is, a lack of money. No, during the manhunt the Lithuanians found considerable sums on money on the bodies.[311]

October 1943

On October 2 the band stole for a second night (October 1 and 2); they take the wagons with the merchandise and drive to the forest. This night, October 2, Polstoki [Półstoki], Wojsiaty, Jacewicze, Podborze [were robbed]. …

When the bandits came into the courtyard, they spoke among themselves in Lithuanian. Among the bandits were Bolsheviks who emphasized that they were from the wostock [*vostok*, i.e., eastern regions of the Soviet Union], and they only take food—bread, lard, that's all. But for what do they need clothing, especially women's clothing and other items, like rings? That is the way Bolsheviks steal: only food [ironically], no other stuff.[312]

October 6, 7, and 8

Three nights in a row the bandits rob the village of Strakiszek [Strakiszki]; the population is in tears. That night Stary and Nowy Miedzyrzecz [Stare and Nowe Międzyrzecze], Pilalowka [Pilatówka], Dobrowola, and Wielki and Maly Ligojn [Wielkie and Małe Ligojnie] were also robbed and several dozen wagons left for the forest with looted property and provisions.[313]

Saturday, October 23

On Monday, October 18, 1943, Blinow, who hid from the conscription and joined the [partisan]

[311] Kazimierz Sakowicz, *Ponary Diary, 1941–1943: A Bystander's Account of a Mass Murder* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 95–97. The last entry in Sakowicz's diary is dated November 6, 1943, however, according to his family, he continued to keep his diary until the day he was shot and mortally wounded while riding his bicycle from Wilno to his home in Ponary on July 5, 1944. The fate of the missing diary pages is unclear. Sakowicz may have hidden them separately from the rest, and they were never found. It is also possible that they were concealed with the other pages but destroyed when in the possession of the Jewish State Museum, or later when the diary was kept in the Central State Archives of Lithuania, the Museum of the Revolution, and the Historical Museum, all in Vilnius (Wilno). In the annotation to this edition of Sakowicz's diary, it is suggested that the pages could have been destroyed by Lithuanian or Soviet elements because they contained a severe indictment of the Lithuanians for participating in the atrocities in Ponary or against specific Lithuanians who were involved in the murders. Ibid., 143–44. This speculation seems rather unlikely. The bulk of the killings in Ponary had been completed and recorded in the extant entries. Increasingly, Sakowicz turned his attention to violent attacks on villagers by Soviet and Jewish partisans which culminated in the massacre at Koniuchy. If such descriptions had fallen into the possession of the Soviet authorities, it is more likely that they would have been destroyed for compromising the Soviet partisan movement. Portions of Sakowicz's diary were first published in Polish in Maria Wardzyńska, *Sytuacja ludności polskiej w Generalnym Komiariacie Litwy: Czerwiec 1941–lipiec 1944* (Warsaw: Mako, 1993), 133–46. The full extant diary was published as *Dziennik pisany w Ponarach od 11 lipca 1941 r. do 6 listopada 1943 r.* (Bydgoszcz: Towarzystwo Miłośników Wilna i Ziemi Wileńskiej, 1999), and *Dziennik 1941–1943* (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2014). Possibly suggesting a conspiracy of silence, Theodore Weeks claims in a 2013 publication that Sakowicz's diary has never been published in Polish. See Theodore R. Weeks, "The Vilnius and Kaunas Ghettos and the Fate of Lithuanian Jewry, 1941–1945," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 25 (2013): 375.

[312] Ibid., 126.

[313] Ibid., 130.

bands, was found in the forest near Lukanc [Łukańce], shot and near death.

On Wednesday, October 20, the band surrounded the house of L. Zacharzewski in Lukanc]. They killed a woman from Madziun [Madziuny] who happened to be there and burned the house, immolating the dead woman, together with her 2 small children and the 2 small children of L. Zacharzewski, who sat hidden in the pigsty with his wife during the raid and saw everything. Zacharzewski is in hiding, since he is suspected of the killing of Blinow.[314]

Friday, October 28 [29], 1943

In the winter of 1942–43 many Jews were employed in the exploitation of the forest in the region of Gob [Goby] near Czarnobyl. The conditions of their work were horrible. … despite this the Jews did not die of hunger, and in general looked well. Above all, this was thanks to the Gob farmers who fed the Jews. They did not hide their appreciation …

When the work in the forest was finished and the Jews (as superfluous) had already been threatened with the base, the Jews fled to the virgin forest, thanks to the farmers from Gob. About a half year has passed since that time. On October 28, at night, a band robbed the farmer Wiernakowicz [Wierchonowicz] from Gob; three pigs were taken, seven lambs, clothing, linen, flour, kitchen utensils, shoes, etc.[315]

Saturday, November 6 [1943]

Practically all of Gob [Goby], and actually all the richer farmers in Gob, were thoroughly robbed last night. Six wagons, loaded with locally slaughtered pigs, lambs, and, in addition, clothes, shoes, and the like, left in the direction of the forest. The band appeared at 6 in the evening. In addition, some of the farmers were grievously beaten and several dogs shot. It is interesting that the Bolsheviks, who that night appeared at the farms, declared at the beginning that "by order of the Soviet authorities they demand that the following be furnished immediately, etc."—after which they named, among other things, small items, such as wristwatches, and when the farmer would try to explain that he didn't have any, he was asked, "Then where is that [high quality] Cyma silver watch"?

How did they know that? Very simple: their guides were the Jews who were sawing in the forest. Now they went together openly. …

I forgot: at Wierchonowicz's on October 2, two wagons were loaded. One of the Jews told Wierchonowicz that the cow would be taken another time (he pointed to her in the pigsty); until then the cow should be fattened. Wierchonowicz is feeding the cow better now.[316]

Historian Kazimierz Krajewski details more of this history, as well as altercations with German forces and their Lithuanian collaborators and attacks on German outposts in the vicinity of Rudniki forest, in his

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[314] Ibid., 137.

[315] Ibid., 140–41.

[316] Ibid., 142–43.

important monograph on the Home Army in the Nowogródek region.[317] On September 11, 1943, a large contingent of Soviet partisans staged an attack on Polish partisans in Posolcz, killing three Home Army members including Second Lieutenant Tadeusz Brykczyński ("Kubuś").[318] A Home Army member from Bieniakonie recalled how a group of Soviet partisans invaded a cottage where they came across a woman baking bread. Despite the woman's pleas to leave some bread for her malnourished children, the partisans took everything they could lay their hands on. Later they returned and torched the house.[319] Kazimierz Orłowski, a Home Army member, was killed by Soviet partisans from Rudniki forest when they came to rob his village of Andrzeiszki.[320] A Pole from Rudniki recalled, "I counted 19 times that the [Soviet] partisans scoured the village looking to take something. Among them was a Jew by the name of Kuszka from Olkieniki who said, 'Do not take lean sheep or those with lamb.'"[321] Soviet reports mention that partisans from the Jewish units "Death to Fascism" and "Struggle" confiscated the last cows from several households, leaving the families destitute.[322] Additional examples, based on German reports and Jewish accounts, were cited in Part Two of this study.

One of the targets of the wrath of Soviet and Jewish partisans was Koniuchy, a small village of several hundred people near the town of Bieniakonie, at the edge of Rudniki forest, southeast of Wilno. Koniuchy was not only remote, it was also a poor village—the soil was sandy and crops and livestock were not abundant. But since it was situated close to the forest it became an easy target for robbers.[323] Soviet and Jewish partisans regularly stripped the villagers of virtually all their possessions, especially their livestock, food supplies and clothing. According to the recollections of Edward Tubin, a resident of Koniuchy,

> The first time they came it was to us alone. They told us to harness our horse … They took the keys to the storehouse and stable, they chased everyone into a corner, one of them watched us with an automatic weapon. They took everything. Then they came at the end and said that 'there'll be no mercy: If you report us, we'll come and burn you down.' … The next time more of them came. They came in the early evening and went to take, to rob in the entire village. They came to us and

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[317] Krajewski, *Na Ziemi Nowogródzkiej,* 430–31, 498–500. For altercations in the vicinity of Nacza forest see 434.

[318] Krajewski, *Na Ziemi Nowogródzkiej,* 430–31. According to Polish sources, 13 Soviet partisans lost their lives.

[319] Testimony of Anna Bardzyńska ("Nowina") in Grażyna Dziedzińska, "Dziewczyna z tamtych lat," *Nasza Polska*, December 20–27, 2005.

[320] Barbara Sidorowicz, "Nigdy z pamięci," *Magazyn Wileński,* no. 11 (November 2003): 25–26.

[321] Andrzej Kołosowski, interview with Witold Ładowicz, "'Bogdaniec' z Rudnik," *Nasz Dziennik* (Warsaw), January 13–14, 2001.

[322] Šarūnas Liekis, "Koniuchy in the 'New' and 'Old' Polish and Jewish Memory," Conference Paper, "Between Coexistence and Divorce: 25 Years of Research on the History and Culture of Polish Jewry and Polish-Jewish Relations," Hebrew University of Jerusalem, March 17–19, 2009.

[323] For a description of the difficult conditions and poverty in the nearby village of Butrymańce see Marian Butrym, "W mojej ojczyźnie, w Butrymańcach…," *Magazyn Wileński,* no. 11 (2001): 21–26.

> also ordered us to harness our horse. … When they were leaving, two of them burst into our home. There was nothing in the house. I was sleeping on the bed with my brother Leon. We were covered with a village coverlet of our own making. They burst in, saw that there was nothing, and tore the coverlet off us. My father said to them, "Comrades, the children won't have anything to cover themselves with." So one of them said using a really dirty word, "shit on your children." And they left.[324]

These descriptions fully accord with the accounts of Jewish partisans from Rudniki forest that follow. As Israel Kowalski explains, "In due time, the Jewish units became experts at foraging for themselves and the non-Jews began to envy them."[325]

> The more people we had in the partisan camp, the more pressing the matter of a food supply. … Every night groups of fighters went out on food forays.[326]

> The "zagotovki" or economic operations began. Twenty-five to thirty people were chosen. The group was directed to a selected village, distant about 25 to 35 kilometres from the base. Of course, those people were armed. There they set up watch at either end of the village, and the rest of us split up into several groups consisting of several persons. Each group went around to several houses and was to requisition everything that we needed: usually potatoes, bread, flour, onions and livestock.[327]

> Going into the local villages to get food, however, was another matter. We came in like bandits and, after all, we were robbing the local peasants of their livelihood, first a sack of flour, then a pig or a cow or a horse. In the early days, we were able to befriend the locals and persuade them to give us food voluntarily, but soon we would need another sack of flour and more cows, and more chickens. In addition, the number of partisans inhabiting the forests grew, as more and more people fled from the ghettos into the forests and as the Red Army moved westwards, Russian soldiers who had imprisoned by the Germans and had escaped, tried to join the partisans. …
>
> As a result of this 'invasion' of the forests, the villages close to our base soon ran out of food; everyone was after the same source of supplies. Gradually the villagers, with whom we had at first tried to negotiate, became our enemies. We explained our needs to them and did our best not to take too much of their livestock and their crops, but there was just so much they could provide, and

[324] Andrzej Kumor, interview with Edward Tubin, "Nie przepuścili nikomu…: Z naocznym świadkiem pacyfikacji wsi Koniuchy rozmawia Andrzej Kumor," *Gazeta* (Toronto), May 4–6, 2001. For a description of a similar raid on the village of Korsaki see Błażejewicz, *W walce z wrogami Rzeczypospolitej,* 84. A diary in Russian was found on one of the armed partisans killed after that raid which referred to the pacification of Koniuchy. Ibid., 85.

[325] Kowalski, *A Secret Press in Nazi Europe,* 281.

[326] Lazar, *Destruction and Resistance,* 142. Chaim Lazar was a member of the "Avenger" detachment.

[327] Account of Abram Mieszczański, dated June 10, 1947, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/2536.

finally we ended up not taking just one cow but by leaving just one cow. We would arrive in the village and load up wagons, or in winter, sledges pulled by horses—which we'd also taken from them, and which we often did not return. After all, their very existence depended on their livestock. Sometimes we would even take a farmer or two with us just so they could return the horse and cart we had used to their village. This also made them less likely to alert the German police that we had been in their village and had taken their goods.

… expeditions to the villages for food took hours—and usually ran into daylight hours. A fully laden wagon train—which inevitably moved very slowly along the dirt roads—took hours and hours to reach base, and it was not uncommon to come across peasants who rushed to denounce us to the Germans who waited to ambush the wagon on the way back to the camp.[328]

Tuesday, January 11th [1944]. The group of nine are called to carry out a mission: to confiscate the weapons owned by the farmers. The commander is Leib Zaitzev, a Byelorussian Jew, and a veteran partisan. His aide is Nikolai Dushin, a former prisoner-of-war … and we were seven Jews: Shimon Eidlson, Michael Gelbtrunk, Mendl Deitch, Aba Diskant, Itzchak Lifszitz, Jankl Ratner and myself [Alex Faitelson]. Zaitzev was armed with a P.P.S.H., a submachinegun of Russian make, Dushin, with an automatic rifle of the S.V.T. type. We had pistols. The battalion did not have enough weapons to go around. If it was necessary to go out to the villages in order to get foodstuffs, there was an armed group whose task this was. Their arms had been lent to the base by the Jewish partisans from Vilna [Wilno].

It is now three days that we have been "combing" the villages deep in the enemy's hinterland. We look into and search the farmers' dwellings for hidden weapons, forcing their owners to empty their hiding places and hand over their arms. Whenever we stop, we interrogate the farmers as to who possesses arms. … In the nearest village we loaded three sleighs [of provisions] and went off to this village. It was a clear night. The moon and the snow in the fields light our way. White expanses. The horses harnessed to the sleighs prance rapidly. We are three to a sleigh. It's a wonderful feeling—being the rulers of the night![329]

Paradoxically, the battle against the Germans was easier and less dangerous than the activity of provision gathering. …

The food expeditions unfolded in general as follows: about thirty partisans went to a village located about forty kilometres from our base, passing along the way closer and non-hostile localities that we did not want to alienate. Usually, after an overnight march, when we arrived in an unfriendly village, first we occupied the house of the village head after placing guards at the outskirts of the dwellings. These operations were more dangerous that combat activities because they were accompanied by a great deal of noise, barking dogs, pigs whose throats were cut, horses that were hitched to wagons on which we loaded the products that we had just confiscated. The rule

[328] Joseph Harmatz, *From the* Wings (Sussex, England: The Book Guild, 1998), 84–85. Joseph Harmatz was a member of the "For Victory" detachment.

[329] Faitelson, *Heroism & Bravery in Lithuania, 1941–1945*, 307. Alex Faitelson was a member of the "Death to the Occupiers" detachment.

was to give to the peasants receipts for our booty so that they could later prove to the Soviets [on subsequent raids] that they "aided the partisans." The booty was restricted only to flour, oil, pork, sometimes beef. The rule was not to touch "luxury" foodstuffs like butter, milk, cheese. … Despite everything, these rules … were not always strictly observed by all the partisans with regard to bread, butter and cheese. …

We were supposed to capture a peasant denouncer in a hostile village, but he was not there when we arrived. To compensate, we put our hands on foodstuffs that were usually forbidden such as bread, cheese, vodka and some clothing.[330]

I could not stand going out on "foraging" expeditions. I was so ashamed of dropping in on a hut and demanding potatoes, flour, and especially animals—sheep and cows—from the peasants. The women cried, and the men cursed us. It happened that our men surreptitiously seized extra things belonging to the working people who supplied us—boots, clothes, even watches and money. Meetings were held in the detachment to explain to everyone that this was mere pillage, that it was wrong to steal, and that by doing this we [would be] making enemies out of the peasants. The detachment, however, contained many "underworlders," former thieves and vagrants for whom theft was the normal state of affairs. Some of them contended that they had the right to do this:

"These folks did not suffer from fascism, but our people all died. Why shouldn't they share something? …"

We were principled members of the FPO. On these expeditions we tried to make sure that nothing was taken except food, but these efforts were not always successful. Our ragged partisans … continued to plunder the peasants, who cursed and hated us. We went out "foraging" after sundown and continued long into twilight. We had to range far afield, since the close-in farms had already been fleeced. Both [Jewish] detachments had complements of up to one hundred forty men. A horde of this size required a great deal of food. In general they took potatoes, flour, cabbage, and sometimes cottage cheese for the sick. The order was given to take cattle only from prosperous peasants who had no fewer than two cows. It was forbidden to take one from a really poor peasant who had just a single cow. …

We finally got to the village we targeted and posted sentries. We ordered the owners to hitch up a cart. We loaded produce on it, tied a cow to the back, and put some confused sheep on it. We worked to the accompaniment of wails and tears on the part of the peasant men and women. We had to hurry. We went back, carefully, looking around from time to time.[331]

Our sources of sustenance were the neighbouring villages. Despite the fact conditions were hard for their own inhabitants, they shared with us what they had. On the other hand, from time to time it

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[330] Krakowski, *Le Ghetto dans la forêt,* 58, 62–63, 69. Anatol Krakowski was a member of the "For Victory" detachment which carried out most of its activities jointly with the "Avenger" detachment.

[331] Margolis, *A Partisan from Vilna,* 481–82. Margolis was a member of Kaplinsky's "For Victory" detachment; the other detachment referred to is Kovner's "Avenger" detachment.

> was necessary to turn to arguments of force, including the use of weapons. The Germans attempted to present us to the peasants in the worst possible light calling us bandits. …
>
> In partisan parlance the food-gathering expeditions were called "zagotovka." They were carried out in the following manner. A group of partisans headed towards the vicinity of a selected village in the early evening hours. It had already been placed under surveillance earlier. In addition we would set up a guard around the village so that no one could leave the area during the operation. The peasants were ordered to gather food and load it onto carriages, to which they had to harness their horses. We took flour, potatoes, bread and pigs. … The peasants brought the loaded carriages out of the village, at which point we intercepted them … We drove the carriages to a location from which we could readily carry the supplies to our base. The horses and carriages were left in places from which the horses could make their way home alone. All of this had to be completed within a few hours, before daybreak.[332]

The myth that villages located near the bases were friendly by nature, whereas outlying villages were hostile and pro-Nazi, has been amply debunked. No village appreciated being plundered repeatedly, and, as could be expected, the villagers *became* hostile because of such relentless raids. Villagers who lived near Soviet partisan bases were simply fearful of retaliation, hence their docility; the partisans treated them with more civility because they did not want hostile villagers in close proximity to their bases. The notion that the partisans exercised restraint in their provision-gathering expeditions is, as numerous accounts have shown, equally baseless. Under the circumstances, the villagers had every right to defend themselves and their possessions from the incessant plundering and brutal treatment they were subjected to. Those who, out of desperation, turned to the German authorities for protection cannot simply be regarded as collaborators.

Not all expeditions were carried off as smoothly as those described above. The following account by Sara Rubinson (Ginaite), a member of the "Death to the Occupiers" detachment, describes a raid in late December 1943 which, exceptionally, was cut short because of defensive action by Polish partisans.

> Meanwhile, our detachment had been preparing for a very important and dangerous mission in a hostile district, far from our camp, to seize food. Our group of about thirty partisans also included the recently arrived newcomers from Kaunas Ghetto who had not yet had an opportunity to gain any experience in guerrilla warfare. As we all knew, experience could only be acquired by going on missions and fighting in skirmishes. We left our camp before dawn, after all the rifles and automatic weapons, and even our only sub-machine gun, had been distributed. When we reached

[332] Shuv (Shub), *Meever lisheme ha-ananah*, 122. See also the interview with Baruch Shub, November 5, 1993, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives For another—more vivid—description of these raids, see Zunia Shtrom, *Hurbn un kamf (fun Kovner geto tsu di Rudnitsker velder): Zikhroynes* (Tel Aviv: Aroysgegebn fun "Farband fun partizaner, untergrunt-kemfers un geto-oyfshtendlers in Yisroel," 1990), 226–34. Shtrom writes that armed groups counting as many as 25 partisans would set out on forays and return to the base with cattle and wagonloads of products. They would block the entrances to a village and then the partisans would fan out in twos to rob individual peasants' cottages, taking virtually all their livestock. Threats and intimidation were commonly used, such as burning down their homes.

the village of Inklerishkes [Inklaryszki in Polish, Inkleriškės in Lithuanian] at daybreak, we stopped for a short rest. …

We rested in Inklerishkes until dusk when we left the village, following order to stay on high alert to potential dangers from all directions. We were heading close to the hostile village of Koletanca [Kalitańce], known for its support for the Polish White Partisans. …

In order to reach the destination of our operation, we had to go through the edge of the village under their control and cross a narrow footbridge. We did this noiselessly, thinking we had not been spotted. When we reached the designated village, our group leader, Michail Trushin, used all the defensive tactics at his disposal. He positioned guards at both ends of the village and ran to the home of the village elder, ordering him to prepare horse-drawn carriages. Once again, partisans were split into small groups and assigned to houses from which to requisition foodstuffs.

Zunia Shtromas [Shtrom], Boruch Lopjanski, and I looked on the window of the house assigned to us. The frightened owners lit the sapwood lamp and opened the door. Zunia demanded they brig bread, bacon, and salt. Boruch ordered them to open the door to the cowshed and bring out a cow. The farmer hesitated. Immediately, Boruch opened the door of the cowshed. He led out a cow, tied a rope to its neck and told me to lead it to the carriage. Zunia handed me a bag of salt.

All I wanted was to get out of that house and get away from the plaintive, pleading looks and moans of the owners. Before long, the command was given to gather at the carriages with our booty and the train of carts started back for base camp. I proceeded to the footbridge and, though my cow bucked a little, we both made it across.

One of the newcomers, Peisach Gordon, was one or two carriages behind me. He put his sub-machine gun on a cart as he went behind the carriage to try and cross the footbridge. Suddenly, a volley of machine gun fire hit us like a hurricane. The White Partisans were shooting at us from cover of the cemetery, directing their fire at the footbridge and those partisans who had not yet crossed. It cut Peisach down first. He was followed by Itzik Segal.

Newcomer Masha Endlin, disappeared in the fray. I heard Trushin's command not to cross the bridge, but I was already on the other side of the river and I hit the ground, holding onto the cow. All the cows and horses began to run in a frenzy around me, taking the carriages with them.

The remaining members of our group waded through the shallow river that, at this time of year, was already covered by a thin layer of ice. Leizer Zilber, Israel Goldblatt, and Misha Rubinsonas [Rubinson] all managed to cross the river, avoiding the bridge, and returned feeble fire with their pistols. Trushin slipped and fell into the river but Boruch Lopjanski managed to pull him out. Meanwhile, the sub-machine gun cartridge was lost in the river. Returning fire, we retreated into the woods where we halted briefly, hoping Masha Endlin would catch up. Enemy fire continued as branches and pieces of bark, clipped by bullets, fell all around us. Then everything went quiet.

… Our group returned to base camp disconsolate and dispirited. We had lost three of our comrades and all the food, though I still gripped the small bag of salt in my hand. The commanders of our detachment were livid and sought out scapegoats for the disaster. They blamed the submachine gunners, the scouts, the informers and us, the fighters.[333]

[333] Sara Ginaite-Rubinson, *Resistance and Survival: The Jewish Community in Kaunas, 1941–1944* (Oakville, Ontario and Niagara Falls, New York: Mosaic Press, 2005), 139–41. Ginaite-Rubinson accuses a group of Soviet partisans

Not all of this information is reliable, it turns out, as the following account of Nehemia Endlin shows. In fact, two of the three Jews allegedly killed by Poles (Masha Endlin and Itzik or Itzchak Segal), after they had been left behind by their comrades, in fact survived. It is not certain whether the Jewish raiders were repelled by partisans or by a group of vigilant villagers. Finally, it appears that the Poles fired shots not with the intention of killing the Jewish marauders, but to attempt to prevent them from leaving with their spoils.

> On December 30, 1943 a group was put together to organize food, headed by Misha [Mikhail] Trushin, a lieutenant among the prisoners of war. My wife Masha [Endlin] and Chaya Shmuelov volunteered. The road led by Vishintzi [Wisińcza], Kaletanz [Kalitańce], towards Novostrelzi [Strzelce]. On the way to Kaletanz, there was a rivulet crossed by a little bridge, close to the cemetery. On the way back, when they were laden with goods, they fell into an ambush of Polish farmers who had positioned themselves in the cemetery and opened fire in the direction of the bridge. Peisach Gordon was shot and killed, and the others scattered and crossed the stream through the water. Misha Trushin and some of the partisans opened fire at the ambush. It was of no importance because the attackers did not come out, nor did they give chase to the group. Their intention was to drive off the partisans, leaving behind them their food and animals.
>
> Shooting in the dark in the direction of the well-armed concealed attackers could have created a target for them to return fire against us. In the meantime, our people were in confusion. The machine-gunner Meishe Rubinson and his deputy, Eliezer Zilber, lost the machine-gun magazine. My wife [Masha Endlin] was left caught on a branch, and no one came to help her. Itzchak Segal got lost and threw away his SOT automatic rifle. Peisach Gordon's body was left on the bridge. A sad end to the campaign, and we returned to the base empty-handed, having lost people and weapons …
>
> The commander and the commissar vented all their anger on Meishe Rubinson and Eliezer Zilber for losing the magazines and bullets. Given the company's meager armory, this was a serious and sad blow. The two of them were sent to find the lost ammunition, which of course they were unable to do. On their return, they announced that Peisach Gordon, Masha Endlin and Itzchak Segal were dead. In this way, apparently, they wanted to prove to the commanders that they had been to the place.

Nehemia Endlin continues:

> It was the night of Sylvester [i.e., December 31]. That evening I was on guard by the HQ dugout. In the dugout they were welcoming in the new year, and as appropriate to partisans, they were drinking home brew and having a good time, even though the day before they had lost three men and weapons. The commissar came out to me late at night and told me that Masha had died near

loyal to the detachment's commissar, Dimitry Parfionov, of being "directly, or perhaps indirectly, responsible for the killing of several of our very close ghetto partisan friends." Ibid., 130.

Kaletanz [Kalitańce]. I answered that we were fighting a just war and that no one could be certain he would come out of the struggle alive.

We reached the target and the commander posted a guard on both sides of the village. They were charged with letting no one in or out without a password. The action took place in the village. Everyone was warned not to take anything, even something of no value, from the farmers other than food.

The food raid was crowned with success. On the way back, Meishe Rubinson wanted to show me the grave of my wife Masha. When we reached the little bridge over the rivulet by Kaletanz, we came under heavy fire from the cemetery. We did not panic, and quickly took the food and livestock across, by the bridge or through the water, while the partisans covered us by shooting in the direction of the attackers. Thanks to this exchange of fire, Meishe Rubinson was saved from the unpleasant task of finding and showing me my wife's grave …

I was sent to the ghetto to bring fighters to the forest.

One day Velvl Shavlan, a member of the underground fighting organization in the ghetto who worked for Liptzer in the Gestapo brigade, came to me and brought me a note he had received from a Jew who had come from the Vilna [Wilno] Gestapo brigade. The note was written by a woman called Mery Ezerhovitz to a family in the ghetto by the name of Rostovski. The handwriting had looked to Velvl to be similar to that of my wife, and he decided to bring the note to me.

Masha described in brief how she had fallen into the hands of the Vilna Gestapo. When she had freed herself from the thicket by the rivulet by Kaletanz her partisan comrades were no longer around. She was caught by armed Polish farmers, who already held Itzchak Segal. The two of them claimed that they were Jews who had lost their way, when they heard the exchange of gunfire. As they were unarmed, the Poles believed them.

The Poles did not know what to do with the Jews they had captured, and gave them to the Vilna Gestapo. There, they were interrogated and not found guilty of anything other than being "Jews who had gone astray"—and they were sent to a Jewish work brigade.

I showed the letter to Chaim Yellin. He immediately instructed David Markovski to take the opportunity of sending my wife 500 marks and clothes. The two of us, Chaim and I, went to Liptzer. He received us as honored guests, with coffee and rolls. I asked him, as the person in charge of the ghetto on behalf of the Gestapo, to get my wife out of Vilna and bring her to Kovno [Kaunas]. We set him a stay of one month.[334]

They brought Masha Endlin to Kaunas and Nehemia Endlin took her to the forest. However, Shmuel Chananovitch, a Jew who was apprehended by the Lithuanian police after escaping from Kaunas and taken to the Gestapo in Wilno, where he met Masha Endlin, maintains that Masha had also been caught by the Lithuanian police in the vicinity of Kalitańce and handed over to the Gestapo. This appears to be a far more

[334] Nehemia Endlin, *Oyf di vegn fun partizaner kamf: Zikhroynes* (Tel-Aviv: A komitet fun gev. yidishe partizaner un untergrunt kemfer fun Kovner geto, 1980), as cited in Alex Faitelson, *The Truth and Nothing But the Truth: Jewish Resistance in Lithuania* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2006), 437–40.

likely scenario than the one suggested by Nehemia Endlin, given the villagers' lack of contact with the Gestapo. According to Chananovitch,

> On December 30, 1943, a group of partisans from the "Death to the Occupiers" battalion, went off on a mission to get food supplies. The group was led by Lieutenant Misha [Mikhail] Trushin, a former prisoner of war. On their way back to their base with a wagon full of provisions, they met with strong fire from the west. Gordon-Shtein was killed in this incident. The partisans lost their nerve, left the wagons with the provisions and dispersed. Neither Itzchak Segal nor Masha Endlin made their way back from this mission. They were caught by the police, to whom Masha said that she had got lost in the neighborhood while looking for a place to stay during the war. The Lithuanian police handed her over to the Gestapo. Itzchak Segal's fate is not known.
>
> Masha Endlin managed to send a letter via a Jew from a working-crew employed by the Gestapo in Vilna [Wilno] who was going to Kovno [Kaunas]. Nehemia Endlin received the letter and approached Chaim about it. Chaim succeeded with Benni Liptzer's help in having Masha transferred from the Gestapo in Vilna to the Gestapo in Kovno, and from there she came to the ghetto and was taken by Nehemia to the forest.[335]

Accounts gathered by the Jewish Historical Institute in Poland shortly after the war indicate that altercations with the Home Army occurred almost always in the context of raids on villages staged by Soviet partisans. Casualties among the Soviet partisans were relatively few. Planting mines proved to be a much more hazardous undertaking: five Jewish partisans were killed when a mine exploded prematurely. The accounts also describe frequent assaults (including rape) and robberies of Jews perpetrated by Soviet partisans and the unwillingness of both Jewish and Soviet partisans to accept unarmed Jews and women into their ranks. The commanders of a partisan unit abandoned a group of Jewish partisans who were thought to be a liability, leaving them to fend for themselves without almost any weapons. The Soviets killed many persons who tried to join their units as suspected "spies." The partisans even murdered some friendly Polish railway workers they had captured, fearing they would betray the location of the whereabouts of the partisans if released. After being subjected to interrogation, captured German soldiers were routinely executed.[336] However, these accounts are silent about the massacre of the villagers of Koniuchy.

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[335] Faitelson, *The Truth and Nothing But the Truth,* 288–89.

[336] See the following testimonies in the Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw): Mania Glezer, dated June 19, 1947, no. 301/2517; Miriam Jaszuńska, dated July 15, 1947, no. 301/2530; Beniamin Brest, dated July 8, 1947, no. 301/2531; Abram Mieszczański, dated June 10, 1947, no. 301/2536. Mordechi Zeidel (Motka Zajdl) also describes the killing of two Poles who were guarded by Jewish partisans. See the interview with Mordechi Zeidel, June 25, 1993, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives. Rachel Margolis mentions the execution of the son of the commander of a peat-working camp in Biała Waka who was alleged to have mistreated the prisoners. See Margolis, *A Partisan from Vilna,* 479–80.

It is also worth noting that many Jewish partisans had received assistance from Poles on their way to Rudniki forest, and some had even left their children in the care of Poles.[337] Contrary to their boastful accounts, their role in the defeat of the German forces was negligible. In fact, actual military operations were few and far between and militarily inconsequential. By January 1944, the director of the military operations branch of the Wilejka Partisan Centre had secured permission to cease talks with the Home Army and to destroy the "Łupaszko" Brigade but its plans were foiled because of precautions taken by the Poles.[338]

In the fall of 1943, a handful of villagers in Koniuchy formed a self-defence unit in response to repeated "economic" operations or armed raids carried out by Soviet and Jewish partisans. The villagers' meagre supply of weapons initially consisted of three rifles (one of which didn't shoot) discarded by Soviet soldiers who had fled the area in June 1941. Later they acquired a few more rifles. The armed strength of the villagers, who were allegedly well equipped by the Germans, was greatly exaggerated in Soviet wartime reports and Jewish accounts that sought to provide a justification for the attack. A night watch was set up to warn residents of impending raids, but proved to be totally ineffective in the crucial test confrontation with the Soviet partisans. Koniuchy was selected by the leadership of the Soviet partisans based in the Rudniki forest for "an act of vengeance and intimidation."[339] The mission was carried out on January 29, 1944, by some 120 to 150 Soviet partisans, or possibly more according to Soviet sources.[340] Although referred to as

[337] In preparation for their escape from the Wilno ghetto, the Jewish underground had received plans of the city sewers from a Polish engineer. On their way to Rudniki forest, they relied on Polish scouts and received assistance from Polish farmers. See the account of Abram Mieszczański, dated June 10, 1947, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/2536; account of Miriam Jaszuńska, dated July 15, 1947, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/2530. Efraim Plotnik and Riva Epsztajn (Rivka Epsztien) were taken in by Aleksander and Jadwiga Milewski of Wilno, who had contacts with the Jewish partisans, before joining the Jewish partisans in Rudniki forest. See Gutman and Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 4: *Poland,* Part 1, 517–18. Chaim Engel (Lewin), who had worked in the Keilis factory in Wilno before joining the partisans in Rudniki forest, placed his young son with Stefania Lipska, a Polish Christian woman. See Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych,* 308; Gutman and Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 4: *Poland,* Part 1, 458–59. Sara Janiska, the daughter of a fallen Jewish partisan who fought in the Rudniki forest, was sheltered Jan and Józefa Przewalski and their relatives. See Gutman and Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 5: *Poland,* Part 2, 644–45. A Pole gave shelter and food to Fania Jocheles Brantsovsky after she escaped from the Wilno ghetto and guided her in the direction of the partisan base in Rudniki forest. See Dulkinienė and Keys, eds., *Su adata širdyje; With a Needle in the Heart,* 51–52. The Szewiel family provided shelter to Joel and Nechama Milikowski in the village of Pogiry for about six months after the couple fled the Wilno ghetto in the fall of 1943; afterwards they joined the Jewish partisans in Rudniki forest. See Gutman and Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 5: *Poland,* Part 2, 786. Additional examples are found in the note on Ponary.

[338] Wołkonowski, *Okręg Wileński Związku Walki Zbrojnej Armii Krajowej w latach 1939–1945,* 159.

[339] Lazar, *Destruction and Resistance,* 174.

[340] For a recent treatment of the Koniuchy massacre see Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Intermarium: The Land between the Baltic and Black Seas* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Transaction, 2012), 500–19. For an early article in Polish see Leszek Żebrowski, "Koniuchy," in *Encyklopedia "Białych Plam"* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2002), vol. 9, 315–20. For an early Polish-language compilation of Jewish accounts see Ryszard Tyndorf, "Zwyczajna pacyfikacja: Źródła żydowskie o zagładzie wsi Koniuchy," *Glaukopis,* no. 2–3 (2005): 376–84. For a study by a Lithuanian historian, see Rimantas Zizas, "Žudynių Kaniūkuose pėdsakais," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 1 (11), 2002, posted online at <http://www.genocid.lt/Leidyba/11/genocida.htm>; and an expanded Polish version of this article entitled "Pacyfikacja wsi Koniuchy (Kaniūkai)," *Biuletyn Historii Pogranicza* (Białystok), no. 4 (2003): 33–57. A more recent study by a Jewish-Lithuanian Šarūnas Liekis is: "Koniuchy in the 'New' and 'Old' Polish and

a military operation in Jewish reports, and indeed touted as one of the greatest wartime accomplishments of the Jewish partisans, the assault on Koniuchy in fact bore no such hallmarks. The assault was not directed against a German military target or an outpost of their collaborators, nor even against the members of the small self-defence unit in the village, but rather it was an indiscriminate and wholesale massacre of the village's civilian population.

According to Jewish sources, around 50 to 60 partisans from the Jewish detachments of the Vilnius Brigade (of the Lithuanian Staff Partisan Movement) took part in the pacification of the village of Koniuchy. The Jewish partisan contingent was led by Jacob Prenner (Yaakov Prener), the commander of the "Death to Fascism" detachment, and included fighters from the following detachments: "Avenger," under the command of Abba Kovner; "For Victory," under the command of Shmuel Kaplinsky; and "Struggle," under the command of Aron Aronovich.[341] By and large, the members of the four Jewish units of the Vilnius Brigade (sometimes referred to as the Lithuanian Brigade), who were mostly escapees from

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Jewish Memory," Conference Paper, "Between Coexistence and Divorce: 25 Years of Research on the History and Culture of Polish Jewry and Polish-Jewish Relations," Hebrew University of Jerusalem, March 17–19, 2009. Zizas argues that the assault on Koniuchy was part of a larger partisan operation which targeted villages that had established self-defence groups and provides examples of additional assaults carried out at that time. While providing valuable research and information about the massacre and its background, Zizas (like Šarūnas Liekis) insists that Koniuchy was a Lithuanian village despite considerable evidence to the contrary: some inhabitants joined the Home Army, others "repatriated" to Poland after the war, and those that still live in Koniuchy and their descendants regard themselves as Poles. Moreover, even today masses are said only in Polish in the parish church in Butrymańce. Zizas also makes use of highly questionable Lithuanian nationalist sources which claim that Poles took part in the massacre (though none are named), and that it was even the work of the Home Army. (A report of the commander of the 253rd precinct of the Lithuanian Protective Battalion in Bolcienniki refers to information from residents of Koniuchy who allegedly recognized some villagers from Salki Wielkie and Wisińcza. These were villages near Rudniki forest where the Soviet partisans had won over some villagers by rewarding them with plundered goods. However, it is highly unlikely that these villagers were armed.) Given that the Lithuanian Brigade, especially the Margiris detachment, contained a significant Lithuanian component and no more than a handful of Poles (at most), it more likely that a number of ethnic Lithuanians (rather than Poles) actually took part in the massacre. For a Lithuanian report which shifts the blame for the massacre onto "Polish partisans," see Garšva, *Armija krajova Lietuvoje*, 266. For another overview see Rimantas Zizas, "Raudonųjų partizanų ir Pietryčių Lieutovos kaimų savisaugos ginkluoti konfliktai 1943 m.," *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 1 (15), 2004, posted online at <http://www.genocid.lt/Leidyba/15/genocida.htm>, and *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 2 (16), 2004.

The number of Poles in the Soviet partisan movement in Rudniki forest was extremely small. Some Poles are identified by name in Juchniewicz, *Polacy w radzieckim ruchu partyzanckim 1941–1945*, 287–89; however, that Communist author greatly exaggerates their strength, claiming Poles comprised as many as twenty percent of all Soviet partisans in this area. Lithuanian historian Šarūnas Liekis states that the number of Poles in the Soviet partisan movement in Lithuania was "absolutely insignificant." See Šarūnas Liekis, "Koniuchy in the 'New' and 'Old' Polish and Jewish Memory," Conference Paper, "Between Coexistence and Divorce: 25 Years of Research on the History and Culture of Polish Jewry and Polish-Jewish Relations," Hebrew University of Jerusalem, March 17–19, 2009, Internet: <http://icj.huji.ac.il/conference/papers/Sarunas%20Liekis.pdf>. According to Baruch Shub, a Jewish partisan in Rudniki forest, the Soviet units were composed mostly of Russians, Jews and Lithuanians, with only an "insignificant" number of Poles. See Baruch (Borka) Shuv (Shub), *Meever lisheme ha-ananah: Sipuro shel partizan* [Beyond the Leaden Clouds] (Tel Aviv: Moreshet, bet edut a. sh. Mordekai Anilevits', 1995), 122.

[341] Chaim Lazar gives a figure of about 50 Jewish partisans. See Lazar, *Destruction and Revenge*, 174–75. According to the "Operations Diary of a Jewish Partisan Unit in Rudniki Forest, 1943–1944," in Arad, Gutman, and Margaliot, eds., *Documents of the Holocaust*, 463–71, posted on the Internet at: <http://www.yad-vashem.org.il/about_holocaust/documents/part3/doc211.html>, 30 fighters from the "Avenger" and "For Victory" detachments, under the operational command of Jacob Prener (Prenner), took part "in the operation to destroy the armed village of Koniuchy" (entry 19). Anatol Krakowski, one of the younger Jewish partisans, states that these two units carried out their activities jointly and had, in effect, a common command. Krakowski, *Le Ghetto dans la forêt*, 57, 81. Members of the "Death to Fascism" and "Struggle" detachments have also been identified among the assailants.

the Wilno ghetto, considered themselves to be first and foremost *Jewish* partisans.[342] The composition of the entire Vilnius Brigade was approximately 60 percent Jewish, and their share in the Jewish units was overwhelming.[343] Their ranks also included a number of women, some of whom took part in the attack on

[342] Arguably, they represented the high point in the Jewish-Soviet partisan movement. According to Dov Levin, "The Jews constituted a majority, at least for a certain period of time, in a considerable number of rifle and other units in the Lithuanian Division. … The existence of a large concentration of Jews within these frameworks … was almost wholly Yiddish-speaking … and whose staff was composed exclusively of Jews, at least in the intermediate and lower ranks, all contributed to the creation of a thriving Jewish existence. The Yiddish language was used predominantly in the Jews' everyday lives and also served as the official military communications language. … The Jewish soldiers' feelings of 'being at home' was also due in measure to the commanding officers tolerating not only the use of Yiddish, but also communal prayers and evenings of entertainment with songs in Yiddish and Hebrew, which not infrequently ended with dancing the *Hora*. Just as the mobilization propaganda was in its time carried out partly in Yiddish, this language was used for a particular type of propaganda inside the Division. Thus, for example, on the eve of going to the front-line, commissars and soldiers addressed meetings in juicy Yiddish, bringing forward in their speeches the terrible account that the Jewish soldier had to reckon with the German Fascists for the murder of his people in Lithuania." See Dov Levin, "Some Facts and Problems About the Fighting of Lithuanian Jews against the Nazis and Their Collaborators (1941–1945)," in Zingeris, *The Days of Memory*, 274, 276. See also Porat, *The Fall of a Sparrow*, 162–63. On March 17, 1944, Abba Kovner issued a missive to the Jewish partisans in the Rudniki forest in which he underscored the Jewish character of their partisan units (they were motivated largely by revenge), and that despite recent reorganization to dilute their ranks, the Jewish partisans should continue to regard themselves as Jew partisans ("shomer"). See Abba Kovner, *A Missive to Hashomer Hatzair Partisans* (Tel Aviv: Moreshet, 2002), xxi, xxiii–xxvi. When Vitka Kempner Kovner, one of Abba Kovner's partisans and his future wife, was awarded a Certificate of Honor by the Miles Lerman Center for the Study of Jewish Resistance at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in January 2001, she underscored the fact that the Jews fighting in Rudniki forest considered themselves to be Jewish, not Soviet, partisans and were instensely nationalistc: "I am proud that I was given the privilege to fight as a Jewess, belonging to a Jewish fighting unit, under Jewish commanders, in which the language spoken and orders given was Yiddish. There were many other Jewish fighters scattered among the Russian partisan groups, but they fought as Russians." See *Update: Newsletter of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, February/March 2002: 2. In an interview from 1987 she stated: "Our forest was the only place where Jews were fighting as Jews." See Aviva Cantor, "She Fought Back: An Interview with Vilna Partisan Vitke Kempner," *Lilith Magazine*, no. 16 (spring 1987): 24. The latter part of this statement is not quite accurate: the Bielski partisans, whose membership was almost exclusively Jewish, also considered themselves to be first and and foremost Jewish partisans. Part of the proud heritage of the Rusniki partisans, as evidenced by their own public statements, is their role in the massacre of the defenceless civilian population of Koniuchy.

[343] According to historian Šarūnas Liekis, the Jewish membership counted: 41 out of 60 members of the "Death to Fascism" detachment; 58 out of 78 members of the "Struggle" detachment; 106 out of 119 members of the "For Victory" detachment; and 105 out of 107 members of the "Avenger" detachment. See Šarūnas Liekis, "Koniuchy in the 'New' and 'Old' Polish and Jewish Memory," Conference Paper, "Between Coexistence and Divorce: 25 Years of Research on the History and Culture of Polish Jewry and Polish-Jewish Relations," Hebrew University of Jerusalem, March 17–19, 2009, Internet: <http://icj.huji.ac.il/conference/papers/Sarunas%20Liekis.pdf>. However, in a more recent article, Liekis gives slightly different numbers for some of these units: "The units with the largest proportion of Jews from the Kaunas and Vilnius [Wilno] ghettos were 'Free Lithuania' (54 out of 94), 'Death to Fascism' (39 out of 69), 'The Struggle' (58 out of 77), 'To Victory' (106 out of 119), 'The Avenger' (105 out of 107), and the Vladas Baronas group (11 out of 18). They were located primarily in the Vilnius district." Samuel (Shmuel) Kaplinsky was the only Jew who retained his role as commander, after the informal refugee groups from the ghettos were transformed into Soviet Lithuanian partisan units. The 19 non-Jews in the "Struggle" detachment consisted of Russians, one Pole, one Lithuanian, and one Ukrainian. The 13 non-Jews in the "To Victory" detachment consisted of Russians, a Kyrgyz, a Turk, an Uzbek, a Pole, a Lithuanian, an Estonian, and a Dutchman. According to lists from December 22, 1944, the Vilnius Brigade, under the command of Marijonas Micieka ("Gabrys"), had 340 Jews (57 percent), 132 Russians (22 percent), 47 Lithuanians (8 percent), and 76 others (13 percent). Additionally, there were three groups from the Kaunas Brigade in Rudniki forest with 359 fighters, of whom 149 were Russians (42 percent), 126 Jews (35 percent), 33 Lithuanians (9 percent), and 51 others (14 per cent). In the Troki district the ethnicity of the 425 fighters in the Trakai Brigade was: 167 Russians (39 percent), 111 Jews (26 percent), 43 Lithuanians (10 percent), and 104 others (25 percent). Thus, the expansion of the Soviet Lithuanian partisan movement was due in large part to Jews from the ghettos. See Šarūnas Liekis, "Soviet Resistance and Jewish Partisans in Lithuania," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 25 (2013): 331–56, here at pp. 340, 343.

Unfortunately, Liekis's article is seriously marred by its anti-Polish bias. This is readily apparent when one compares his treatment of the Polish underground with that of other players (pp. 344–51). While accusing the Polish Home Army

Koniuchy.[344] The perpetrators also included quite a few Jewish members of the "Death to the Occupiers" detachment [*Smierť okkupantam*] of the Kaunas (Kovno) Brigade, which was composed of some 80 fugitives from the Kaunas ghetto and a larger contingent of escaped Soviet prisoners of war,[345] as well as the small "Margiris" (or "Margirio") detachment, consisting mainly of ethnic Lithuanians, and a special

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of "exterminating" (sic) twelve member of the Kalinauskas unit on March 1, 1944, Liekis neglects to mention that this detachment was notorious for robbing and murdering civilians and that Soviet partisans routinely killed Polish partisans taken in battle. Tellingly, Liekis makes no mention of the Soviet partisans' extermination of scores of Polish partisans (Burzyński's partisan unit) in Narocz forest in August 1943 and other such massacres which precipitated the struggle between the Soviet and Polish partisans in this area. Although his singling out of the Polish "nationalist" underground for concerted criticism is certainly skewed, nothing can match his bizarre "charge" that "nationalist" Poles viewed Lithuanians as "nationalists, 'Pole-haters'," and "all Germans" as "'fascists,' without differentiation of the many political and ideological trends inside any ethnic group." Liekis doesn't identify the Lithuanian and German factions the Poles were supposed to have aligned themselves in their struggle against the Nazi German oppressors and their Lithuanian allies because, without making it clear to the readers, there weren't any such factions actively involved in such a struggle in this area. (If there were, there would be no obstacles to their joining the Home Army, just as many Belorussians did.) On the contrary, Liekis goes out of his way not to mention the involvement of Lithuanians in the massacre of tens of thousands of Jews and Poles in Ponary and hundreds of Poles in Święciany. Liekis manages to conceal both the nationality of the victims (Poles), and the nationality of the perpetrators (Germans and mostly Lithuanians) of the latter crime. While claiming that "anti-Semitism" played a role in the attitudes of the Polish population towards the Soviet partisans, although the Poles' attitude was in fact driven by the constant raids carried out by the Soviet partisans, Liekis does not mention that the Jews who joined the Soviet partisans, as their memoirs show, fully endorsed Soviet propaganda directed against "White" Poles, whom they branded as "Hitlerities" and "fascists." Liekis claims that the Home Army fought for "eastern Lithuania," without explaining that this area was an integral part of interwar Poland and contained only a tiny Lithuanian minority, and alleges, quite falsely, that the Home Army wanted to seize "possibly all of Lithuania," yet downplays the fact that the Lithuanians regarded the Poles as their primary enemies, along with the Soviets, and sought to incorporate territories inhabited primarily by Poles and "depolonize" them. Although altercations between Soviet partisans and German military forces were rare, Liekis claims that, unlike the Home Army, "the Soviet partisans … were engaging with" the German forces. Liekis is correct, however, in pointing out: "As a rule, the conflicts [with the Home Army] started when Soviet partisans entered territories inhabited by Poles." However, when he refers to punitive Soviet partisan expeditions against local villagers, he identifies them as "Lithuanian" settlements (p. 355), when in fact some of them, like Koniuchy, the target of the deadliest assault, were populated by Poles. Similarly, he neglects to point out that villages like Gumba and Gajdzie, in the vicinity of Rudniki forest, where the Germans and Lithuanians murdered some 50 people on April 8–9, 1944, were inhabited by Poles. Yet, despite such glaring omissions, Liekis decries the "building of nationalist narratives" (p. 356).

[344] Ruzhka Korchak states most of the Jewish women attached to the partisan units in Rudniki forest took part in partisan operations: "There was almost no military or economic expedition, diversionary action or ambush in which young women would not participate." See Korchak, *Plamia pod peplom,* 324. See also Zizas, "Žudynių Kaniūkuose pėdsakais," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 1 (11), 2002.

[345] The "Death to the Occupiers" detachment of the Kaunas Brigade was formed in October 1943. At that time it was made up of about twenty partisans, mostly escaped Soviet POWs, and led by Konstantin (Kostia) Radionov ("Smirnov"), a Soviet paratrooper. See Ginaite-Rubinson, *Resistance and Survival,* 129. According to Israeli historian Dov Levin, who was a member of the unit, some 180 members of the Jewish underground from the Kaunas ghetto made their way to Rudniki forest and were accepted into the "Death to the Occupiers" detachment, where Jews then became the majority. See Levin, *Fighting Back,* 122, 188, 198. Alex Faitelson, another member of that detachment, states that the number of former Soviet POWs "was not large but they all occupied positions of command. … Apart from individual Russians, the rest were all rabid anti-Semites." See Faitelson, *Heroism & Bravery in Lithuania, 1941–1945,* 316. However, the statistics are not consistent or particularly reliable. According to Šarūnas Liekis, a Lithuanian historian who reviewed the Soviet partisans' personal files, of the 224 members of the "Death to the Occupiers" detachment, 93 were Russians, 79 Jews, 5 Lithuanians, and 47 others. According to Rimantas Zizas, another Lithuanian historian, in July 1944, its membership consisted of 104 Russians, 51 Jews, 3 Lithuanians, and 6 others. See Zizas, "Raudonųjų partizanų ir Pietryčių Lieutovos kaimų savisaugos ginkluoti konfliktai 1943 m.," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 1 (15), 2004. Some of the Jewish partisans who took part in the assault on Koniuchy are mentioned in Dmitrii Gelpern's *Kovno Ghetto Diary,* cited later on; others (for example, Mikhail Robinzon) are mentioned in Zizas, "Žudynių Kaniūkuose pėdsakais," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 1 (11), 2002.

intelligence group, composed mostly of Russians, attached to the Lithuanian partisan movement. The "Death to the Occupiers" unit is believed to have played a key role in the assault.[346]

Jewish sources claim that some 300 villagers—mostly women and children—were slaughtered in the pogrom. According to an incomplete Polish investigation, the number of victims may have been smaller, perhaps as low as fifty, of whom 39 have been identified by name. The youngest was about a year and a half; other victims were as young as four, eight, nine and ten years old.[347] Another Polish source estimates

[346] Zizas, "Žudynių Kaniūkuose pėdsakais," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 1 (11), 2002. Lithuanian historian Alfonsas Eidintas, basing himself on Rimantas Zizas, writes: "an exceptional role in the destruction of Kaniukai [Koniuchy] was played by the *Mirtis okupantams* 'Death to Occupiers' Unit. Former prisoners of the Kaunas Ghetto … were amongst the ranks of this unit, which included female partisans, who apparently had participated in this action." Eidintas offers the following untenable motivation for the attack on Koniuchy: "Quite possibly, Red partisan leadership made use of the hatred of former prisoners by attacking a village of Lithuanian policemen, which was loyal to the government. They associated such people with Lithuanian executioners, and this motivated them into enacting a brutal operation." See Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust,* 307.

[347] A local Polish partisan leader gave the victim toll as 34. See Siemaszko, "Rozmowy z kapitanem Szabunią," *Zeszyty Historyczne,* no. 25 (1973): 146; Krajewski, *Na Ziemi Nowogródzkiej,* 512. A Polish underground report from that period stated that 34 were killed, 14 injured, and the number of persons burned alive was unknown. Of the 50 buildings in the village, only four remained. The reason given for the assault was the villagers' resistance to raids conducted by the partisans. See Jan Bańbor, "Tło wydarzeń w Koniuchach w polskich i niemieckich sprawozdaniach sytuacyjnych," *Biuletyn Historii Pogranicza* (Biaystok), no. 4 (2003): 92. Other Polish accounts simply noted that most of the villagers perished, and indicate that this was one of the impetuses for the Polish underground's decision to accept an invitation from the Wehrmacht in February 1944 to discuss a temporary ceasefire (from which the Polish side soon withdrew). See Siemaszko, "Rozmowy z Wehrmachtem w Wilnie: Luty 1944," *Zeszyty Historyczne,* no. 69 (1984): 90. Lithuanian and German reports from that period, referred to later, indicate 35–36 killed and 13–14 wounded, but do not include those deceased victims taken from the village by relatives or those who subsequently died in hospital. According to more recent accounts and a preliminary investigation by Poland's Institute of National Remembrance, the victim count may have been closer to fifty, about 40 of whom have been identified by name. Among the youngest victims were Mieczysław Bandalewicz (9 years old), Zygmunt Bandalewicz (8), Marian Bobin (16), Jadwiga Bobin (around 10), Molis (a girl around 1½), Marysia Tubin (around 4), and Marian Woronis (15). However, more cnt reports indndcate that the number of incinerated victims is unknown. See Czesław Malewski, "Masakra w Koniuchach," *Nasza Gazeta* (Vilnius), March 8–14, 2001; Czesław Malewski, "Masakra w Koniuchach (II)," *Nasza Gazeta* (Vilnius), March 29–April 4, 2001; Andrzej Kumor, interview with Edward Tubin, "Nie przepuścili nikomu…: Z naocznym świadkiem pacyfikacji wsi Koniuchy rozmawia Andrzej Kumor," *Gazeta* (Toronto), May 4–6, 2001; Jerzy Danilewicz, "Zbrodnia bez kary," *Newsweek* (Warsaw), May 15, 2005. See also the following reports issued by Poland's Institute of National Remembrance which are posted on their website <http://www.ipn.gov.pl>: "Komunikat w sprawie wybranych śledztw prowadzonych przez Oddziałowe Komisje Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu," April 23, 2001, posted online at <http://www.ipn.gov.pl/aktual_sledztwa.html>; Anna Gałkiewicz, "Informacja o śledztwach prowadzonych w OKŚZpNP w Łodzi w sprawach o zbrodnie popełnione przez funkcjonariuszy sowieckiego aparatu terroru," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 7 (August 2001): 22; Oddziałowa Komisja w Łodzi, "Informacja o stanie śledztwa w sprawie zabójstwa przez partyzantów sowieckich, w styczniu 1944 roku, mieszkańców wsi Koniuchy gm. Bieniakonie pow. Lida woj. nowogródzkie," March 1, 2002; Oddziałowa Komisja w Łodzi, "Śledztwo w sprawie zabójstwa przez partyzantów sowieckich, w styczniu 1944 roku, mieszkańców wsi Koniuchy gm. Bieniakonie pow. Lida woj. Nowogródzkie," September 5, 2002; Anna Gałkiewicz, "Omówienie dotychczasowych ustaleń w śledztwach w sprawach o zbrodnie w Nalibokach i Koniuchach," May 15, 2003; Robert Janicki, "Investigation in the Case of the Murder by Soviet Partisans of Koniuchy Inhabitants: Investigation S 13/01/Zk, August 5, 2003"; "Informacja o działalności Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu w okresie 1 lipca 2003 r.–30 czerwca 2004 r.," Warsaw, January 2005 (Łódź sygnatura akt S 13/01/Zk); "Information on the Investigation in the Case of Crime Committed in Koniuchy," September 13, 2005; Oddziałowa Komisja w Łodzi, "Śledztwo w sprawie zabójstwa przez partyzantów sowieckich, w styczniu 1944 roku, mieszkańców wsi Koniuchy gm. Bieniakonie pow. Lida woj. nowogródzkie," May 16, 2006; Oddziałowa Komisja w Łodzi, "Śledztwo w sprawie zabójstwa przez partyzantów sowieckich, w styczniu 1944 roku, mieszkańców wsi Koniuchy gm. Bieniakonie pow. Lida woj. nowogródzkie," October 12, 2007; Oddziałowa Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu w Łodzi, "Śledztwo w sprawie zabójstwa w styczniu 1944 roku przez partyzantów sowieckich kilkudziesięciu mieszkańców wsi Koniuchy wcześniej gm. Bieniakonie pow. Lida, woj. nowogródzkie (obecnie Republika Litewska rejon Sołeczniki)," December 21, 2009; Oddziałowa Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu w Łodzi, "Śledztwa w biegu (stan na sierpień 2010)"; Oddziałowa Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi

the number of victims to be higher: 46 victims were buried in the local cemetery and about a score were taken by family and friends and interned in the nearby villages of Butrymańce, Soleczniki, and Bieniakonie.[348] Some of the wounded were taken to the hospital in Bieniakonie where several of them died.[349] It is quite possible that there were many more victims, especially young children and the elderly, who were simply incinerated in the inferno and never identified. Fifty fatalities are therefore a minimum figure, with 300 victims the maximum.

The descriptions of the slaughter by Polish eyewitnesses are horrific. People attempting to escape from their burning homes were shot, regardless of their age or gender.

> Józef Bondalewicz: "We were awoken from our sleep by the shooting and the glow of fire in our windows. It was as light as day and crawling with partisans who fired at everyone who tried to get out of their homes. The noise from the fire and crash of buildings falling apart were reminiscent of a thunderstorm. From various sides one could hear the desperate moans of people being burned alive in their homes and the groaning of animals locked in their sheds.
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> "When I ran out of my house I saw a mother with an infant in her hands running out of the neighbouring Wójtkiewicz house. Two women whom I recognized by their voices to be Jewish, since there were no women in Soviet units, mowed her down with a series of bullets from their automatic weapons. One of them darted toward the dying woman, tore her child away, and threw it into a burning cottage. The terror and uncanny heat forced everyone who made it out of the buildings to take flight without delay. Out of breath I managed to reach friendly brushwood from where I made my way to the village of Kuże."[350]
>
> Antoni Gikiewicz: "…they surrounded the entire village and started murdering everyone, one after another."
>
> Stanisław Wojtkiewicz: "…they didn't even spare pregnant women."
>
> Stanisława Woronis [née Bandalewicz]: "…whomever the Soviets found in the bushes or in a hole in the ground, they killed."[351]
>
> "I remember that it was the 29th of January. At dawn, around 7 o'clock—it was usually dark so I could not understand where the light was coming from—my husband woke me up, pulling me

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Polskiemu w Łodzi, "Śledztwa w biegu (stan na styczeń 2012)." Some of these reports incorrectly state that the "Death to Fascism" detachment was made up of various nationalities, whereas in fact its composition was Jewish. These reports and various other articles can be found in the Canadian Polish Congress dossier "The Massacre at Koniuchy" posted at <http://www.kpk-toronto.org/viewpoints/KONIUCHY_MASSACRE_rev.pdf >.

[348] Wiktor Noskowski, "Koniuchy—stygmat męczeństwa," *Rozmaitości Wileńskie* (Bydgoszcz), 2002.

[349] Malewski, "Masakra w Koniuchach," *Nasza Gazeta,* March 8, 2001.

[350] Noskowski, Koniuchy—stygmat męczeństwa," *Rozmaitości Wileńskie,* 2002.

[351] Malewski, "Masakra w Koniuchach," *Nasza Gazeta,* March 8, 2001.

sharply by the arm and screaming that we should leave our home immediately. Our house was in the middle of the village. The first farmsteads were already on fire …

"On the other side of the road that crossed our village is a forest—a silent witness to these awful events. Soviet partisans often came around before. They usually made firm demands or with a revolver in hand demanded that we give them chickens, pigs and other food. Then they simply carried out robberies, just like bandits. Our men rebelled. We didn't have enough food to feed our own children. Some villagers were so poor that they couldn't make both ends meet. When a self-defence was organized they dealt with us in a brutal manner employing both murder and fire. I could understand settling scores in a manly fashion, but the killing of innocent people—never! It was worse than war. During war you run from bullets. Those who were not hit with a bullet in Koniuchy, or were just wounded, they finished off alive.

"Together with my husband and little daughter I took shelter a few kilometres from our village with the Stackiewiczes. Although we were only humble villagers we found understanding and refuge there. Mrs. Stackiewicz was shocked that instead of a dress I wore a nightshirt and that my child, whom we covered a warm scarf (it was January and there was frost), had bare feet. They rubbed her with alcohol, wrapped her in a warm blanket, and gave her tea. She survived, but all of us suffered the consequences. I'll remember the fear and whizz of bullets behind my back for the rest of my days. Just like the burning village begging for pity in vain.

"We didn't return to Koniuchy at once. The Soviet partisans were vigilant and God help those they found. Close family members of my husband also perished that blood-filled day. Twenty-year-old Anna Woronis was renowned for beauty in the entire vicinity. I felt so sorry for the lad Antek Bobin. Young, handsome, and hardworking. He didn't live here, but worked for farmers elsewhere. He just happened to be visiting his home village. His father was taken to the hospital in Bieniakonie. But Antek died so innocently. The same was true for the Pilżys family who had moved here from Wilno and bought a house. We were not in close contact with them because they lived farther out, beyond the river. But I know that they had children. How were the children to blame? Mrs. Molis had a young daughter who was a year and a half old. She held her in her arms as she ran away. They both fell from bullets."[352]

Anna Suckiel: "The partisans murdered everyone regardless of their age and sex. People ran from their burning homes and perished from rounds of machinegun fire. Stanisława Jankowska was paralyzed and couldn't escape from her burning home. She was burned alive. Here, on this spot, where they erected a cross with the names of my deceased neighbours, partisans finished off Urszula Parwicka with stones. Miraculously I survived."[353]

"But why did they murder so many women and children? What did the little Molis daughter do to them? She was not even two years old. Or the Bandalewicz boys—one was eight and the other

[352] Liliana Narkowicz, "Siła w cierpieniu (z zeznań naocznego świadka)," *Nasza Gazeta* (Vilnius), March 29–April 4, 2001.

[353] A.K., "Krzyż pamięci—w miejscu zbrodni," *Tygodnik Wileńszczyzny* (Vilnius), May 27–June 2, 2004.

nine."[354]

Edward Tubin: "Automatic weapons started to go off and we see fire, it's burning. The thatched roofs were made of straw. People started to run away, they rushed into the forest, into those bushes. …

"My mother and I ran to a hollow to hide, and I see them running from the cemetery—there may have been twelve of them—they're shooting. Maybe if I were older I would have followed my mother, but I left her, ran across the village, to our neighbour … My [11-year-old] brother Leon was there. And Leon and I ran to the river. I saw incendiary bombs dropping. … We ran up to the river. We look and see a large alder that had grown on the other side of the river. A hole had been hollowed out. And we look and see a neighbour sitting there who had run and hidden with his family near that river. And we went there.

"We sat there and heard shots on the other side. The Pilżys family lived there. We saw how they came for them, they entered their house. They shot them. That's to say they shot the two daughters, the father and the mother. They left the house and set it on fire. They set fire to everything. Then we see how quite near us, well maybe about 50 metres away, Woronis, an elderly man, was running and fell into the water with his sheepskin coat. Two men with automatic weapons ran right behind him. They ran to the river and sprayed a series from the automatic weapons into the river. They thought they'd killed him and so they turned back. Thank God they did not look to the left, where we sat under that little hill. …

"We thought that [Woronis] had perished … We look and look, he crawled out of the water on the other side … They had wounded his hand very seriously. … The partisans killed his wife, his daughter and his son. …

"My mother had run to that hollow and fell in. They probably knew … They approached. My sister was sitting nearby with her young daughter. They sprayed her with shots from the automatic weapon. … My sister may have been around thirty. She had a young girl, four years old, in her hands. They shot at the girl in her hand and killed her. My sister sat there, and another man saw her and said that she's still alive and raised his rifle. Another fellow said to leave the woman alone … But he shot at my sister. She was sitting, and he fired at her head diagonally right in the cheek and through the jaw. The bullet ripped through her teeth and jaw. My sister fell. So that the bullet entered through her jaw and ripped out part of her breast.

"And my brother who was nearby in the bushes ran. That's how they encountered him and sprayed him on the head with the automatic weapon. His head what shattered in half. …

"Stanisław Bandalewicz was burned in his house with two sons. I myself saw him lying on the veranda with his burned bones. … His children had hidden under the stove and were burned, they had suffocated. …

"There was no difference, they killed whomever they caught. Even one woman who ran toward the cemetery to the forest, they didn't shoot her but killed her with a rock, a rock to the head. When

[354] Jerzy Danilewicz, "Zbrodnia bez kary," *Newsweek* (Warsaw), May 15, 2005.

they killed my mother, they sprayed about eight bullets in her chest.[355]

The following somewhat conflicting, at times exaggerated and often inaccurate accounts are by Jews who took part in that heinous crime. (Rather than concoct stories, Russian partisans spoke of their involvement in this massacre with great reluctance, seemingly recognizing it as a shameful and compromising event and not a show of heroism.) Contrary to what these accounts allege, there never was a German garrison in Koniuchy. There were no policemen, either Lithuanian or Polish, stationed in the village. (The nearest outpost of Lithuanian police in the service of the Germans was six kilometres away in Rakliszki. It is alleged that one or two of the male residents of Koniuchy may have been policemen.) Nor did the village have elaborate fortifications. A few men from the self-defence patrolled the village for several hours after nightfall. In the face of repeated raids, they had refused Soviet demands to disarm. The notion that the villagers were Nazi sympathizers who organized ambushes of well-armed Soviet partisans, or that they captured and killed any of them, is without any merit. The poorly armed villagers, who certainly had no automatic weapons or arms caches, barely put up any resistance during the unexpected attack in the early morning hours of January 29, 1944. Overtaken by swarms of well-armed fighters, it appears that they did not even return the fire. The assailants suffered no casualties. What happened in Koniuchy was a virtual bloodbath of defenceless civilians—another Lidice or Oradour. However, the perpetrators' own accounts try to outdo each other in attempting to justify the wanton butchery and vilify the victims. The hoax that there was alleged German garrison in the village is repeated in almost every account, doubtless to enhance the "military" nature of the assailants' exploits. Characteristically, all of the partisan memoirs glorify their role and demonize the victims.

According to an account penned in 1950 by Chaim Lazar of the "Avenger" detachment of the Vilnius Brigade:

> For some time it had been known that the village Koniuchy was a nest of bands and the center of intrigues against the partisans. Its residents, known for their villany [sic], were organizing the people in the area, distributing arms among them which they received from the Germans, and leading every attack on the partisans. The village was well fortified. Every house was a military position and there were defense trenches near every dwelling. There were watchtowers on both sides of the village, so it was not at all easy to penetrate the place. Nevertheless, the partisans chose this very place to carry out an act of vengeance and intimidation. The Brigade Headquarters decided to raze Koniuchy to the ground to set an example to others.
>
> One evening a hundred and twenty of the best partisans from all the camps, armed with the best weapons they had, set out in the direction of the village. There were about 50 Jews among them, headed by Yaakov [Jacob] Prenner. At midnight they came to the vicinity of the village and

[355] Andrzej Kumor, interview with Edward Tubin, "Nie przepuścili nikomu…: Z naocznym świadkiem pacyfikacji wsi Koniuchy rozmawia Andrzej Kumor," *Gazeta* (Toronto), May 4–6, 2001.

assumed their proper positions. The order was not to leave any one alive. Even livestock was to be killed and all property was to be destroyed. …

Up until midnight the villagers would keep a heavy watch. At midnight they would reduce the number of guards, since it was well-known that the partisans would not begin an attack so late, as they would not have enough time to reach the forest before dawn. The villagers certainly could not imagine that the partisans would return to the forest in daylight, victorious.

The signal was given just before dawn. Within minutes the village was surrounded on three sides. On the fourth side was the river and the only bridge over it was in the hands of the partisans. With torches prepared in advance, the partisans burned down the houses, stables, and granaries, while opening heavy fire on the houses. Loud explosions were heard in many houses when the arms caches blew up. Half-naked peasants jumped out of windows and sought escape. But everywhere fatal bullets awaited them. Many jumped into the river and swam towards the other side, but they too, met the same end. The mission was completed within a short while. Sixty households, numbering about 300 people, were destroyed, with no survivors.

The news spread quickly throughout the area. … The next day, the Gestapo heads came from Vilna [Wilno] with large army forces. The Germans photographed the ruins and the charred corpses and publicized the photos accompanied by biting articles on the cruelty of the partisans.[356]

According to Isaac Kowalski of the Second Fighters' Group of the Vilnius Brigade:

Koniuchi [sic] was the name of a big village that was some 30 kilometers from Vilna [Wilno] and 10 kilometers from the periphery of our partisan base.

The Germans convinced the wheeler-dealers of that village that if they would be obedient they would receive security, riches and peace, and they would be able to live thus through the entire war. [In fact, the villagers lived in dire poverty and the Germans took no steps to arm, fortify or protect them from marauders. *M.P.*]

All they had to do was to inform the Germans of the activities of the partisans in the region.

The villagers did the best they could to please the new occupants.

Whenever our partisans crossed in groups of five or ten men to important and dangerous missions, they met with sniper fire and always suffered casualties. [These "important and dangerous missions" were the so-called "economic" operations or, put simply, foraging in villages, since there is no evidence of any military activity by the partisans directed against the Germans. *M.P.*]

The individual commands then decided that their men should pass the village in groups of about 40 or 50, and when shot at by snipers should chase after and destroy them. The rest of the group would guard the village.

[356] Lazar, *Destruction and Revenge*, 174–75. Chaim Lazar's description of the massacre of this village, which he concedes was obliterated "in a short while," with virtually no resistance being offered and no casualties incurred by the attackers, belies his extravagant claims that it was a well-armed fortress.

For a while the situation was so. But then the Germans supplied the villagers with rifles and machine-guns. A permanent guard was established, whose purpose was to shield the village day and night.

It became so bad that bigger groups could not be safe crossing the village on the way to an important mission, or passing the village on the way to the railroad, highway, etc. We always ended up with casualties. [There is no evidence of any such casualties inflicted by the villagers. *M.P.*]

The brigade-staff decided to remove the cancer that was growing on the partisan body.

Our base commander gave the order that all able-bodied men should be prepared in an hour to leave for an operation.

The order was that all men, without exceptions, including the doctor, the radio-telegraphers, the workers of the brigade staff, and people like myself who were working in the propaganda and printing department, be ready on time.

At the correct time all of us were ready in full battle-gear, and left for our destination.

When we were closing in on our destination, I saw that partisans were coming from all directions, from various detachments. …

Our detachment got the order to destroy everything that was moving and burn the village down to its roots.

At the exact hour and minute all partisans from all four corners of the village started pouring rifle and machine-gun fire, with incendiary bullets, into the village. This caused the straw roofs of the houses to catch fire.

The villagers and the small German garrison answered back with heavy fire, but after two hours the village with the fortified shelter was completely destroyed.

Our only casualties were two men who were lightly wounded. [These alleged casualties are not confirmed by Soviet reports. *M.P.*]

When, later we had to go through Koniuchi we did not encounter any sniper shots, because it was like crossing through a cemetery.[357]

Interviewed in 1991, Kowalski further embellished his story:

One time we went to … a very strong village, a big village. The Germans … give them rifles everybody and say listen, "Your task is when see going through the partisans, you have to kill them

[357] Kowalski, *A Secret Press in Nazi Europe*, 333–34; also reproduced in Kowalski, *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance, 1939–1945*, vol. 4 (1991), 390–91. Kowalski assisted Senia Rindziunski in producing an underground bulletin. According to Kowalski, Koniuchy was located about ten kilometres from the periphery of the partisan base, but there is no mention by him that the residents were going out of their way to hunt down Jewish or Soviet partisans. (Indeed, such conduct would have been suicidal.) Rather, whenever the partisans "crossed" or "passed" the village on their way to "important and dangerous missions" of an unspecified nature, they "were met by sniper fire." Since there was no compelling reason for the partisans having to pass repeatedly through a village ten kilometers from their base, it is apparent that these confrontations occurred during "economic" actions, i.e., raids on this village. Polish historian Kazimierz Krajewski disputes the Jewish versions. The village was not the "fortress" it is made out to be and its entire "arsenal" consisted of several rusted rifles. The sole cause of the villagers' misfortune was that they attempted to fend off relentless partisan raids. See Krajewski, *Na Ziemi Nowogródzkiej*, 511–12. We now know, as well, that the nearest German garrison or police post was six kilometres away in Rakliszki, and that there were no policemen—German, Lithuanian or any other—in the village of Koniuchy. See Malewski, "Masakra w Koniuchach," *Nasza Gazeta*, March 8, 2001; Malewski, "Masakra w Koniuchach (II)," *Nasza Gazeta*, March 29, 2001.

> … You don't have to wait to call for the Germans to do the job. First, you will protect yourselves this way from the partisan [sic], and on the other side, if you are not going to do the way what we like, you'll get killed from us." So they didn't really have another choice, and they took the rifles from them … When we … have to go to this village, they used to apprehend us and … we have to fight with them. We have all the time a little ... people were fell in battle and the Germans were very happy with their work so they give them all kind of ... sugar, things, other things what there were shortage and but we decided if you are working with the Germans, then we'll give you a lesson … So one day we for fuel places [sic] and we apprehended the village and we killed a lot of people there and we destroyed the village. … all the villages around saw what happened if you take ammunition, if you take weapons from the Germans, then the partisans … will go after you.[358]

Abraham Zeleznikow, a partisan from the "Struggle" unit of the Vilnius Brigade, did not mention the attack on Koniuchy in an earlier account.[359] In a 1993 interview, however, he recalled the obliteration of this village very vividly:

> There was a Polish village, about 400 people. The village's name was Koniuchy, and it was on the way for us to go from the forest. If we would have to go around, it would be another 20 miles. And if you have to make in the night, mostly it was taking the night, you went out in the dark in the evening, and in the morning when you come back, the light, you had to be back in the forest. If not, you haven't be [sic] safe. So you had in 12 hours to make about 60–80 kilometers. If you would have to make another 20 kilometers, it would take you at least another two hours if not more, and physically it would be very hard. And when we went to this village, quite a few times we had attacks from the Polish partisans, what had the support of the people in the village. So we got from Moscow that the village should be destroyed, all the village. Nothing what is alive in the village should stay alive. We are not allowed to take anything from the village. Partisans come around the village, everything was torched, every animal, every person was killed. And one of my friends, acquaintances, a partisan, took a woman, put her head on a stone, and killed her with a stone. When I asked him, how could you do it, he said they did it with my mother. Still, you see, it was, this was the atmosphere in which you have been living.[360]

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[358] Interview with Isaac Kowalski, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, September 21, 1991.

[359] Abraham Zeleznikow, "Danke and Imke Lubotzki," in Kowalski, *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance 1939–1945,* vol. 2 (1985), 416–17.

[360] Abram Z. Holocaust Testimony (HVT–1972), interviewed March 29, 1993, Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library. From another source, we learn that Zeleznikow became a Soviet "intelligence officer" before leaving for central Poland in 1945. See Richard Peterson, *A Place of Sensuous Resort: Buildings of St Kilda and Their People* (Melbourne: St Kilda Historical Society, 2005), chapter 5. Curiously, Abram Zeleznikow's son, John Zeleznikow, alleges that discussions about the activities of the Jewish partisans "have produced some demonstrably false claims." He attempts to illustrate this point by referring to the fact that the present work (*A Tangled Web*) states that his father did not mention the attack on Koniuchy in an earlier account, but did mention it in his 1993 interview. Since he does not dispute this in any way, there is nothing false about this claim. John Zeleznikow also appears to take issue with the fact that this work states that his father was part of the "Struggle" unit, insisting that his father's group "was named 'Death to Fascism' and was commanded by Abba Kovner." However, all historical accounts agree that Kovner was the commander of the "Avenger" unit, not the "Death to Fascism" unit. John

Characteristically, Zeleznikow's account is also strewn with false justifications for the assault. There was no Polish partisan base in Koniuchy and the village lay off the beaten track, so there was no need to traverse it unless one was carrying out raids in the immediate vicinity.

Israel Weiss of the "For Victory" detachment of the Vilnius Brigade appears to allude to the destruction of Koniuchy in the following account:

> We succeeded in wresting considerable quantities of arms and ammunition from villages who collaborated [sic] with the Germans and were supplied with arms by them. Punitive measures were undertaken against collaborators; and one village which was notorious for its hostility to the Jews was burned down completely.[361]

Zalman Wylozni, who escaped from the Wilno ghetto and, with the assistance of friendly Polish farmers, made his way to Rudniki forest where he joined the "Death to Fascism" detachment of the Vilnius Brigade, provides a rather laconic description of his role in the attack on Koniuchy:

> As a partisan I took part in many and various operations and raids. Among others I participated in the important action of the liquidation of the village of Koniuchy, whose inhabitants collaborated with the Germans [sic]. The peasants of this village did a lot of harm to the partisans in the surroundings. In retaliation, the entire village of 80 farmsteads was burned to the ground and its inhabitants were murdered.[362]

Rachel Margolis, a member of Kaplinsky's "For Victory" detachment, tells the following story:

Zeleznikow then goes on to explain how his father came to rationalize the slaughter of "thirty-eight Lithuanians" (sic) in Koniuchy: "He accepted that split-second decisions needed to be made to save his and his comrades' lives. There was no time for ethical decision-making and perhaps some killings were unnecessary but enabled by an historic context of violence and desperation." However, the assault on Koniuchy was not a "split-second" decision; it was a carefully planned mass slaughter of civilians, mostly women and children, who posed no threat to the Soviet and Jewish partisans. John Zeleznikow does not comment on Richard Peterson's claim that his father (Abram Zeleznikow) became a Soviet "intelligence officer" before leaving for central Poland in 1945. Rather, he claims that given his father's "active membership of the Bund and the demise of his [i.e., Abram Zeleznikov's] father, Avram was at great risk in the Soviet Union." See John Zeleznikow, "Life at the End of the World: A Jewish Partisan in Melbourne," *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History*, vol. 16, no. 3 (Winter 2010): 11–32, here at 19–21, 30.

[361] Testimony of Israel Weiss, in Kaplinsky, *Pinkas Hrubieshov*, xiii. It appears likely that the village referred to as being "burned down completely" was Koniuchy. Both Israel Weiss and Shlomo Brand are mentioned in the list of Jewish partisans in Rudniki forest who were responsible for the massacre. See Kowalski, *A Secret Press in Nazi Europe*, 405–407.

[362] Testimony of Zalman Wylozni, December 24, 1960, and January 11 and 15, 1961, Yad Vashem Archives, 032272 (formerly 1503/80–01). See also Janusz Gołota, "Losy Żydów ostrołęckich w czasie II wojny światowej," *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego,* no. 187 (1998): 32, based on Yad Vashem Archives, 1503–80–1. The name "Zalman Wolozni" appears in the list of Jewish partisans in Rudniki forest. See Kowalski, *A Secret Press in Nazi Europe*, 405–407. In another account, Wylozni stated: "We got food from the farmers in various ways, primarily with the help of weapons. They would not have given us food out of good will, so they became our sworn enemies." See Zalam Wylozny, "Taking Testimony," in Ivri, *Book of Kehilat Ostrolenka*, 381.

> A Nazi garrison was stationed in Kanyuki [sic] village. It blocked the partisans' way into the region beyond it and it was very dangerous for us. The brigade high command decided to attack the garrison and send all our detachments there. Fania [Jocheles, later Brantsovsky] went on this operation with a group from the Avenger Detachment. Our guys went, too.
>
> In a few days they returned, bearing their wounded with them. It had been a very prolonged battle. The partisans had surrounded the garrison, but the Nazis were exceptionally well armed and beat off all attacks. They broke the flanks of the Jewish detachments, and the partisans withdrew precipitously. Then [Elhanan] Magid jumped up on a rock and yelled:
>
> "We are Jews. We will show them what we are capable of. Forward, comrades!"
>
> This sobered the men up; they ran back and won. … Everyone felt uplifted. We had returned with a victory despite the enemy's superiority in numbers. The Kanyuki garrison in Kaniuki no longer existed.[363]

As Margolis points out, the recollection of these events became a source of merriment for the Jewish partisans:

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[363] Rakhil Margolis, *Nemnogo sveta vo mrake: Vospominaniia* (Vilnius: Gosudarstvennyi Evreiskii muzei imeni Vilniusskogo Gaona, 2006), 411, as translated in Rachel Margolis, *A Partisan from Vilna* (Brighton, Massachusetts: Academic Studies Press, 2010), 484. The Polish translation of this memoir—Rachela Margolis, *Wspomnienia wileńskie* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2005)—is a considerably truncated version of the Russian edition and reads: "One day a large number of partisans were directed to the garrison in Koniuchy where Germans were stationed. The battle lasted a long time and there were wounded, but the boys returned as victors. The Germans left the garrison." See Margolis, *Wspomnienia wileńskie,* 195. In an interview with Dovid Katz on December 22, 2009, Margolis speaks of a "battle" that ensued after the villagers, who were allegedly armed by the Armia Krajowa, shot at Jewish partisans who had come around "asking" for some food. See Internet: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FP9TVxUYMzg>. Some of these characters were later transformed into phantoms. According to BBC news story aired on July 21, 2008 (Tim Whewell, "Reopening Lithuania's Old Wounds," BBC Radio 4's Crossing Continents), "Brantsovskaya insists she was not present during the raid." According to another article, "Margolis says [Fania Brantsovsky] was not even in Lithuania at the time of the attack, and was active in another partisan unit in White Russia." See Yossi Melman, "Nazi Hunter: Lithuania Hunts Ex-partisans, Lets War Criminals Roam Free," *Haaretz,* August 7, 2008. However, in her own account published in a collective memoir under the name Fania Brantsovskaya-Jocheles, she writes: "I fought in the 'Keršytojas' (Avenger), a squad of Soviet partisans of the Vilnius brigade, and took part in carrying out various tasks: destroying telephone lines, blowing up bridges and railways; I was also a signaller. There I met my future husband, Mikhail Brantsovsky." Curiously the assault on Koniuchy, a source of pride for that detachment and its largest "military action," is not mentioned. See Dulkinienė and Keys, eds., *Su adata širdyje; With a Needle in the Heart,* 53. In yet another version, Brantsovsky was supposedly recovering from an operation at the time of the massacre. See Nick Bravin, "In Other Words: Baltic Ghosts," *Foreign Policy,* May/June 2009. While there is mention of an illness, there is nothing about an operation in the extensive interview she gave to Zhanna Litinskaya in February 2005. In that interview Brantsovsky also stated: "I became a member of a group. I was given a rifle and then an automatic gun. I dragged it with me and took part in military missions. … We blasted trains and placed explosives in the enemy's equipment. We shot and killed them. Yes, I did, I killed them and did so with ease. I knew that my dear ones were dead and I took my revenge for them and thousands others with each and every shot." See Internet: <http://www.centropa.org/biography/fania-brantsovskaya>. Since there is no evidence Brantsovky took part in any assaults on Germans, this may well be an allusion to the Koniuchy massacre. Antony Polonsky writes: "Rachel Margolis has since confirmed that her statement that Brantsovskaya participated in the attack on Kaniukai was based on hearsay and it has been accepted that Brantsovskaya did not actually take part in this incident." See Polonsky, "Introduction" to Margolis, *A Partisan from Vilna,* 50. Once Margolis realized that she had mistakenly referred to Brantsovsky's participation in the assault, she could have identified the female partisan who did take part but did not do so.

> Fania [Jocheles, later Brantsovsky] told a very funny story about Magid, who spoke Russian poorly. As he said it, it came out, "We are Jews, we'll show them what we have." Everyone laughed, and the expression took root in our conversations.[364]

Another member of Kaplinsky's unit, Pesia Złotnik Schenbaum, attributes the fate of the villagers to their "betrayal" of the partisans:

> There was a Lithuanian village that betrayed the partisans, for which it faced a harsh punishment. The entire village was encircled at night and burned alive. No one came out of it alive, which was ensured by the guard that was mounted.[365]

Joseph Harmatz, who escaped from the Wilno ghetto and, with the assistance of a Polish acquaintance, made his way to the Rudniki forest, joined the "For Victory" detachment of the Vilnius Brigade. He recalls: "Taking food away from the peasants is not easy because they didn't have enough and they would hide it. … And some of the peasants would be angry and would alert the Germans."[366] Harmatz advances the dubious claim that Jews who had escaped from a special brigade of 80 Jewish prisoners tasked with exhuming and burning bodies at the mass execution site in Ponary outside Wilno played a particularly savage role in the pacification of Koniuchy.[367] Their wrath was directed at Polish villagers even though the Poles had nothing to do with the crimes committed in Ponary, but rather had themselves been killed in Ponary by the hundreds.

> In the nearby village of Kanyuchi [sic], where the locals collaborated with the Germans—these newly-recruited partisans, furious at what they had seen at Ponar [sic], burned down all the houses

[364] Margolis, *Nemnogo sveta vo mrake,* 411, as translated in Margolis, *A Partisan from Vilna,* 484, where it is explained that this is a play on two similar-sounding, but very different, Russian verbs: *umet',* to be capable of, and *imet',* to have or possess. It is unlikely that this event, which has the ring of truth, was simply concocted.

[365] Testimony of Pesia Bernstein (née Złotnik, then Schenbaum), Yad Vashem Archives, 03/1292.

[366] Smith, *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust,* 203.

[367] The successful escape of about fifteen Jews held in an underground bunker in Ponary is described in Arad, *Ghetto in Flames,* 444–45, and Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union,* 503; however, the date of the escape is given as April 15 or 16, 1944, which follows the massacre in Koniuchy. (The Jews were part of Commando 1005 which was responsible for opening the mass graves and removing the corpses, then stacking them in large piles and burning them.) Eleven of the escapees reached Rudniki forest where they joined the Soviet partisans. See also Sakowicz, *Ponary Diary, 1941–1943,* 123–24; Margolis, *A Partisan from Vilna,* 485–86; Aleksander Dawidowicz, "Shoah Żydów wileńskich," in Feliksiak, eds., *Wilno–Wileńszczyzna jako krajobraz i środowisko wielu kultur,* vol. 1, 273. The latter sources confirm that Poles, including those associated with the Home Army, assisted Jewish escapees from Ponary in making their way to the forest. See Margolis, *A Partisan from Vilna,* 486; Aleksander Dawidowicz, "Shoah Żydów wileńskich," in Feliksiak, eds., *Wilno–Wileńszczyzna jako krajobraz i środowisko wielu kultur,* vol. 1, 269–70. After escaping from Ponary with other members of his work brigade, Mordechi Zeitel (Motka Zajdl) and his colleagues received help and directions from a Polish peasant. See the interview with Mordechi Zeidel, June 25, 1993, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives. A Jewish woman who survived a Lithuanian firing squad at Ponary, pulled herself out a pit full of corpses with a wound to her arm, bleeding, dishevelled and barefoot, and wandered in the direction of nearby villages where she received assistance from a number of Poles, despite their fear of German retaliation. See the testimony of Ita Straż in Tomkiewicz, *Zbrodnia w Ponarach 1941–1944,* 204.

> and killed every single one of the inhabitants, shouting as they shot each one: 'That's for my mother, and that's for my father, and that's for my sister,' and so on.[368]

The eyewitness testimony of Paul Bagriansky, cited later, confirms the element of misdirected revenge described by Harmatz.

According to a popular book based on Jewish accounts,

> Konyuchi [sic] was a village of dusty streets and squat, unpainted houses. … The partisans—Russians, Lithuanians and Jews—attacked Konyuchi from the fields, the sun at their backs. There was gunfire from the guard towers. Partisans returned the fire. The peasants ducked into houses. Partisans threw grenades onto roofs and the houses exploded into flame. Other houses were torched. Peasants ran from their front doors and raced down the streets. The partisans chased them, shooting men, women, children. Many peasants ran in the direction of the German garrison, which took them through a cemetery on the edge of town. The partisan commander, anticipating this move, had stationed several men behind the gravestones. When these partisans opened fire, the peasants turned back, only to be met by the soldiers coming up from behind. Caught in a cross fire, hundreds of peasants were killed.[369]

Israeli historian, Dina Porat ties Abba Kovner closely to the assault on Koniuchy and identifies another participant, Senka Nisanelewicz. However, this version is also replete with inconsistencies as to why the village was attacked (was it Jewish revenge or Soviet orders? or did Soviet orders provide an ideal outlet for pent-up but misplaced revenge against victims of partisan raids?) and inaccuracies (notably the strength of the Soviet partisan forces). After acknowledging that the partisans "raided the peasants and took food by force" and that "often the Jewish partisans did not follow orders" to take only what was absolutely necessary to survive,[370] Porat states:

> Sometimes the partisans took revenge on villages that were particularly hostile and had caused them loss of life or were the home base of the murderers of Jews in Vilna [Wilno]. For example, about twenty partisans, Jewish and non-Jewish, razed and then set fire to the village of Konyuchi [Koniuchy], having received orders from partisan headquarters in Rudniki to destroy it. … Kovner mustered his men, announced the operation had been successful, and praised the fighters who had distinguished themselves. However, he said, the partisans should do nothing that the Germans could

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[368] Harmatz, *From the Wings*, 96.

[369] Cohen, *The Avengers*, 144–45. According to this source, Koniuchy was a "pro-Nazi town on the edge of the forest. There was an enemy garrison nearby, and the Germans used Konyuchi [sic] as a staging point for sweeps and raids. They built towers around the town and organized a local militia; the militia had recently captured two partisans and tortured them to death." Ibid., 144. This latter claim, for which there is no evidence in Soviet reports, is disputed by historian Rimantas Zizas. See Zizas, "Žudynių Kaniūkuose pėdsakais," *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 1 (11), 2002.

[370] Porat, *The Fall of a Sparrow*, 158–59.

> use against them. Kovner could not be too critical because the orders had been given by the partisan general command. He later sat individually with each of the fighters, spending several hours explaining, according to Nisanelewicz, that they "were partisans but first of all Jews, and we do not kill the way the Germans do. We were angry with him again, the poet-turned-partisan, who was trying to turn us into members of Hashomer Hatzair with its ideas about morality in combat. We were young and hot-headed, we had lost everything and were eager to take our revenge on the Lithuanians. In retrospect, of course, he was right again; we had gotten carried away."[371]

Contrary to Kovner's reported admonition, the pacification of Koniuchy was every bit as brutal as any German pacification, a fact that Nisanelewicz seems to acknowledge.

The accounts of "second generation survivors" (i.e., children of Jews who lived through the Holocaust) are equally problematic. They simply regurgitate well-worn clichés and even embellish them. The following account is Michael Bart's, the son of Leizer Bart, who was a policeman in the Wilno ghetto, a group that had deservedly acquired a very bad reputation, before joining Kovner's partisans in Rudniki forest. (As Rachel Margolis noted, "The detachment … contained many 'underworlders,' former thieves and vagrants for whom theft was the normal state of affairs.") Leizer Bart, a member of the Second Fighter's Group of the Vilnius Brigade, claims to have taken part in the assault on Koniuchy. Much of what Michael Bart writes is simply fiction. No one has ever attempted to identify the two Jewish partisans who were allegedly killed by the villagers and whose their corpses they put on public display, or the scout who allegedly penetrated the village. It should be the simplest of tasks to do so if they existed. (Ruzhka Korchak, cited later, also refers to the capture of two unnamed guerrillas from the "Lithuanian units" who were tortured to death, but does not claim they were Jews, nor does she name them.) Besides, why would the partisans need to send a scout to check out a village they had entered and robbed several times in the past? It is not surprising, therefore, that even Soviet reports do not repeat such nonsense. The novel claim advanced in this book that only resisters were to be killed, and that the villagers were warned to leave to avoid harm, is contradicted by all reliable sources. One wonders why Michael Bart would have resorted to such concoctions, tampering with the sources he cites (Israel Weiss, Isaac Kowalski, Chaim Lazar, and Rich Cohen), unless to save face for his father and his cronies, whose vile deeds he glorifies. Interestingly, Michael Bart hastily abandons the victim count advanced by Jews over the years and, conveniently, adopts the much lower German victim count to facilitate spinning a web of deceit about the partisans' goodwill and compassion toward those villagers who allegedly agreed to leave the village and save themselves at the urging of the highly principled partisans. While this is a touching example of attempting to salvage his

[371] Ibid., 159–60. On the Home Army ("White Polish partisans"), Porat writes (at p. 159): "They also armed the peasants, fought against the Soviet partisans, and murdered scores of Jews who hid with peasants." See also pp. 167–68, for similar charges. The Home Army had no spare weapons to arm villagers, rarely fought with the Soviet partisans in Rudniki forest, and did not as a rule murder Jews in hiding. Porat also makes the bizarre claim that, when the Polish partisans joined forces with the Soviets in July 1944 to liberate the city of Wilno, "White Poles tried to convince the [Soviet] partisan command to hand over the Jewish partisans and thus prevent them from entering Vilna [Wilno] … It was obvious that the Poles, who had already drawn their guns, were planning to kill the Jews as they had during combat in the forest." Ibid., 178.

father's reputation, it is ultimately misguided. Any reputable historian and informed reader will see through the ploy and recognize it for what it is: a deliberate falsification. Bart's book is thus discredited as a historical record, even though it received a Christopher Award in 2009—given to works that "affirm the highest values of the human spirit"—for describing his parents' "heroic efforts in the underground resistance, and their role in the liberation of Vilna."

> Abba Kovner began meeting with other Jewish, Russian, and Lithuanian partisan leaders to plan a response against the Polish villagers who had attacked them. One particular town, Koniuchi [Koniuchy], was notorious for its enthusiastic support of the Nazis against the partisans. The Germans had helped the residents fortify their village by building defense trenches and lookout towers, and organizing the men of the town into an antipartisan militia, armed with German rifles and even machine guns.
>
> One day in April [sic] a scout returned from Koniuchi. Because he looked "Aryan" and spoke unaccented Polish, he had been able to enter the village posing as a member of a pro-Nazi militia from another village. In the village he had seen the corpses of two Jewish partisans, who had been killed and afterward placed on public display.
>
> When Kovner heard this, he reported the event to the Russian partisan commander, with whom the leaders had already been discussing retaliation against hostile villages. The commander ordered an unprecedented call-up of all available fighters from the various Jewish and non-Jewish brigades in Rudnicki [Rudniki] for an attack on Koniuchi.
>
> Leizer [Bart] and the other Avengers would be part of a small army of well-armed and trained partisan fighters. They would surround the town from all sides and destroy it. No building was to be left standing. All residents who resisted in any way were to be killed. Only those who surrendered would be spared. They were not to take anything from Koniuchi—no food, no livestock, no valuables. It needed to be clear that they had come for one reason alone, to make the other villages think twice about turning them in or shooting at them as they passed by on their missions.
>
> The fighters disappeared down the path with rifles slung over their backs while Zenia [Lewinson-Bart—i.e., Leizer's wife] and others at the camp began an edgy and sleepless wait for the fighters' safe return.
>
> By dawn the strike force had surrounded the three land-locked sides of the village and taken control of the river on the forth side. Several partisans had torched houses, stables, and granaries on the outskirts of the village, while the others began riddling the town with gunfire and incendiary bullets.
>
> The people of Koniuchi returned fire from their houses and defensive positions. The straw roofs burst into flames, and within minutes the German ammunition hidden inside homes began to explode. Soon the whole town was ablaze. Half-clothed villagers, roused from their sleep, jumped out of windows and escaped across the river. Anyone in the town who surrendered was told to leave, but those who fought back or ignored calls for surrender were killed. Within two hours the mission was complete. The town had been leveled, three dozen people were dead, and another dozen had been injured.

> Leizer and the other Avengers came back safely from Koniuchi. All any of them had to say was that it was done and that Koniuchi would not be a problem anymore. Once other nearby villages saw the price to be paid, they would most likely not be problems either. Kovner had once said that, unlike the Nazis, the Jewish partisans didn't kill because they wanted people to die. Making an example of Koniuchi had been necessary for their survival, and the validity of their cause made the choice between their survival and that of the people of Koniuchi a defensible one. After the war, when recounting their exploits, Koniuchi was rarely spoken of.[372]

A recent media report provides yet another self-serving spin on the assault that no eyewitness account or official report has ever advanced:

> The Lithuanian partisans, who operated under the aegis of the Central Partisan Command of the Soviet Union, had information that there was a German garrison in the village. *After the fact, it turned out that the Germans had abandoned the place.* In the battle that ensued, 38 villagers were killed, including women and children.[373] [emphasis added]

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[372] Michael Bart and Laurel Corona, *Until Our Last Breath: A Holocaust Story of Love and Partisan Resistance* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008), 228–30. Michael Bart refers to sporadic altercations with the Home Army and villagers, though he provides no details of any fatalities, only a few casualties. Bart spins the following story (at pp. 214–15), mixing fiction with fact, about the "food missions". The notion that the Germans were available on call to protect the villagers from Soviet pillaging has little basis in fact.

> Food missions were extraordinarily dangerous—much more so than sabotage. …
>
> Food missions were another matter, for they involved farm families and villagers who were afraid of starvation and willing to protect what little they had with all the means at their disposal. A few times, shortly after their arrival in Rudnicki [Rudniki], the Jews had been able to simply promise payment after victory for supplies from a few local people wishing to help with the resistance, but even then they discovered that most villagers dislike the Jews and the Nazis about equally. However, as time passed and the peasants grew poorer and the number of partisans grew, the Avengers, like everyone else, were forced to turn to thievery and coercion to get what they needed to survive.
>
> The Jewish detachments tried wherever possible to target villages and farms that were known for collaboration with the Germans to harm Jews. For this reason, in the beginning they often went much farther afield than they would otherwise have had to, bringing back food over great distances on foot or using wagons … Once inside the forest, they had to be careful to cover their tracks back to the camp. …
>
> The time it took to bring food to the edge of the forest often gave those who had been robbed the chance to alert the Germans, and food parties sometimes had to scatter without their booty even before reaching the woods. They solved this problem either by resorting to villages or farms closer to the edge of the forest so they could escape quickly, or by taking a member of the targeted house hostage and forcing him to use the family wagon to take the supplies to the edge of the forest. The family of the hostage was told that if the Germans were sent after the departing partisans, the hostage would be shot. …
>
> By early 1944, missions to procure food, tools, and the occasional weapon and ammunition from local farmhouses had resulted in many partisan casualties … The targeted house had to be surrounded so no one could escape to alert the authorities. While some partisans went inside to handle the occupants, other stood watch. The more people who came along, the more hands could carry the booty back to the camp …

[373] Yossi Melman, "Nazi Hunter: Lithuania Hunts Ex-partisans, Lets War Criminals Roam Free," *Haaretz*, August 7, 2008.

The most fanciful accounts were published in the Soviet Union, shortly after the war. The *Black Book of Russian Jewry*, based on Jewish testimonies compiled by Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman in 1944, reported that the Jewish partisan units "Avenger" and "For Victory" carried out a "series of military operations" in the vicinity of Rudniki forest, and "helped destroy a German garrison in the heavily fortified town of Konyukhi."[374] A memoir by Dmitri Gelpern (Gelpernas) and Meir Yelin published in Moscow in 1948 speaks of a German-infested fortress equipped with machine guns. This version is at odds not only with Soviet and German reports but also with later Jewish accounts that toned down the scale of the fighting considerably.

> Having got reinforcements from Kovno [Kaunas] ghetto, [the] group "Death to Invaders" ["Death to the Occupiers"] received an opportunity to participate in large operations alongside other groups from Rudnizky [Rudniki] forest.
>
> In village Koniukhi [Koniuchy], some 30 kilometres from the partisan base a German garrison took up position. [The] Fascists followed partisans, set up ambushes on the roads. Several partisan groups, among them the "Death to Invaders," were ordered to liquidate this bandit cell.
>
> At first the Germans were ordered to stop their actions and hand in weapons. When they refused to do so people's avengers decided to act according to the law: "If the enemy does not give in, the enemy should be eliminated."
>
> Having left their base in the evening and gone through marshes and forests, the partisans reached suburbs of the village by morning time. Red rocket was a signal for the start of the attack. Twenty partisans from the group "Death to Invaders", headed by unit leader Mikhail Trushin, went entered [sic] the village. Germans occupied several houses and started drum-fire from their submachine- and machine-guns. Every house had to be stormed. Incendiary bullets, hand grenades, flares were used to exterminate the Germans. Kovno partisans Dovid [David] Teper, Jankl [Yakov] Ratner, Peisach Volbe, Leiser Zodikov [Tsodikov] and others charged the enemy in the face of bullets. Strong Leib Zaiats [Zaitsev] stormed one of the buildings after using all his bullets, wrestled a rifle from a German and proceeded hitting the enemy with a butt so that the butt broke.[375]

Other members of the "Death to the Occupiers" detachment, including some women, who claim to have taken part in the assault on Koniuchy include: Hilel Aronovicz, Edvarda Bekker, Matvei (Mordechai) Brik, Pela Chas, B. Gelenina (Beila Ganelin), S. Gilis, Sara Hempel (Gempel), Khoks (Chanan) Kagan, Boris (Beryl, Beka, Dov) Kot, Faiga Kulbak (Kolbak), Misha Meyerov (Meirow), Lazar Mozas (Eliezer Mozes),

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[374] Ehrenburg and Grossman, *The Complete Black Book of Russian Jewry*, 289.

[375] Dmitrii Gelpern (Gelpernas), *Partizaner fun Kaunaser geto* (Moscow: Emes, 1948); translated into English as *Kovnno Ghetto Diary* and posted on the Internet at <http://www.jewish.gen.org/yizkor/kaunas/kaunas.html>. The passage in question is found in Part One of the chapter "In the Open Battle." Isaac Kowalski's lists of partisans does not include the Jewish partisans fighting in the "Death to the Occupiers" unit mentioned in this source.

Itzek (Izhak) Nemzer, Peretz Padison, Ida Pilownik (Wilencok), Mikhail Rubinson, Moshe Sherman, Lita Teper, and Eliezer Zilber.[376]

A kindred account by Ruzhka Korchak also turned the massacre into a pitched battle. (This account was constructed for the 1977 Russian edition of Korchak's expanded memoirs that were first published in Hebrew in 1946. It is based on "the testimonies of participants of the resistance," most of whom were interviewed by the author, and on documents in the Moreshet kibbutz and Yad Vashem archives.[377])

> At the [Soviet partisan] brigade headquarters they considered what means to employ for revenge. It was obvious that if no decisive measure was undertaken, most villages could refuse to obey the brigade. If there was no reaction to the instances of the killing of partisans, all their activities could be endangered and the prestige of the brigade would be undermined. The Lithuanian village of Koniukhi [Koniuchy] was known for its actions against the partisans. Its inhabitants actively collaborated with the Germans and the Lithuanians of Plechavičius.[378] They distributed weapons they received among the neighbouring peasants and organized them [for self-defence]. The village itself was large and well fortified; the partisans eschewed coming up to the village. The inhabitants of Koniukhi organized ambushes; they captured two guerrillas from the Lithuanian [Communist] units and tortured them to death.[379]
>
> The staff of the brigade decided to carry out a great punitive expedition against the village. Šilas, the commander of one of the Lithuanian detachments, infiltrated Koniukhi pretending to be an officer of the Plechavičius army who had come to organize the watch. [Not only does this whole episode not sound plausible, but also there is an apparent *non sequitur*: either the village was well fortified at the time, or it wasn't. Moreover, no other account mentions this episode. *M.P.*] Since he was a Lithuanian and military man, he was not suspected. He studied all posts and weak points of defence. Based on his report the staff of the brigade prepared an operation. All partisan forest units contributed fighters for the operation; in total about 150 persons participated, including about 40

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[376] Rimantas Zizas, "Pacyfikacja wsi Koniuchy (Kaniūkai)," *Biuletyn Historii Pogranicza* (Białystok), no. 4 (2003): 49; Piotr Gontarczyk, "Tragedia Koniuchów," *Niezależna Gazeta Polska,* March 3, 2006, 27. This information comes from the fighters' personal files found in the Vilnius archives housing the Soviet partisan movement documents. Zizas (*supra*) also lists fighters from other units: L. Žubikas from "For the Fatherland" detachment, S. Kuozis from the Margiris detachment, and A. Uždavinis from the Mickiewicz detachment.

[377] Ruzhka Korchak, *Plamia pod peplom* (Tel Aviv: Biblioteka-Aliia, 1977), 261. The author's name is rendered in various forms: Ruzhka Korchak (Russian), Reizl Korchak (Yiddish), Rużka Korczak (Polish), and Reuzl Korts'ak (Hebrew). Her memoirs appeared in Hebrew as: Reuzl Korts'ak, *Lehavot ba-efer [tirgem mi-khetav yad ha-Polani, Binyamin Tenenboim],* Edition/Mahad 2 (Merhavyah: ha-Kibuts ha-artsi ha-Shomer ha-tsa'ir, [1946]); *Lehavot ba-'efer [targum mi-khetav ha-yad ha-Polani Binyamin Tene],* Edition/Mahadurah 3 murhevet ([Tel Aviv]: Moreshet, bet 'edut 'al shem Mordekhai Anilevits, [1965]). The only reference in her memoir to a specific altercation with the Home Army was a chase that ensued *after* the Jewish partisans staged a raid on a village. See Korchak, *Plamia pod peplom,* 312.

[378] General Povilas Plechavičius was the commander of the collaborationist Lithuanian "defence force" in the service of the Germans.

[379] As noted earlier, there is no evidence to support this claim in Soviet reports. See Zizas, "Žudynių Kaniūkuose pėdsakais," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 1 (11), 2002.

Jewish fighters. A Soviet officer from the Šilas detachment was appointed commander. The Jewish fighters were led by Iakov Prener [Jacob Prenner].

Some partisans surrounded the village and entered it. Others, including Jewish partisans, remained outside of the village, laying an ambush, to prevent a relief force from the German garrison from arriving. The village cemetery served as the place of the ambush. Those partisans who rushed into the village were moving in from three directions. According to the plan, the central storm group was to shoot its way in, while those attacking from the flank were to set the village on fire. The Lithuanians [i.e., inhabitants of Koniuchy] opened fire as the left flank approached its target. Hand-to-hand combat commenced. Many Lithuanians succeeded in fleeing the village. They began running toward the German garrison. They were ambushed. They were slaughtered; only a few saved themselves.

Seeing that the attempt to take Koniukhi by surprise failed, the commanding officer sent couriers to the partisans manning the ambush site and ordered them to assist the fighters in the village. Two Lithuanian couriers failed to get through and then the commander dispatched another one—Pol Bagrianskii [Paul Bagriansky], who served as a liaison between the command post and the ambush spot. Bagrianskii broke through and delivered the order. Jewish partisans left the place of ambush and entered the fray. After a fierce fight the resistance of the villagers was broken. The partisans burned down one farmstead after another. Many peasants, women, and children fell from their bullets. Only very few saved themselves. The village was erased from the face of the earth.

The following day the superior Gestapo authorities from Vilnius arrived on the spot along with soldiers. The ruins and the bodies of the fallen were photographed and then the pictures were published as proof of the bestiality of the "Red bandits," who ruthlessly destroyed the peaceful population.

Both the operation and German propaganda shook everyone around. The staff of the brigade undertook damage control. Leaflets were disseminated in the villages telling the truth about Koniukhi. The leaflets also contained a warning that everyone collaborating with the enemy would meet the same end. However, those who assisted the partisans would be rewarded. One can suspect the village inhabitants were influenced not so much by admonitions, agitation, and leaflets, but by fear of revenge by the partisans. The story of Koniukhi tamed other villages of the region for a long time.[380]

The testimony of Paul (Pol) Bagriansky, referred to in Ruzhka Korchak's account, however, in no way substantiates her claim of a "fierce fight" on the part of the villagers. It describes in gruesome detail a bloodbath with virtually no resistance. Bagriansky does, however, make unfounded claims about the villagers being "well armed," that each hut held "thousands of German bullets," and that Koniuchy was under the special protection of the Germans. The alleged pretext for the Soviet assault was the improbable

[380] Korchak, *Plamia pod peplom,* 319–21. Korchak states that the Jewish partisan command in the Rudniki forest did not permit collective punishment and that Jewish partisans targeted only actual collaborators with great effort, risk and precision in order to prevent innocent civilian casualties. The accounts gathered in this book belie that claim. Korchak also claims that the punitive operation, and the manner in which it was carried out, caused "great consternation" and that many of the fighters in the Jewish camp voiced "sharp criticism." However, there is no indication of this in the boastful accounts penned by actual participants such as Chaim Lazar, Isaac Kowalski, Israel Weiss, and others.

claim that villages as far away as 20 kilometres brought their cows and hogs to Koniuchy for the night, thus depleting stock for Soviet partisans to seize. He also alleges that the partisan headquarters later issued orders to reprimand and punish those who attacked Koniuchy. No such orders were ever issued. No one was ever punished for these crimes. In fact, several villagers were charged and convicted by the Soviet authorities for having organized the local self-defence.

> When in April [sic] 1944 our partisans were told that we are going [to] teach a lesson to a village by the name of Koniuchi [sic], I was not surprised. … Our Jewish unit of 25 men was put under the command of Jacob Prener. Other units of mixed nationalities made up another 125 partisans. A total unit of 150 men, well equipped, represented an impressive force for us. …
>
> Before we started, the commanding officer told us briefly in Russian what our mission was about. Many villages in the radius of about 20 kilometers from Koniuchi decided to bring their cows and hogs during the night to the village of Koniuchi. Koniuchi was well armed by the Nazis and soldiers from Armia Krajowa. Partisans who went for food to the surrounding villages would find them empty. Very often the Germans would come there overnight to protect the village of Koniuchi. Therefore, the commanding officer told us, we are going to teach Koniuchi a lesson. …
>
> We marched from midday till the late evening and stopped in a village to rest and to eat. I was appointed by our commanding officer as interpreter and messenger between various units. … I spent an hoour [sic] or two in the headquarters where we studied the map with other officers, and being there I understood that our purpose is to destroy the entire village including all the villagers. I asked why such harsh inhuman treatment? The answer was that this is what the high command had decided to do. We cannot permit such heavy armed villages to disrupt our partisan activities. This lesson will teach the other villages to think twice before they try again with Nazi's [sic] help to arm and to oppose us. …
>
> Around 4 o'clock we started moving again and we reached our destination close to 11 at night. A specific task and territory was assigned to each unit. At midnight everybody was in his place and waited for the sign to start the attack on the village Koniuchi. Some units had the task of setting the huts on fire while the others had to close the escape routes. Exactly at midnight the village was set on fire and in a few minutes the stored ammunition started to explode. The cows and hogs as well as horses that were in their stables started to make terrible noises. A few horses succeeded to escape and they were running like mad out of the burning village. The explosions from fire of all the thousands of German bullets that were held in each hut, the terrible noises of the burning animals and the shooting of the escaping villagers made such a hell of an uproar that no human cry or voice could be heard. The first hour I was standing with the commanding officer and few of his aides on a hill watching this awful inferno. In the meantime I received an order to get in touch with my unit and to order them to take a new position. When I reached my unit I saw one of our people holding the head of a middle aged woman against a big stone and hitting her head with another stone. Each blow was accompanied by sentences like: this is for my murdered mother, this is for my killed father, this is for my dead brother, etc. He was a young man of about 22 years old and I was with him all the time in the underground. He was a friendly and quiet person, I would never have

expected to see him doing what he was doing now. What brought this sudden change? I did not react and told Jacob Prener what new position he should take and return to our commander. When I was back he ordered me to go to another unit to give them their new position. … When crossing the road I saw a man escaping from the village. Probably he saw me first and shot at me [?] on the run, but missed. Realizing it, he stopped for a second to aim better with a second shot. But now I was ready and before he pulled his trigger, I pulled mine and the man's gun fell from his hand. The man descended slowly to his knees and then stretched out. He was dead. …

When I reached the unit to tell them their new assignment, I saw an awful, gruesome picture. … In a small clearing in the forest six bodies of women of various ages and two bodies of men were lying around in a half circle. All bodies were undressed and lying on their backs. The full moon was shining on them. One man at a time was shooting in between the legs of the dead bodies. When the bullet would strike the nerve the body would react as if were alive. It would shiver, quiver for a few seconds. The women's bodies reacted much more violently than the dead bodies of men. All men of the unit were participating in this cruel play, laughing, in a wild frenzy. I was first petrified by this performance, and then started to be sickly interested. I had been standing fascinated for several minutes, when the unit commander approached me and asked if I would be interested to participate in these experiments. Only then I remembered why I was here, and told him what new position his men must take without further delay. They were not in a hurry, and only after the bodies ceased to react to the bullets, they moved to the new position.

The village by now was burning with big red flames, the explosions still continued, as did the terrible howl of the burning animals. On my way back to the command post I saw several bodies of the peasants who had been shot on their way to escape. A horse with a burning tail and mane was galloping full speed, probably to find some river or pond to ease the pain in the water. …I remembered that horses know their way around and so he was galloping full speed to reach the water. I hoped he would make it in time.

Around two o'clock in the morning the village of Koniuchi was completely burned, not one hut was visible, no sound was forthcoming. Presumably all people, including the young, the women and the men were burned, shot with their own bullets exploding from the fire or finished by our men when trying to escape from this hell. Probably a few horses escaped and survived, if they made in time to the water. It is possible that a few people succeeded to escape and to stay alive in one way or another. The village Koniuchi was now a memory full of ashes and of dead bodies. The lesson had been taught. The commanding officer assembled all units, thanked them for their well accomplished job, and ordered them to be ready to start to go back to our base. The people were tired but their faces looked satisfied and happy with the accomplished assignment. Only a very few of them realized what a terrible murder had been committed within one hour. Those few looked dejected and downcast and felt guilty. …

We reached our base late at night. I was tired and exhausted and went to sleep at once, as did most people of our unit. As we learned the next day, the other units got a heros' [sic] welcome for destroying Koniuchi and they drank and ate and sang all night. They enjoyed the killings, the destruction and most of all the drinking.

> Three weeks later there was a message from the Partisan Headquarters in Moscow to reprimand and punish the people that initiated and led the destruction of the village Koniuchi.[381]

A Russian partisan from the "For the Fatherland" detachment, Anatolii Mikhailovich Kotskin vividly recalls the mission the partisans received: everyone in Koniuchy was to be killed. He paid little attention to the victims he sprayed with his automatic weapon.[382] Baruch Shub, another fugitive from the Wilno ghetto who joined Kovner's partisans in Rudniki forest, also describes the "punitive action" directed against the village of Koniuchy.[383] Not all Jewish partisans from Rudniki forest, however, share those recollections. Harry Reischer, a member of the "Death to Fascism" unit, does not recall any attacks on Poles or Polish villagers, but makes wild claims about his unit being surrounded by 16,000 [sic] "White Polacks" who were famous for killing Jews and "10,000 times worse" than the Germans.[384] Similarly, Anatol Krakowski, who belonged to the "For Victory" detachment, recalls only in a general way "punitive expeditions against Nazi collaborators and those who had denounced Jews." Krakowski levels the following accusation against the Home Army: "They did not constitute any threat for the Nazis, for they killed essentially Jews and Communists." He concedes, however, that the Jewish partisans steered clear of pitched battles with the Germans and incurred relatively few casualties.[385]

Genrikas Zimanas (*nom de guerre* "Jurgis" or "Yurgis")—the Yiddish version of his name is given variously as Henrich, Henoch or Hanoh Ziman, and the Russian is Genrikh Ziman[386]—who headed the partisan command in southern Lithuania in January 1944 (his title was secretary of the "South Area" Underground Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party), oversaw the entire operation. He filed the following report with Antanas Sniečkus, First Secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party (from 1940 to 1974) and head of the Lithuanian Partisan Movement Headquarters, who had reportedly issued the order authorizing the assault on Koniuchy.

> The joint forces of the Vilnius [Wilno] partisan units "Death to the Occupiers," Margirio and General Headquarters Special Intelligence Group [Soviet Military Intelligence–GRU] destroyed Kaniūkai [Koniuchy], the village with the fiercest self-defence in the Eishyshok [Ejszyszki] area.

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[381] Paul Bagriansky, "Koniuchi," *Pirsumim* (Tel Aviv: Publications of the Museum of the Combatants and Partisans), no. 65–66 (December 1988): 120–24.

[382] Jerzy Danilewicz, "Zbrodnia bez kary," *Newsweek* (Warsaw), May 15, 2005.

[383] Interview with Baruch Shub, November 5, 1993, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archive. Shub describes the arrest of Poles in Wilno after the Soviet "liberation," and how the Jewish partisans were assigned to "reorganize" the Lithuanian prison system. His unit was sent to the infamous łukiszki prison where he worked for a time.

[384] Testimony of Harry Reischer, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Interview Code 21907.

[385] Krakowski, *Le Ghetto dans la forêt*, 58, 78, 82, 86.

[386] Kowalski, *A Secret Press in Nazi Europe*, 270.

> Kaniūkai had not only objected to the Soviet partisans entering the village but used to organize ambushes on the roads, was attacking villages friendly to the partisans and forced villages that were neutral to the partisans to arm themselves. The [village] self-defence suffered heavy casualties. We did not have casualties on our side.[387]

This latter statement from an official Soviet report written at the time of the events bears repeating: "*We did not have casualties on our side.*" This statement is difficult to reconcile with reports of a pitched battle that lasted up to an hour. Some Jewish accounts, however, allege there were casualties, but do not provide details. Providing no source for his information, Lithuanian historian Alfonsas Eidintas goes even further, claiming that "Lithuanian police at the village returned the fire for about 45 minutes. … The Red partisans lost one man, and took away 3 of their seriously wounded members."[388] This claim has simply no basis in fact. There was no exchange of fire involving policemen, certainly not one that lasted 45 minutes. No report has ever identified any Red partisan who allegedly fell in battle or who was injured. Furthermore, when the Soviets brought to trial several members of the Koniuchy self-defence in 1947, they were not charged with murdering any Soviet partisans.[389]

According to Report No. 53 of January 31, 1944, from the commander of the Lithuanian Police post in Bołcieniki to Vladas Zibas, the commander of the 253rd Lithuanian Police Battalion,

> 1944.01.29 at 6 a.m., around 150 bandits (Jews and Russians) armed with 1 heavy machine gun, 3 light machine guns, machine pistols, rifles and grenades, attacked Koniuchy village. The village was burnt down, people were killed and cattle were slaughtered. (35 were killed in action and 15 wounded.) Bandits had arrived from Daučiunai [Dawciuny] and WLK Salky [Wielkie Sałki] directions. They spent one hour there. Then they retreated in the same directions.[390]

A Wehrmacht report of February 5, 1944 confirming the massacre can be found in the Central Archives of Modern Records (Archiwum Akt Nowych) in Warsaw. According to that report the village was burned to the ground by a group of Jews and Russians, who killed 36 residents and wounded 14.[391]

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[387] LVOA F. 1, In. 1, File 410, p. 173.

[388] Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust,* 306.

[389] Piotr Gontarczyk, "Tragedia Koniuchów," *Niezależna Gazeta Polska,* March 3, 2006, 28. After their sham trials, Władysław Woronis, Stanisław Bobin, and Jan Kodis were convicted and received sentences of 10 years in a concentration camps and confiscation of their property.

[390] LCSA F.R–666, In. 1, File 7, p. 29. See also Arūnas Bubnys, "253-iasis lietuvių policijos batalionas (1943–1944)," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 2 (4), 1998, posted online at <http://www.tdd.lt/genocid/Leidyba/4/arunas3.htm>; Zizas, "Žudynių Kaniūkuose pėdsakais," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 1 (11), 2002.

[391] Alexandria Collection, T–454, Reichministerium für die besetzten Ostgebiete, Reel 19, reproduced in part in Jan Bańbor, "Tło wydarzeń w Koniuchach w polskich i niemieckich sprawozdaniach sytuacyjnych," *Biuletyn Historii Pogranicza* (Biaystok), no. 4 (2003): 98.

The most accurate depiction of what occurred in Koniuchy is doubtless that of Polish historian Kazimierz Krajewski, who summed up the situation as follows:

> The only "fault" of the inhabitants of Koniuchy was the fact that they had had enough of the daily—or, rather, nightly—robberies and assaults, and they wanted to organize a self-defence. The Bolsheviks from Rudniki forest decided to level the village to the ground in order to terrorize into submission the inhabitants of other settlements. …
>
> The murder of the population of Koniuchy, including women and children, has been described by Chaim Lazar as an outstanding "combat operation," of which he is genuinely proud. The description [of Lazar] of the village's "fortifications" is complete nonsense. It was a normal village, in which some of the men had organized a self-defence unit. Their equipment consisted of a few rusty rifles.[392]

The final episode of this sordid affair occurred after the "liberation" when Soviet officials descended on the village to investigate and interrogate the survivors regarding the "bandits" in their midst and *their* "crimes" against the Soviet partisans. A number of Poles were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and deported to the Gulag.[393] The real perpetrators of the massacre were never brought to justice. The partisans of the "For Victory" detachment were transferred to "the organs of the militia and other organs" of newly liberated Wilno.[394] Henoch Ziman, who oversaw the assault on Koniuchy, was bestowed Poland's highest military honour, the Virtuti Militari, by its Communist rulers.[395]

Other villages in the Nowogródek region such as Szczepki, Babińsk, and Prowżały, as well as the small town of Kamień, met with a similar fate at the hands of the Soviet and Jewish partisans in the early months of 1944.[396] On April 12, 1944, Soviet partisans burnt down the village of Bakaloriškės (Bakałaryszki) near

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[392] Krajewski, *Na Ziemi Nowogródzkiej,* 511–12. This version is not only confirmed by Polish eyewitnesses, but also is consistent with German and Lithuanian reports.

[393] For example, Władysław Woronis, who organized the night watch in Koniuchy, was sentenced to 10 years in a penal camp. See Malewski, "Masakra w Koniuchach," *Nasza Gazeta*, March 8, 2001; Narkowicz, "'Siła w cierpieniu (z zeznań naocznego świadka)," *Nasza Gazeta*, March 29, 2001; Andrzej Kumor, interview with Edward Tubin, "Nie przepuścili nikomu…: Z naocznym świadkiem pacyfikacji wsi Koniuchy rozmawia Andrzej Kumor," *Gazeta* (Toronto), May 4–6, 2001; Jerzy Danilewicz, "Zbrodnia bez kary," *Newsweek* (Warsaw), May 15, 2005; Piotr Gontarczyk, "Tragedia Koniuchów," *Niezależna Gazeta Polska*, March 3, 2006. The archives of the Lithuanian KGB in Vilnius contain an enormous file with interrogation reports and statements by former partisans.

[394] "Istoriia otriada 'Za Pobedu'," Lietuvos ypatingasis archyva, Arkhiv Tsentralnogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoi Partii Litvy, Litovskii Shtab Partizanskogo Dvizheniia, Partizanskii otriad "Za Pobedu", Vilnius, fond 11, opis 1, delo 1, listy 14–16.

[395] Levin, *Fighting Back,* 199.

[396] Krajewski, "Nowogródzki Okręg Armii Krajowej," in Wołkonowski, *Sympozjum historyczne "Rok 1944 na Wileńszczyźnie,"* 54; Krajewski, *Na Ziemi Nowogródzkiej,* 388; Gasztold, "Sowietyzacja i rusyfikacja Wileńszczyzny i Nowogródczyzny w działalności partyzantki sowieckiej w latach 1941–1944," in Sudoł, *Sowietyzacja Kresów Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej po 17 września 1939,* 277; Boradyn, *Niemen–rzeka niezgody,* 203–204. According to Polish sources, ten people were murdered in Babińsk (February 24, 1944); 12–14 villagers were killed in Prowżały in retaliation for an attempt to organize a local self-defence group (February 17, 1944); and seven families were massacred in Szczepki (June 9, 1944). According to Soviet sources, 71 people perished in Kamień on May 14, 1944.

Onuškis (Hanuszyszki), murdering eighteen people in this and neighbouring villages.[397] Another assault on a Lithuanian village that dared to defend itself in the face of continuous partisan raids is described by Yitzhak Arad (then Rudnicki):

> The last operation I participated in that winter was a punitive action against Girdan [Girdany], a large Lithuanian village on the road between Hoduciszki and Swienciany [Święciany]. The inhabitants of the village were prepared for self-defense and had been armed by the Germans. … During February when a Vilnius [Wilno] force had tried to enter the village to requisition provisions, the inhabitants opened fire and killed two partisans. Our command decided to punish them. About twenty of us went on this retaliatory mission, which would serve also as a warning to other villages. We broke into the village from two different directions, and the defenders fled after putting up feeble resistance. We took the residents out of several houses in the section of the village where our two comrades fell and burned down the houses.[398]

These were not the only murders of civilians in this area. Other settlements in the vicinity of Rudniki forest were also attacked and razed by the Soviet-Jewish partisans. A number of farmsteads were burned to the ground by Jewish partisans in Niewoniańce and eight villagers were killed.[399] The village of Bojary near Werenowo was also torched and several people were killed. Entire settlements like Popiszki, after being stripped of their means of livelihood, were abandoned and became ghost towns. A different tactic was employed to exact revenge for the self-defence undertaken by the villagers of Pirciupie (or Pirczupie), a mixed Polish-Lithuanian village on the western edge of Rudniki forest. On June 3, 1944, Soviet partisans ambushed some vehicles carrying German military personnel on a road near the village, killing fourteen of them. The provocation resulted in a punitive operation by German and Latvian forces, who immediately descended on the village, drove the inhabitants into barns and then set the barns ablaze. The village was burned to the ground and 119 people, including 49 children, perished. Soviet partisans based nearby in

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[397] Rimantas Zizas, "Vietinė savisauga (savigyna) Lietuvoje nacių Vokietijos okupacijos metais (1941–1944)," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 1 (11), 2002, posted online at <http://www.genocid.lt/Leidyba/11/genocida.htm>; Rimantas Zizas, "Bakaloriškių sunaikinimas," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 2 (12), 2002, posted online at <http://www.genocid.lt/Leidyba/12/zizas.htm>.

[398] Arad, *The Partisan,* 158.

[399] For confirmation that Jewish partisans took part in the assault see "Operations Diary of a Jewish Partisan Unit in Rudniki Forest, 1943–1944," in Arad, Gutman, and Margaliot, eds., *Documents of the Holocaust,* 469. The attack occurred on April 27, 1944; two families of Home Army members—consisting of eight people—were murdered and their farmsteads burned to the ground. See Krajewski, *Na Ziemi Nowogródzkiej,* 511. In retaliation Polish forces attacked the hamlet of Wisińcza located in Rudniki forest, a mainstay of the Soviet partisans. See Krajewski, *Na Ziemi Nowogródzkiej,* 512; Boradyn, *Niemen–rzeka niezgody,* 223; Kiersnowski, *Tam i wtedy,* 96. The local population referred to the Soviet partisan units as "Wisińcza" because their base was located between the village by that name and Lake Kiernowo. In order to lessen hostilities, the Polish underground entered into negotiations with the Soviet partisans in April 1944. Areas of operation were divided up, the Poles agreed to provide food in exchange for arms in order to curtail food gathering expeditions, and Soviet partisans were allowed to pass through areas controlled by the Home Army. See Boradyn, *Niemen–rzeka niezgody,* 223–24; Stanisława Lewandowska, *Wilno 1944–1945: Oczekiwania i nastroje* (Warsaw: Neriton and Instytut Historii PAN, 2007), 47–48.

Rudniki forest did nothing to protect the villagers even though the operation lasted several hours.[400] On other occasions villagers from "hostile" villages were seized for suicide missions:

> The Germans finally came up with a deadly device that should have stopped this kind of sabotage once and for all. They inserted a trip wire in each [telephone] pole, attaching it to a buried mine which was detonated when the saw touched the wire. As we always worked in the dark, we couldn't be sure which poles were mined, but we resolved this problem by recruiting men from nearby villages to cut the poles, By choosing only those who had been hostile to the partisans and to the Jews, we forced the Germans to kill or injure their own sympathizers and collaborators, while we gained extra labourers to help in the fight.[401]

Other villages, such as Gumba, were pacified by the Germans for helping the Soviet partisans.

The various Jewish accounts about the Koniuchy massacre demonstrate that even a multitude of eyewitness testimonies about one event is no assurance of the accuracy of the story. Partisan historians and publicists have only compounded the problem by resorting to various strategies in an attempt to neutralize the negative fallout of these events. This response is one mired by silence, denial, obfuscation, blaming the victims, and contempt for the messanger. Curiously, some Jewish historians and publicists have taken umbrage at the fact that events such as the massacre at Koniuchy are even being raised by Poles, imputing to them some anti-Semitic motive, although these same commentators had not shown any concern in the past when these exploits were passed off in Jewish memoirs as heroic deeds that justly targeted "vile" Poles. After all, it is not the Polish side who claimed that 300 persons were murdered in Koniuchy, but rather the Jewish partisans who have been boasting about the scale of their misdeeds for decades. The following defensive article appeared in *Forward*, a leading Jewish-American newspaper, in August 2003:

> Poland's official National Institute of Remembrance, created to investigate historic crimes of the Nazi and communist eras, is currently investigating allegations that Jewish partisans participated in a massacre of civilians in Poland in early 1944.
>
> The institute launched the investigation in February 2001 at the request of the Canadian Polish Congress.

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[400] Rimantas Zizas, *Persecution of Non-Jewish Citizens of Lithuania, Murder of Civilian Population (1941–1944),* International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania (Vilnius 2003), 60–61, also published in Dieckmann, et al., *Karo belaisvių ir civilių gyventojų žudynės Lietuvoje 1941-1944–Murders of Prisoners of War and of Civilian Population in Lithuania, 1941-1944*; Tomkiewicz, *Zbrodnia w Ponarach 1941–1944,* 149, 349–52. See also Kowalski, *A Secret Press in Nazi Europe,* 349, 351; Wiktor Noskowski, "Czy Yaffa Eliach przeprosi Polaków?" *Myśl Polska,* July 20–27, 1997; Zizas, "Žudynių Kaniūkuose pėdsakais," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 1 (11), 2002. According to Jewish sources, two Jewish units ("Avenger" and "For Victory") took part in the ambush on the German vehicles that precipitated the destruction of Pirciupie. See "Operations Diary of a Jewish Partisan Unit in Rudniki Forest, 1943–1944," in Arad, Gutman, and Margaliot, eds., *Documents of the Holocaust,* 469. In *There Once Was a World,* at 641, Eliach cannot make up her mind about the villagers of Pirciupie, conceding that many of them did assist the Soviet-Jewish partisans.

[401] Kahn, *No Time To Mourn,* 134.

Robert Janicki, deputy commissioner for prosecution of crimes against the Polish nation, told the Forward in a written statement that the institute was interviewing witnesses, including both victims and perpetrators, and was gathering archival material from several countries, but that no date had been set for the conclusion of the investigation.

Still, the institute has issued some preliminary reports, which contain allegations that some 50 to 60 Jewish partisans were part of a 120-strong Soviet partisan unit that attacked the village of Koniuchy on January 29, 1944. At least 35 civilians were killed, and the village, now located in Lithuania and called Kaniuakai [sic—Kaniūkai], was burned to the ground, according to the reports.

The investigation, which has not been reported in the United States and was unknown to a series of scholars interviewed for this article, is creating unease among Jews because of its possible political motives.

"It is very convenient for the Canadian Polish Congress to raise this issue instead of providing explanations about pogroms of Poles against Jews during and after the war," said Hebrew University historian Dov Levin, who was a member of one of the Jewish partisan units operating under Soviet command in that region and has written several books on the issue. …

The institute is now trying to reconstruct the actual events that took place in Koniuchy, a small village at the Polish-Lithuanian-Belarus border.

Severin Hochberg, a historian with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, said material he had seen suggested that civilians were indeed killed by partisans, a view endorsed by several experts interviewed for this article.

"At the time, the Soviets were on the offensive and the Jews fought with them, so I believe something serious took place," he said. "But there is still a lot of research to be done."

One of the issues needed to be settled is the number of deaths, which the Canadian Polish Congress puts around 300. Most accounts hover between 30 and 40. [This claim is a baseless manipulation. The figure of 300 dead originates from accounts of Jewish partisans who took part in the massacre. It was the Canadian Polish Congress who identified other, non-Jewish sources that pointed to a lower toll. *M.P.*]

A spokesman for the institute, Andrzej Arseniuk, told the Forward the institute was basing its research on the lower estimate.

An examination of preliminary findings summed up in several interim reports confirms that the institute is basing its research on the assumption that 36 to 50 people were killed. …

Professor Levin of Hebrew University, who was a member of the "Death to the Occupants" ["Death to the Occupiers"] partisan unit, said Koniuchy was an "event."

He refused to discuss the events further on the phone, adding that there were probably mischievous designs behind the initiative to publicize the events.

A key issue facing Polish researchers will be to determine the degree of autonomy of the Jewish units in the Soviet partisan hierarchy. The units were incorporated within the Soviet command-and-control chain at the time, according to historians Hochberg of the Holocaust Museum in Washington and Israel Gutman of the Yad Vashem museum in Jerusalem. …

> However, Hochberg added that one could possibly speak of a "semiautonomous" situation in which the Jewish units had to fall in line with the Communist leadership while maintaining some leeway in deciding their participation in specific operations.[402]

It is perhaps understandable that Dov Levin should feel threatened by the revelations about Koniuchy, since he assiduously avoids mention of this massacre of civilians in his monograph and extensive writings on Jewish armed resistance in Lithuania, but rather subsumes it under the rubric of the fight against "Nazi collaborators":

> Concurrent with the battle against the German military and civil administration, the partisans conducted a methodical fight against Lithuanian collaborators serving in special German auxiliary units in the peasant militia in the villages, and in police forces on the forests' periphery and at strategic communication points.[403]

Among the "operations" carried out by the "Avenger" detachment, Levin lists "reprisals and punishment" which resulted in the killing of "a number of peasants who collaborated with the enemy."[404] Moreover, he fingers and chastises Polish partisans in the area for "their brutal attitude toward [Soviet] partisans in general and Jewish fighters in particular,"[405] even though the Home Army did not go out of its way to attack Soviet partisans in that area. According to Levin's own count, only fourteen Jewish partisans from Lithuania fell at the hands of "White Poles" during the entire occupation.[406] Similarly, historian Yitzhak Arad, who also fought with the Soviet partisans in this area and later joined the NKVD, speaks of "punitive raids against hostile villages" and blames the Home Army for instigating the conflict and killing Soviet partisans and Jews.[407] An excellent gauge of alleged "viciousness" of the Polish partisans are the statistics compiled by the Soviet command itself. Out of the 722 partisans who crossed the front line or were

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[402] Marc Perelman, "Poles Open Probe Into Jewish Role In Killings," *Forward* (New York), August 8, 2003.

[403] Levin, *Fighting Back,* 182.

[404] Ibid., 197.

[405] Ibid., 277 n.4. According to his memoir Levin joined the "Death to the Occupiers" unit in March 1944 after escaping from the ghetto in Kaunas. He did not therefore take part in the assault on Koniuchy but did participate in "requisition missions" that targeted area farmers. While he does not mention any incidents of brutality on the part of Polish partisans, he complains of the "anti-Semitic virus" that infected his "non-Jewish comrades" and relates an incident which almost cost him his life (he was abandoned in a snowstorm). See Dov Levin, *With a Rifle in My Hand and Eretz Yisrael in My Heart*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/dovlevin1/dovlevin1.html> (updated July 28, 2005), 17–18.

[406] Levin, *Fighting Back,* 191. By comparison, the Germans and allied Lithuanian forces killed 92 Jewish partisans, while the Soviet and Jewish partisans killed 16.

[407] Arad, *Ghetto in Flames,* 459–60. However, Arad does not mention any punitive raids in discussion of the Jewish partisans in Rudniki forest in his most recent book, *In the Shadow of the Red Banner*. Nechama Tec refers to these assaults as "anti-German military missions." See Tec, "Reflections on Resistance and Gender," in Roth and Maxwell, eds., *Remembering for the Future,* vol. 1, 559; Tec, *Resilience and Courage,* 281.

parachuted into Lithuanian territory in 1941–1942, 141 were reported dead by May 1944. The vast majority were killed by the German army and Lithuanian police, died in accidents or as casualties of the local population, and only seven of them were killed by the Home Army.[408] Despite this evidence and the Home Army regional commander's specific orders forbidding the mistreatment of the civilian population, regardless of their nationality, historian and former partisan Yitzak Arad claims that the Home Army was waging a war against the Jews for purely ideological and racial reasons:

> The Jewish partisans active in the forests were portrayed as gangs of robbers, who behaved brutally towards non-Jews. This picture of the Jews … was rooted in political evaluations and inherent anti-Semitism. The result was that many Jews of Vilna [Wilno] and its environs who found refuge in the forests or with farmers, as well as Jewish partisans, were murdered by bands of Polish partisans.[409]

The reaction to an investigation launched by the Lithuanian authorities in 2007 concerning Koniuchy and other allegations involving former partisans such as Yitzhak Arad and Sara Ginaite-Rubinson (the latter is the wife of Mikail Rubinson, who reportedly took part in the assault on Koniuchy), was even more shrill and jarring, and exhibited nothing but contempt for their accusers as well as the victims. Their "line of defence" was twofold: how dare those anti-Semites question the conduct of the Jews, and besides, the peasants murdered by the Jewish partisans had it coming to them. They were just a bunch of vicious Nazi collaborators. (In this case, the partisans project their own pro-Soviet sympathies onto the villagers, whom they accuse, without any basis, of being Nazi sympathizers.) Although she insists she was not in Rudniki forest at the time, Ginaite-Rubinson states: "There were many villagers, hostile to the partisans, who were organized into armed groups, supplied by the Germans. Yes, they were villagers, but no, they were not unarmed civilians. Such a conflict was most likely the reason for the tragedy in Koniuchy."[410] In a subsequent interview, she attempts to link the villagers of Koniuchy to a raid on the village of Kalitańce that she took part in, which is described earlier on.

> The villagers in Koniuchy had a record of hostility to the partisans and attacked us whenever we passed in the vicinity of the village. They organized an armed group to fight the partisans, were

[408] Šarūnas Liekis, "Koniuchy in the 'New' and 'Old' Polish and Jewish Memory," Conference Paper, "Between Coexistence and Divorce: 25 Years of Research on the History and Culture of Polish Jewry and Polish-Jewish Relations," Hebrew University of Jerusalem, March 17–19, 2009.

[409] Arad, *Ghetto in Flames*, 249. Arad repears these charges in his most recent book where he refers to two attacks on Jewish marauders in Mickuny near Nowa Wilejka on December 14, 1943, and in Boruny near Oszmiana on March 24, 1944, but particulars are lacking so they are difficult to assess. See Arad, *In the Shadow of the Red Banner*, 291.

[410] Sara Ginaite, "'Investigating' Jewish Partisans in Lithuania: The Protest of a Veteran Jewish Partisan," *Jewish Currents*, September 2008: "During the events in Koniuchy, I was not in the Rudnicky [Rudniki] forest. I was on assignment to return to the Kaunas (Kovno) Ghetto … I cannot comment, therefore, on the details of the event. I can say this however: In our own interest, we tried to keep friendly relations with the villagers in the Rudnicky forest. We were never encouraged to harass or hurt them. In order to survive, we did have to collect food wherever we could, often from hostile villagers, but we tried as far as possible to seize food from German food storage areas or transports of food headed for Germany."

> supplied with weapons by the Germans, and collaborated with the Nazis and the local police. At the end of December 1943, during a food-gathering assignment in a village close to Koniuchy, we were spotted and attacked by the villagers. During the battle, two of our partisans were killed and a third was captured and handed over to the Nazi-controlled police.[411]

In fact, as we have seen, only one Jewish partisan was killed in that altercation, which was commenced by the Jewish partisans, and another two were captured by the Lithuanian police and survived.

Former partisans such as Arad and Ginaite-Rubinson are championed by a chorus of ethno-nationalist journalists, politicians, and community leaders, who endeavour to justify the Jewish partisans' misdeeds. They rail against the anti-Semitic Lithuanians for raising the issue[412] and the "vile" peasants who, as alleged "Nazi sympathizers," had only themselves to blame for their well-deserved fate. "There is no evidence of a 'war crime' at Koniuchy," proclaims Adam Fuerstenberg, former director of Toronto's Holocaust Centre, indignantly. Another pundit proffered the following "insights," based largely on sheer fiction:

> The investigation centered around the supposed massacre of civilians in a small village, Koniuchi [Koniuchy], near the Rudniki forest, which was controlled by Soviet partisans late in the war. Here's what seems like a probable scenario: Jewish and Soviet partisans regularly commandeered food and supplies from local villages. Nazi efforts to contain the partisans in Rudniki consisted mainly of arming villagers and local police as proxy fighters. Koniuchi was hostile to Soviet requisitioning, and contained Nazi sympathizers who organized ambushes of Soviet partisans—who organized a counterattack and put torch to the village by firing incendiary ammunition into wooden buildings. The pro-Nazi police officers made a last stand and fired back. Around thirty-five villagers, mainly men but also women and children, died in the battle. To date there is no reason to believe any of the people sought by Lithuanian prosecutors were present during this violence.
>
> Was the incident worth a criminal investigation in 2008?[413]

Writing for the Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel in an article entitled "Falsifying History," Abe Lawre attained new heights in the realm of fantasy and laying blame on the victims of this human tragedy.

> All existing evidence points to the fact … that Kaniukai [Koniuchy] was not an innocent village but a fortified position of the German anti-partisan units and their local collaborators. They roamed the surrounding countryside hunting and killing any partisan and Jew they encountered. Had the

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[411] Adam Fuerstenberg, "Lithuania Asks Partisans to 'Justify' Their Actions," *The Canadian Jewish News,* November 20, 2008.

[412] Among those who engaged in gratuitously condemning the Lithuanian authorities for mounting an investigation was *The Economist* ("Prosecution and Persecution: Lithuania Must Stop Blaming the Victims," August 21, 2008).

[413] Geoff Vasil, "Analyzing Lithuanian Anti-Semitism: The 'Double Genocide' Theory Refuses to Quit," *Jewish Currents,* November 2008.

> garrison of Kaniukai won the battle not a partisan and especially not a Jew would have been spared the torture and cruel death that the locals were so adapt [sic] at.[414]

However, the Jewish partisans who actually took part in the indiscriminate massacre of the civilian population—whose only "crime" was, on occasion, defending their homes from robberies and not supposedly attacking Soviet partisans because of their alleged pro-Nazi sympathies—describe the events in the following graphic terms, without mincing words:

> *Isaac Kowalski:* "Our detachment got the order to destroy everything that was moving and burn the village down to its roots. … after two hours the village with the fortified shelter was completely destroyed."
>
> *Abraham Zeleznikow:* "Partisans come around the village, everything was torched, every animal, every person was killed. And one of my friends, acquaintances, a partisan, took a woman, put her head on a stone, and killed her with a stone."
>
> *Zalman Wylozni:* "the entire village of 80 farmsteads was burned to the ground and its inhabitants were murdered."
>
> *Paul (Pol) Bagriansky:* "the shooting of the escaping villagers made such a hell of an uproar that no human cry or voice could be heard. The first hour I was standing with the commanding officer and few of his aides on a hill watching this awful inferno. … When I reached my unit I saw one of our people holding the head of a middle aged woman against a big stone and hitting her head with another stone. Each blow was accompanied by sentences like: this is for my murdered mother, this is for my killed father, this is for my dead brother, etc. He was a young man of about 22 years old and I was with him all the time in the underground. He was a friendly and quiet person, I would never have expected to see him doing what he was doing now. …
>
> "When I reached the unit to tell them their new assignment, I saw an awful, gruesome picture. … In a small clearing in the forest six bodies of women of various ages and two bodies of men were lying around in a half circle. All bodies were undressed and lying on their backs. The full moon was shining on them. One man at a time was shooting in between the legs of the dead bodies. When the bullet would strike the nerve the body would react as if were alive. It would shiver, quiver for a few seconds. The women's bodies reacted much more violently than the dead bodies of men. All men of the unit were participating in this cruel play, laughing, in a wild frenzy. …
>
> "Around two o'clock in the morning the village of Koniuchi was completely burned, not one hut was visible, no sound was forthcoming. Presumably all people, including the young, the women and the men were burned, shot … or finished by our men when trying to escape from this hell."

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[414] Abe Lawre, "Falsifying History," February 20, 2009, Internet: <http://www.lithuanianjews.org.il/HTMLs/article_list4.aspx?C2014=14497&BSP=13973&BSS59=13971>.

According to Ruzka Korchak, these shocking scenes caused considerable consternation among some of the partisans who participated in the massacre, though she surely exaggerates the extent of that constituency since not one participant who wrote about it openly expressed such humane sentiments.

> This punitive operation, as well as the manner in which it was carried out, caused deep consternation in the Jewish camp and sharp criticism among many fighters. … this cruel operation, prepared and carried out by the military and political leadership of the Brigade, in the course of which men, women and children were killed indiscriminately … Many of the Jewish fighters who took part in the operation returned to the camp shaken and dejected.[415]

The commentary took a rather bizarre twist at the hands of Nick Bravin, who described the enormous international campaign mounted by Jewish circles to pressure the Lithuanian authorities to stop all their investigations and, in advancing a "defence" for one of the alleged participants of the Koniuchy massacre, for which he blames the victims of the "raid," seriously undermined the value of partisan memoirs.

> The Arad case "created so much damage" for Lithuania, [Lithuanian Foreign Affairs Secretary Oskaras] Jusys said, referring to the significant diplomatic pressure imposed by the United States, the European Union, Israel, and international Jewish groups. Lithuania's foreign minister and president appealed personally to the prosecutor to drop the Arad investigation, Jusys said, and in September [1998] the case was closed. But in the meantime, prosecutors had opened investigations into several other Holocaust survivors. …
>
> The most public of the ongoing investigations involves Rachel Margolis … who joined the Soviet partisans after escaping the Vilnius [Wilno] ghetto. … In Magolis's memoir, … she recounts a partisan raid on the village of Kaniukai [Koniuchy] in January 29, 1944. Facts about the raid are heavily disputed, including whether the villagers were acting in concert with the Nazis …
>
> According to Margolis's memoir, she did not take part in the Kaniukai raid, but her longtime friend and fellow partisan, Fania Brancovskaja [Brantsovky], did. …
>
> Brancovskaja met with prosecutors last May to explain that she was recovering from an operation at the time of the Kaniukai raid and had not taken part in it. Margolis sent her old friend a letter backing up Brancovskaja's account, and said her memoir should be regarded as literature, not historical fact.[416]

Remarkably, when word got out her wartime exploits the American, Brirtish, Irish, Austrian, and other embassies in Vilnius started to fete Fania Brantsovsky.[417] German President Horst Köhler even bestowed

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[415] Korchak, *Plamia pod peplom,* 321.

[416] Nick Bravin, "In Other Words: Baltic Ghosts," *Foreign Policy,* May/June 2009.

[417] Dovid Katz, "'Genocide Industry' Has Hidden Agenda," *Irish Times,* May 30, 2009.

an award on her.[418] British commentators write of "the collaboration between ordinary Lithuanians and German occupiers that was in evidence in places like Kanyuki [sic]" and "the battle … between armed pro-Nazi villagers and the [Soviet] partisans," implying that the massacre was "a legitimate partisan military operation, with inevitable civilian casualties."[419] Writing in 2013, Dovid Katz, a cultural historian, claimed, contrary to all evidence, that "Koniuchy is the name of a village that the Germans manipulated and regularly used for violent attacks against local anti-Nazi partisans camped in nearby forests."[420] There is no credible account of villagers launching violent attacks on Soviet partisans in the Rudniki forest.

Some observers are more circumspect. Initially, Antony Polonsky, Professor of Holocaust Studies at Brandeis University and editor-in-chief of the journal *Polin,* offered the following matter-of-fact rebuttal—so very different from the obscene media spectacle put on by the defenders of the murderers of the Koniuchy villagers: "partisans often took actions which were quite brutal, and this applies also to Jewish partisans."[421] Further: "The same pertains to the massacre in Koniuchy and the pacification of Naliboki, and the role that Jewish partisans played in them. I have no problem in saying that these people also did very bad things."[422] Common decency is as simple as that. In subsequent pronouncements, however, Polonsky sought to justify the actions of the Soviet partisans and essentially accuses the villagers of bringing the tragedy on themselves for allegedly collaborating with the Nazis and "hampering [Soviet] partisan activity." The victims are simply written off as collateral damage of war who, rightly, had it coming to them. Polonsky refuses to acknowledge the impact of the incessant raids that the villagers endured at the hands of the partisans and stubbornly clings to the blatant fiction that there was a garrison in the village of Koniuchy and that the villagers organized ambushes on the roads and attacked villages friendly to the partisans. He dismisses those who have noted that there were many Jews among the partisans who attacked the village as "ethno-nationalists," conveniently forgetting that it was the Jewish partisans themselves who were the first to acknowledge this fact and turned Koniuchy into a central

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[418] "Germany Awards in Vilnius Former Red Guerrilla Featured in Mass Murder Case," Baltic News Service, www.bns.lt, October 29, 2009.

[419] Gordon Brown, "Women of Courage: Rachel Margolis," *The Independent,* March 9, 2011.

[420] Dovid Katz, Review of Marek J. Chodakiewicz's *Intermarium: The Land Between the Black and Baltic Seas, Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2013): 169–176. Katz focuses on the activities of the present-day Lithuanian authorities to draw attention away from the real issue of a ghastly war crime perpetrated against a Polish village.

[421] *Voices on Antisemitism*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, November 6, 2008. Internet: <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/antisemitism/voices/>. Professor Polonsky goes on to state: "One of the issues that we have to understand is that all of the countries of Eastern Europe were subjected to two occupations—a Nazi and a Soviet occupation. For the Poles, the Lithuanians, Latvians, the Ukrainians, they were faced with two enemies, or faced with how to choose between them. The Jews were in a different position. For the Jews, the Nazis were unequivocally enemies, whose goal was to destroy physically Jews in Eastern Europe. Soviets were potential allies. So we're talking about a very complicated situation in which two totalitarian systems are in conflict, and in which a lot of innocent people on all sides are suffering. And what we need to do is to understand the complexity of these events and show some empathy for all those people—including Jews—caught up in this tragic conflict."

[422] Piotr Zychowicz, "Winni i tak nie przepraszają: Z prof. Anthonym Polonskym rozmawia Piotr Zychowicz," *Rzeczpospolita,* September 20–21, 2008.

episode of their "military" accomplishments. To suggest, as Polonsky does, that Poles are not aware that Koniuchy was a Soviet-ordered pacification is simply a bizarre subterfuge designed to turn attention away from the grisly crime.

> These conflicts intensified from the end of 1943 when there was an increase in the fighting between Soviet partisans and village self-defence set by German and Lithuanian police in eastern Lithuania. During this period many encounters between partisans and the local police from the villages took place, marked by the arbitrary killing on both sides of suspect civilians. No doubt, many of these suspects were innocent.
>
> One such episode was the attack by Soviet partisan units on the village of Koniuchy (Kaniukai [Kaniūkai]), a village today in Lithuania, but largely inhabited by Poles. At the time of this attack the Soviet partisans were in a critical position and were being harassed by the local police force and its German superiors. …
>
> The action was undertaken by all the partisans in the Rudnicki [Rudniki] forest. Although subsequently, ethno-nationalists in both Lithuania and Poland have claimed that it was a 'Jewish' action, it is not possible definitively to determine the ethnicity of those who participated. … Clearly what was involved was an attack on a village which harboured collaborationist police and had hampered partisan activity. As so often happen in such incidents, there were also many innocent victims.[423]

Other ethno-nationalist historians and publicists have attempted to diminish the importance of the Koniuchy massacre and steer away from the justifiable criticisms of the Jewish partisan narrative by resorting to the rather transparent ploy of accusing Poles of focusing upon Koniuchy to draw attention away from their own atrocities.[424] Tellingly, they are also are now quick to discount accounts by Jewish perpetrators that mentioned 300 victims in Koniuchy as exaggerated and take issue with Poles who refer to those numbers. This is in marked contrast to their treatment of the July 1941 massacre in Jedwabne, where they consistently refer to a grossly inflated toll of 1,600 or higher in spite of the fact that the investigation carried out by Poland's Institute of National Remembrance point established that no more than several hundred Jews perished in Jedwabne.[425] Since the perpetrators of the Koniuchy massacre openly and

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[423] Antony Polonsky, "Introduction" to Margolis, *A Partisan from Vilna,* 40–42. Polonsky repeated these charges in *The Jews in Poland and Russia,* vol. 3, 524–25.

[424] John Zeleznikow, "Life at the End of the World: A Jewish Partisan in Melbourne," *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History,* vol. 16, no. 3 (Winter 2010): 11–32, here at 20.

[425] Antony Polonsky, for example, continues to insist that more than more than 1,000 Jews were killed in Jedwabne. See Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia,* vol. 3, 422. The January 2008 issue of *History* ran a highly charged letter from Joanna Michlic and Antony Polonsky which blatantly misrepresents the findings of the prosecutor of the Jedwabne massacre investigation and historians at the Institute of National Remembrance regarding the number of victims, the respective degree of German and Polish involvement in the crime, and the participation of local Jews in the persecution of Poles during the Soviet occupation. Compare with Paweł Machcewicz and Krzysztof Persak, eds., *Wokół Jedwabnego: Studia; Dokumenty* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2002), vol. 1, 17, 80, 104, 330–31. Polonsky's approach to many complex issues is equally troubling. For example, he reduces the events in Ejszyszki, where the Home Army attacked a home that harboured a

repeatedly boasted of their accomplishment of having annihilated the entire village of Koniuchy and murdered all of its 300 inhabitants, and vilified the villagers in the process, there is really no reason not to mention the higher victim count in the case of Koniuchy. Despite the disparate tolls, Jedwabne and Koniuchy must be treated as equivalent crimes, as both were inspired and planned by Poland's invaders—Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union and carried out with some local collaborators.

The significance of the pacification of Koniuchy cannot be overstated. While Jewish partisan groups committed various acts of sabotage (train derailments, cutting down telegraph posts), carried out ambushes of local policemen, and were occasionally involved in skirmishes with small groups of German troops, they did not as a rule engage the Germans in direct military confrontations. The assault on Koniuchy was therefore played up and embellished to enhance their wartime exploits, growing into—reputedly—the largest military operation undertaken by Jewish partisans on Polish territory. The legend that it spawned underscores the following significant facts: (1) the small scale of Jewish partisan warfare; (2) the widespread grassroots conspiracy to tarnish Poles as Nazi collaborators; and (3) the unreliability of memoirs of Jewish partisans as an objective source concerning relations with the Polish population. Accounts from other areas of Poland (for example, Wyszków forest) give further support for this assessment.

As James M. Glass has demonstrated, former Jewish partisans expressed no guilt about taking from the peasants whatever they needed, and spoke of having killed Nazi "sympathizers" without remorse. Revenge was foremost in their minds, and blind hatred, which they projected onto the entire surrounding population, often overwhelmed them. They justified their misdeeds by resorting to a twisted logic. Moreover, they were intensely proud of being Jewish.[426] Therefore, their conduct cannot be subsumed under that of Soviet partisans, but must be judged on its own merits, as an expression of their ethnicity.

Soviet counter-intelligence officer, to "the Polish AK attacking Jews," thereby unwittingly conflating Communists and Jews. See Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia,* vol. 3, 608. Joanna Michlic's standard approach is label historians whose views (and facts) she does not agree with as primitive, blame-shifting "ethno-nationalists" (read: "anti-Semites"), who "use a range of strategies to rationalize and justify early postwar anti-Jewish violence and to minimize its cruel nature." See Joanna B. Michlic, "'The Past That Will Not Go Away:' The Polish Historical Debate about Jan T. Gross's *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz* (2006, 2008) and the Study of Early Postwar Anti-Semitism," Conference Paper, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, March 17–19, 2009. Michlic's strategy is simply one of attempting to monopolize and control the discourse, and not tolerating any deviation from her own views. (Another example of this approach is her strident review of Gunnar Paulsson's excellent study *Secret City*.) On the other hand, as is to be expected of someone who sees everything through the prism of anti-Semitism, this ardent champion of Jan Gross's methodology has nothing unfavourable to say about Jews who collaborated with Soviet invaders in 1939–41 and with the postwar Stalinist regime. Although Michlic does not allude to, or concede, the possibility of "ethno-nationalist" Jewish historians, her writings are a clear indication that such historians do in fact exist.

[426] Glass, *Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust,* 2–3, 5, 68, 97.

The Soviets Lay the Groundwork for Poland's Subjugation

From the summer of 1943, special NKGB (the predecessor of the KGB) sections were attached to all of the Soviet brigades operating in this area.[427] The recruitment tactics initiated in the summer of 1943 did not endear the local population to the Soviet cause:

> Our Russian "advisers" started an intensive recruiting drive among the inhabitants of the villages near us. Many Poles and White Russians were in no hurry to join a partisan unit led by Russians. Poles who had doubts about joining a partisan brigade under Russian command were given short shrift. Anyone who refused the Russians' "invitation" to join their partisan brigade was arbitrarily presumed to be an enemy of the Soviet Union and shot then and there.[428]

A special operational group of the NKVD tasked with counter-intelligence directed at the Polish underground was parachuted into the Nowogródek region in May 1944.[429] Joseph Riwash, a Jew who joined the Voroshilov brigade and was assigned to its "intelligence section," acknowledges that the "political commissars" parachuted into the area "kept a close check on the local populace and radioed its findings to Russia. Hence, when the regular Russian forces moved in, they had enough information to place 'undesirables' … under arrest at once."[430] To be effective they had to rely on intelligence agents as well as on information supplied by local partisans and a network of informants—often recruited under duress—among the local population.[431] Soviet reports complained that they were generally unsuccessful in

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[427] Boradyn, "Stosunki Armii Krajowej z partyzantką sowiecką na Nowogródczyźnie," in Boradyn, ed., *Armia Krajowa na Nowogródczyźnie i Wileńszczyźnie (1941–1945)*, 77.

[428] Riwash, *Resistance and Revenge*, 60. A Pole from Lubieszów, in Polesia (Polesie), recalls his arrest, along with more than a dozen Poles, Ukrainians and Russians, by partisans from Fiodorov's "Chernikhovskyi" group in early September 1943. Their hands were tied and they were taken to a remote barn where they were closely guarded. During a brutal interrogation conducted by two young Jews, they were psychologically abused and accused of all sorts of wrongdoing. Although none of those arrested was guilty of any crime, only six of them came out of the ordeal alive. This Pole, one of the lucky ones, was inducted into Fiodorov's Polish partisan unit. See account of Zbigniew Małyszczycki, dated November 23, 1997 (in the author's possession).

[429] Boradyn, *Niemen–rzeka niezgody*, 218.

[430] Riwash, *Resistance and Revenge*, 59. The story of one of the Polish-Jewish agents sent by Moscow to Naliboki forest to carry out "political-educational indoctrination" is recorded in Kowalski, *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance, 1939–1945,* vol. 3 (1986), 216–18. However, this account becomes evasive when describing the activities they performed upon arrival there. Another NKVD operative sent to the Soviet partisan base near Lake Narocz in February 1944, was Jan Frey (pseudonym Bielecki), reportedly a prewar Jewish Communist from Łódź. Frey-Bielecki railed against the allegedly "pro-Nazi" Home Army in Soviet propaganda publications. See Borodziewicz, *Szósta Wileńska Brygada AK,* 103 n.7; Tadeusz Paweł Rutkowski, "Frey-Bielecki Jan," in *Encyklopedia "Białych Plam"* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2001), vol. 6, 207. Bielecki, then a captain with the security office, became head of the regional security office in Kraków in April 1945. At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Polish People's Party in July 1945 he complained that "it is universally known that the managers of the voivodship security office are Jews." See Korkuć, *Zostańcie wierni tylko Polsce…,* 117, 437.

[431] According to Soviet archival sources, the Nowogródek region was infested with agents and informants: "by 1 February 1944, the Baranovichi [Baranowicze] regional partisan headquarters … employed the services of 500 agents. At the same time, the 13 partisan brigades that operated in this region received information from 408 agents, who reported directly to the heads of the brigades' reconnaissance sections. In addition, another 270 agents reported to the heads of NKVD special sections, and 100 reported to various other agencies in the headquarters. Finally, 72 agents

recruiting Poles for this purpose.[432] Moreover, the Soviets were not always able to strike immediately and held on to the lists of "anti-Soviet elements" until after the "liberation."[433] One of the tools of the Soviet onslaught was a well-orchestrated propaganda campaign that labelled the Home Army as "fascists," "bandits," "terrorists," "capitalists," "German collaborators," "German spies," and "Gestapo agents."[434] This crude propaganda would leave an indelible mark on Holocaust memoirs.

By February 1944, the list of "anti-Soviet elements" in the district of Baranowicze alone contained 3,927 names for the NKVD–NKGB. By June of 1944, these special sections also managed to liquidate 689 people, a number that did not include those killed by the partisan formations.[435] Between July 1944 and January 1945, the Soviet security apparatus recruited 4,385 people in "Western Belorussia," including 724 agents, 141 residents and 3,517 confidants or informants. During that period the Soviets liquidated 259 "bandit insurgent" groups [i.e., the Polish underground], killing 2,900 of their members and 642 "individual bandits." They also liquidated other "bandit groups," killing 753 of their members and arresting 2,644.[436] In total, between July 1944 and the end of 1947, it is estimated that in the Wilno and Nowogródek regions, the Soviets killed 3,000 Home Army members, arrested 13,000 members of the Polish underground, and deported 20,000 civilians to the Gulag.[437]

As the Soviet Army was poised to re-enter prewar Polish territory in the summer of 1944, Stalin issued orders (Decree no. 220145 of July 14, 1944) calling for the open liquidation of the Polish underground

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worked in the headquarters' long-range intelligence service." See Leonid D. Grenkevich, *The Soviet Partisan Movement, 1941–1944: A Critical Historiographical Analysis* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 291–93. Another source refers to more than 2,000 agents active in this area. See Boradyn, "Antyakowskie specjalne wydziały i wywiad baranowickiego zgrupowania partyzantki sowieckiej," in Polak, *Zbrodnie NKWD na obszarze województw wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 265; Boradyn, *Niemen–rzeka niezgody*, 78–79. A Jewish memoir states that there was "a 'spy' left in each village." See Rubin, *Against the Tide*, 112. Village informants were often recruited under duress. See Boradyn, *Niemen–rzeka niezgody*, 211. The Polish underground also maintained their own intelligence-gathering sections aimed at penetrating the network of Soviet spies, whom they also executed. Ibid., 117. Apparently, the Home Army even had a Jewish confidant in the Lenin Brigade. Ibid., 147 n.208. The Soviets executed many Poles suspected of being Home Army "spies." Ibid., 219.

[432] Boradyn, *Niemen–rzeka niezgody*, 136. However, some Poles were also recruited. Ibid., 213–15.

[433] Ibid., 146. The chronicler of the Wilno ghetto noted, already in January 1942, reports that "the Jewish Communists from the ghetto are making a proscription list of all those who will have to be sentenced to death by the future wo[rker's] regime." See Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania*, 168.

[434] Boradyn, *Niemen–rzeka niezgody*, 220–21.

[435] Boradyn, *Niemen–rzeka niezgody*, 78; Boradyn, "Antyakowskie specjalne wydziały i wywiad baranowickiego zgrupowania partyzantki sowieckiej," in Polak, *Zbrodnie NKWD na obszarze województw wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 270.

[436] Chmielarz, et al., *NKWD o polskim podziemiu 1944–1948*, 35.

[437] Henryk Piskunowicz, "Zwalczanie polskiego podziemia przez NKWD i NKGB na kresach północno-wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej," in Andrzej Ajnenkiel, ed., *Wojna domowa czy nowa okupacja? Polska po roku 1944* (Wrocław, Warsaw and Kraków: Wydawnictwo Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, 1998), 70. According to another source, by March 1945, more than 7,000 Polish partisans were arrested in "Western Ukraine" and more than 11,340 in the Wilno region. The number arrested in "Western Belorussia" amounted to 13,329 by March 1947. See Brzoza and Sowa, *Historia Polski 1918–1945*, 649.

forces—the Home Army—operating in that area. On July 20 field orders directed that officers of the Polish underground be directed to the organs of the NKVD–NKGB and "Smersh."[438] According to a report filed in mid-July 1944 by Colonel Ivan Serov, the NKVD regiments in the Wilno region totalled 12,000 men.[439] The Home Army was being systematically disarmed and many of its members fled to central Poland, to the forests or to their homes hoping to escape capture. This did not deter the Soviet "liberators" and their accomplices, however, from relentlessly hunting down the remnants and new recruits. By August 3, 1944 almost 8,000 Home Army members in the Wilno region were "disarmed," of whom 4,400 were interned. What this meant is vividly illustrated by reports and eyewitness accounts from that period.

Those who attempt to blame the Poles for how events unfolded in Eastern Poland are far off the mark. As American historian Timothy Snyder explains,

> Polish commanders did make local agreements with Soviet counterparts in summer 1944, but at a very heavy price. Negotiation meant leaving hiding places and revealing identities, and the Soviets exploited Polish vulnerability to the maximum. Poles who revealed themselves to join the common fight against Germans were treated as people who might resist future Soviet rule. The Soviet Union never had any intention of supporting any institution that claimed to represent an independent Poland. The Soviet leadership and the NKVD treated every Polish political organization (except the communists) as part of an anti-Soviet plot.
>
> In July 1944, Polish units were allowed to assist the Red Army in attacks on Vilnius [Wilno] and Lviv [Lwów], the major cities of prewar eastern Poland, but were then disarmed by their ostensible Soviet allies. The Polish soldiers were given the choice of Soviet command or prison. After the disarmaments, the NKVD arrested everyone with a political past. Soviet partisans were allowed to take part in the victorious campaign against the Germans; Polish partisans were not. Indeed, in many cases Soviet partisans were turned against the Polish fighters. The partisan unit of Tuvia Bielski, for example, took part in the disarming of the Home Army.[440]

The search for Polish partisans who hid was carried out with brutality. Any Home Army member was automatically considered to have been a Nazi "collaborator." According to a dispatch of July 1944 for the Government Delegate,

> After Grodno was occupied by the Bolsheviks, Jewish bands entered the town in conjunction with the band of Wasilewski, who is paid and armed by the Bolsheviks. Both bands conduct themselves aggressively toward the Poles; they murder [people]. The same thing has been occurring in the

[438] For additional information about the NKVD operations against the Home Army see Andrzej Paczkowski's essay, "Poland, the 'Enemy Nation,'" in Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Paczkowski, Karel Bartošek, Jean-Louis Margolin, *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge, Massacusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1999), 372–75.

[439] Noskowa and Fitowa, eds., *NKWD i polskie podziemie 1944–1945*, 40.

[440] Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 299.

environs of Białystok.[441]

Candid Jewish sources—such as the one below which describe conditions in Wilno and its surroundings—confirm this information:

> Those who returned from the forests, from the forced labor camps in Estonia, and from hiding places in the villages, bitter individuals and armed groups, killed more than a few Polish and Lithuanian collaborators, and those who accompanied groups of German prisoners meted out their own brand of justice, "as only partisans knew how," said [Abba] Kovner. "It was a terrible sight," [Vitka] Kempner told [Haim] Guri. "Our men screamed and cried out for vengeance for their mothers and sisters, and I think they simply killed them on the spot." When the Soviet government stabilized, killings by Jews stopped, at least officially.[442]

Wanda Lisowska, a prewar teacher from Nowogródek and a courier for the Home Army, who was arrested by the Soviets in the fall of 1944, recorded the following in 1946:

> They [the Soviets] conducted massive round-ups. It happened this way: they would arrive around two or three o'clock in the morning, surround the village and conduct house-to-house searches looking for arms and taking away the men. The prisons in the neighbouring towns of Raduń and Ejszyszki were overflowing. … The NKGB interrogations were savage: they were conducted mainly at night. The numerous informers were mostly recruited from among the Jews who occupied positions in the military, NKVD, and NKGB and worked as confidants. … Partisan [Polish Home Army] units, not wanting the civilian population to suffer on account of these denunciations, liquidated Soviet confidants. …
>
> Right after the battle of Surkonty, I was arrested. I was bringing civilian clothing to the soldiers in a hideout. … They took us to Raduń. The men were locked in a stable and I, in a dark chamber. They held me for two weeks. The interrogations took place at night. On the first night I was interrogated seven times. … The interrogations were ordinary: one was beaten. Their purpose was to elicit information about AK detachments. The men were treated much worse. They were tortured, beaten, their ribs were broken, their teeth knocked out. … In towns, the prisoners were held for up to two weeks, then they were taken to Wilno or Lida for trial. Trains departed for Siberia every two weeks. …
>
> In December 1944, in Wilno, the arrests were so massive that the NKVD were stationed in almost every apartment building arresting anyone who entered. In Wilno, there were sixteen prisons; in

[441] Referat Komunistyczny, Attachment (załącznik) no. 1, July 19, 1944, Archiwum Akt Nowych, Delegatura Rządu, file 202/II–58, 76.

[442] Porat, *The Fall of a Sparrow*, 187. Porat states that Abba Kovner destroyed Gestapo files concerning Jewish collaborators, so that they would not fall into the hands of the Soviet authorities and be used against Jews. To obtain documents and pemits needed by his organization, Kovner turned to former Jewish partisans, such as Yosef Harmatz and Senka Nisanelewicz, who had been given jobs in key positions in the Soviet bureacracy. Ibid., 186–88. Kovner was able to enter Poland wearing a Polish Army uniform, which he obviously acquired illegally, with the assistance of Jews serving in the Polish Army. Ibid., 189.

> Łukiszki there was tremendous overcrowding. It was very difficult to get information about those arrested. They took them away and they disappeared like a rock in water. The families brought packages to all the prisons and received the same answer—"not here."
>
> Christmas 1944 was a very sad day all over the Wilno district. On the second day of the holidays a large transport filled with Poles left for Siberia.[443]

Confirmation of Lisowska's experience can be found in the memoirs of Abraham Lipkunsky, a Jew who joined the NKVD in July 1944. Lipkunsky was part of a small group of Jews who served in a "special combat sector" of a Red Army. His unit was transferred to Raduń "to maintain order in the town and to purge the area of criminals, meaning the White Poles who hated the Red Army and the Soviet regime." Lipkunsky, who served as aide to General Mayor, head of the security police in Raduń, readily admits that the surviving Jews "were focued at first on wreaking vengeance."[444]

> I was attached to the security police, known as the NKVD, whose principal responsibility was to help the Red Army uncover White Poles and bring them to the security police to be investigated. It was an unpleasant and dangerous task. The neighborhood of Radun contained hundreds of White Poles …
>
> As I knew the dusty lanes and paths leading to the villages around Dowgalishok [Dowgieliszki, a rural settlement near Raduń], I was attached to a Red Army unit as guide and scout. I was given a uniform of the Red Army and I would go out mounted on a small horse at the head of a company of soldiers, and lead them to the villages where there were nests of White Poles and show them how to surround the villages and cut off any possibility of entering or leaving them. After that, searches were made in the houses of the suspects. A good many weapons were confiscated and scores of suspects were taken to be interrogated. Anyone who objected, would be shot on the spot.
>
> Despite my revulsion at the task, I was glad that I had been chosen to fulfil such a dangerous mission, for in this way I could take my revenge in some way against the murderer of my father and all the innocent Jews of Dowgalishok.
>
> The security police in Radun were stationed in the spacious house that had formerly belonged to Berl Lipkunsky, the tailor of Dowgalishok. The many rooms were turned into interrogation cells and the enormous storeroom became a temporary prison. The prisoners were crowded into a corner

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[443] Wanda Lisowska, "Wspomnienia 'Grażyny,'" *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Paris), no. 36 (1976): 30–33. The participation of Jews in the repression of Home Army members was a widely held perception. According to a report from February 1945, in the Wilno and Nowogródek regions, "the NKVD with the assistance of the remaining Jews has been carrying out bloody orgies. The [Polish] population under the leadership of the AK has been resisting heroically and it trusts in the urgent assistance of the legal [Polish] government [in London]." Of course, no such help was on the horizon. See Franciszek Gryciuk and Piotr Matusak, eds., *Represeje NKWD wobec żołnierzy podziemnego Państwa Polskiego w latach 1944–1945: Wybór źródeł,* vol. 2 (Siedlce: WSRP, 1995), 24–25. Irena Chodakiewicz, a liaison officer for the Polish government in exile's Delegate's Office, was arrested by the NKVD in Wilno in June 1945. Jews were among her interrogators and torturers, who also included Soviets and Poles, in Wilno, and later in Warsaw, when she was recaptured. See Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918–1955,* 423–24.

[444] Aviel, *A Village Named Dowgalishok,* 289–93. Another Jew who worked as an official for the NKVD was Laike Slodovnik. Ibid., 299.

of the storeroom, enclosed and fenced in like in a sheepfold and there was barely enough room for everyone to stretch out. Occasionally, I was asked to be present during an investigation and assist in questioning, which generally took place at night. Some of the methods used during these interrogations are still fresh in mind. It was then that I learned that the interrogator always sat unrevealed in the darker shadows of the room, while a strong electric lamp illuminated the face of the suspect. And when the answer to the interrogator's question was not satisfactory, he would make use of an improvised whip made of supple metal wire and lash the suspect all over his body. I also learned the effect of isolation, hunger and thirst on a prisoner.

… One morning, as I was passing the large community center in the heart of the marketplace, I witnessed a sight one could not forget. Scores of bodies were lying one next to the other along the wall of the building, with their heads near the wall and their feet facing outward. The previous day, the White Poles had attacked soldiers of the Red Army and murdered seven in the most ruthless manner. In response to this act, the Red Army soldiers carried out a search in the vicinity of this incident and killed scores of White Poles by slitting their throats, placing them on public display for everyone to witness the bodies which remained there for two whole days.[445]

Similar reports—such as the one below—come from those imprisoned in Lida. Edward Dragun, who hails from the Lida area, escaped from Miedniki where the Soviets assembled the Home Army men who had just helped to liberate the city of Wilno from the Germans.

I escaped and returned home where I spent some time. Then I stayed with friends in Lida. We tried to leave for Poland, as they were already registering [Poles for this purpose]. The arrests became more frequent and the jails were full of people. I heard the tragic news that my older brother perished in a German concentration camp and another brother perished near our home. He was shot by Soviet soldiers. I didn't make it to the funeral. I was now all alone. That brother had never been anywhere and had not belonged to any organization. He was married and looked after the farm. I had had enough of everything because I had lost my entire family because of it. To live or to perish—it didn't make any difference to me. But why did my brother have to perish? Because he was a Pole?

I hid for quite some time. I was the deputy commander of the district and had only one thought—to leave for Poland. We didn't succeed; we were arrested. I was badly beaten immediately and my hands were tied with wire the entire time. We were led to Lida over 15 km away. In Lida they made a point of taking us to the place where the leader of our battalion, Lieutenant Pazurkiewicz, was left hanging. I was told that a similar fate awaited me.

Near the NKVD premises was a small home which served as the detention centre. I met a lot of acquaintances who had been there for quite some time. The interrogations lasted throughout the day and night. Everyone returned beaten and was barely able to stand on his feet. I myself was beaten on the neck with a special triangular-shaped billet and then with a rod 25 mm thick and about one-

[445] Ibid., 290–92. Aviel states that, unusually, he testified on behalf of a Polish farmer named Andzielewicz, who at one point had sheltered him and his father, and Andzielwicz's son, both of who were imprisoned for their connections with the Home Army. He does not know to what extent this helped them.

and-a-half metres long. We were hardly given anything to eat …

And for many of us our Polish patriotism came to an end. We saw that they wanted to annihilate us Poles in any way possible. They took us to the jail in groups and there we were investigated, beaten and called "fascist Polish mugs." … We were chewed up by lice and with our blood we wrote dates and names on the walls. More and more people moved about with difficulty after their heavy beatings …

The jail was located on Syrokomla Street in Lida. The day came when four of us were taken before the court and our sentence was read to us: ten years and loss of rights for five years, in other words we faced exile after our jail term was over. This was the sentence for "killing and robbing people." In my final words I said, "Indicate even one person whom I have killed or whom I have robbed. And did I betray my homeland? I am a Pole so let a Polish court try me." The judge, a Jewish colonel, smiled and said that the next time I will be tried by a polar bear in Siberia.[446]

As we have seen, the net was much broader than Home Army men. Leonard Perepeczko, a Polish doctor from Szumsk near Wilno, recalls his own arrest, on January 10, 1945, from his hospital office, by an NKVD lieutenant named Finkelstein, a Jew, for political reasons totally unrelated to Home Army activities. In Wilno, where his show trial took place and from which he was sent to a hard labour camp in Saratov without a specific verdict, he was under the watchful eyes of a Jewish militiaman named Kaplan.[447]

Field reports from Colonel Serov about the progress of this action in the Wilno area poured into Moscow, and these were passed on by Lavrentii Beria to Stalin himself.[448] A telling indicator of the extent of the oppression of the Home Army (commonly referred to as "bandits" in both Nazi and Soviet reports) is found in the research done by Lithuanian historian Arūnas Bubnys, summarized as follows:

The Soviet Union has never considered the Armia Krajowa (AK) its ally and made every effort to annihilate the armed underground movement of Poles in [the interwar Polish territories incorporated into] Lithuania. The process of the annihilation of the Polish underground movement is generally divided into three periods.

During the first period of the campaign in July 1944, the Soviets interned the AK units of the Vilnius [Wilno] and Naugardukas [Nowogródek] districts. The Soviets arrested the district

[446] Edward Dragun, "Życie i jego ciernista droga," *Wspomnienia Sybiraków* (Warsaw: Komisja Historyczna Związku Sybiraków, 1989), vol. 1: 51–52. Among those working in the jail in Lida was Icchak Lewin, a former partisan based in Lipiczany forest. See his account in the Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/2129, cited in Czajka, Młodkowska, and Umińska-Keff, eds., *Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz/Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue,* vol. 3, 60.

[447] Leonard Perepeczko, *W łagrach na "saratowskim szlaku": Wspomnienia* (Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Ludoznawcze, 1993), 7, 40, 42, 254.

[448] Some of these documents, only recently made public, were published by Russian historian Sergey Krivenko in the Warsaw historical journal *Karta,* no. 15 (1995): 28–51 as "Teczka Stalina: raporty z Polski"; another selection of Soviet documents describing the activities directed against the Polish underground can be found in Noskowa and Fitowa, eds., *NKWD i polskie podziemie, 1944–45.*

commander A. [Aleksander] Krzyżanowski, a number of commanding officers and about 7,900 soldiers. Nevertheless the Polish underground movement survived and continued its activities.

During the second period between July 1944–February, 1945, the NKVD–NKGB launched regular operations against the Polish underground. The campaign reached its peak in December 1944–January 1945. At the time, the operations against armed resistance in Lithuania were directed by S. Kruglov, the NKVD assistant commissar. During this period NKVD troops transferred to and concentrated in Lithuania from other regions of the USSR and reinforced by a number of NKGB operatives handed a severe blow to the Polish underground. They arrested the executives of the AK staff and of the Government Commissioner's [Delegate's] office to the Vilnius District. Between December 20, 1944 and February 6, 1945, the NKVD–NKGB arrested 9,249 Poles. After such big losses the process of gradual abatement of Polish resistance had started. Facing the Soviet terror many Poles of Lithuania decided to repatriate to Poland.

During the third period from March 1945 until the autumn of the same year the AK units had finally ceased their activities, and Polish partisans persuaded by the NKVD–NKGB reported themselves to Soviet authorities. The last Commandant of the Vilnius district Wincenty Chrząszczewski ("Ksawery") was arrested on July 18, 1945. Between July 1944 and May 20, 1945 the NKGB arrested or detained 7,116 participants of the Polish underground and the activities of the AK in Lithuania were suppressed.[449]

A similar situation pertained in other Soviet-occupied territories. In the latter part of 1944 repressions openly targeted all persons with ties to the anti-Communist underground. At the beginning of October 1944 an 8,850-strong NKVD division was sent to Lublin; its activities were coordinated with the state security office (*Urząd Bezpieczństwa*) and counter-intelligence section of the Communist Polish Army.[450]

Lieutenant General Viktor Akabumov, the chief of military counter-intelligence ("Smersh") informed Beria, on November 13, 1944, about the deportation of 1,014 members of the Home Army from the Białystok region to the NKVD camp in Ostashkov, and reiterated that since the beginning of the operation 2,044 partisans had been arrested and deported. A report from November 14, 1944, by Ivan Serov, by then chief of NKVD operations in Poland, spoke of the arrest of 2,210 Home Army soldiers in the Lublin region. By December 31, 1944, the county security offices of Lublin province had arrested 4,954 people,

[449] Arūnas Bubnys, "NKGB–NKVD prieš lenkų pogrindį Lietuvoje 1944 m. antroje pusėje–1945 m. pirmoje pusėje," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 2 (6), 1999, posted online at <http://www.tdd.lt/genocid/Leidyba/6/arunas6.htm>. According to an earlier study by that historian, between July 1944 and January 1945, the Soviets arrested some 11,500 Home Army members in the territory of Soviet Lithuania alone. See Bubnys, "Walka NKGB-NKWD z polskim podziemiem na Litwie w drugiej połowie 1944 r.–na początku 1945 r.," in Wołkonowski, *Sympozjum historyczne "Rok 1944 na Wileńszczyźnie,"* 205. According to another report, between August 20 and September 10, 1944, NKVD forces liquidated 14 Polish partisan groups in the districts of Baranowicze and Wilejka, then in Soviet Belorussia, killing 281 Polish partisans and capturing 103 of them. See Boradyn, ed., *Armia Krajowa na Nowogródczyźnie i Wileńszczyźnie (1942–1944) w świetle dokumentów sowieckich,* 227. It was in the context of this mop-up operation that Polish partisans struck at NKVD outposts and Soviet functionaries. Ibid., 230–44. See also Chmielarz, "Likwidacja podziemia polskiego na Nowogródczyźnie i Wileńszczyźnie (lipiec 1944–lipiec 1945)," in Boradyn, ed., *Armia Krajowa na Nowogródczyźnie i Wileńszczyźnie (1941–1945),* 171–95.

[450] Wnuk, *Lubelski Okręg AK DSZ i WiN, 1944–1947,* 35.

half of them suspected Home Army members. According to Soviet figures, the NKVD had arrested 3,375 people and deported them to the Soviet interior. Polish historians estimate that the actual number of those arrested was closer to 20,000, of whom half were deported to the Soviet Union.[451]

Without the support of the NKVD and Soviet advisers in the security office and in the Communist-controlled Polish Army, the chances of local Communists winning the war against the anti-Communist Polish underground and holding on to power were negligible. The local apparatus was so ineffective that the task of keeping the Communists in power fell to the NKVD forces stationed in Poland.[452] After the defeat of Nazi Germany in May 1945, the Communist authorities embarked on anti-partisan operations which were conducted in conjunction with the Red Army and NKVD forces. The first large-scale "anti-bandit" operation directed against the anti-Communist insurgents, the so-called Augustów round-up (*obława augustowska*), was carried in the vicinity of Augustów and Suwałki between July 10 and 25, 1945. It resulted in the arrest some 2,000 partisans, of whom about 600 disappeared. With the release of secret Soviet documents, it is now known that Lieutenant General Abakumov, the head of "Smersh," ordered their execution. In addition to units of the NKVD, security office, Internal Security Corps (*Korpus Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego—KBW*), and Citizens' Militia (*Milicja Obywatelska—MO*), all of which had Soviet advisers in key positions, 1,739 soldiers of the Polish Army took part in these operations.[453] In December 1945, the Ministry of Public Security ordered that a plan be drawn up to eradicate totally all remnants of the underground once and for all.[454] Anti-partisan operations intensified again after the falsified national referendum in July 1946, when more than 250,000 soldiers, Internal Security Corps personnel, militiamen and security office functionaries were mobilized for this task.[455] In September 1946, in Operation "Lawina," 167 National Armed Forces soldiers were murdered in the forests near Opole.

A large network of agents and informers was enrolled in the field to assist the NKVD and communist security forces to accomplish these measures. As we have seen, Poles, whether suspected of being ill-disposed toward the Soviets or of anti-Semitic activities, not only were apprehended in large number but also could be, and were, executed extrajudicially with impunity. Entire Polish families were often liquidated and the perpetrators could count on the authorities turning a blind eye to such atrocities directed at Poles.[456] For example, in Drohiczyn, not far from Brańsk, ten Poles were murdered by local Jews in

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[451] Ibid., 35–36.

[452] Ibid., 79.

[453] Ibid., 86. See also Jan Jerzy Milewski, Anna Pyżewska, and Tomasz Danilecki, eds., *Obława Augustowska (lipiec 1945 r.): Wybór źródeł* (Białystok: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Oddział w Białymstoku, 2010).

[454] Wnuk, *Lubelski Okręg AK DSZ i WiN, 1944–1947*, 87.

[455] Ibid., 98.

[456] An exceptional case where the Polish authorities took some action to punish a perpetrator is that of a Mr. Godlewski, who returned to Poland with the Polish Army. Having learned that his family, who had been hidden and sheltered by a local Polish farmer, was betrayed to the Germans (both Godlewski's family and the Polish farmer's perished), he took his submachine gun and killed the entire family of the informer. However, Godlewski was declared

December 1944 because they were falsely suspected of killing a Jew, a crime in fact perpetrated by the Soviets.[457] While Jews were eager to take revenge against Poles, they were far less successful in going after Jewish collaborators. Lubicz, the head of the Jewish police in Międzyrzec, assisted the Germans in rounding up Jews and captured those hidden in ghetto bunkers. After learning that some Jewish partisans had issued a death sentence against him, Lubicz helped the German gendarmerie organize a raid in which four Jewish partisans were killed. According to a survivor,

> After the liberation, Lubicz [the last head of the Jewish ghetto police] and his wife returned to Międzyrzec in July 1944 from their hideout. The Jews convoked a court of ten people (I was among them). They resolved to kill him. I was supposed to carry out the sentence. This was two days after we had killed a Polish traitor who had betrayed Jews. The majority of our court considered it unseemly in front of Poles for Jews to kill a Jew. It was decided to take him to the ghetto and kill him there clandestinely. Lubicz found out, or perhaps someone told him, so he fled.
>
> After some time more Jewish traitors returned: Szejmel, the vice president of the Judenrat and organizer of the Ordnungsdienst [Jewish ghetto police], the policeman Topf, and others. We decided to kill all of them. At that time, however, Sommersztajn [Emil Sommerstein], the chairman of the Jewish Committee in Lublin, arrived and did not allow it. We did not carry out the sentence. Some time later I organized an investigation commission and we gathered documents and materials regarding these traitors. We gave these documents to the Central Committee [of Jews in Poland], but until this time [April 1948] they haven't been used. We handed Topf over to the state prosecutors but he bribed the entire police in Międzyrzec Podlaski and fled.[458] He was in the United States, but is now in Cuba. We also arrested Lubicz but he gave

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insane and soon released; he was placed as a security guard at a Jewish orphanage in Łódź, where he used to say: "Don't worry one little bit, I have my papers from the insane asylum, they can do nothing to us." See Sven Sonnenberg, *A Two Stop Journey to Hell* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, 2001).

[457] *Archiwum Polski Podziemnej 1939–1956: Dokumenty i materiały,* no. 2 (Warsaw, April 1994), 80. For other examples of extrajudicial killings perpetrated by Jews after the Soviet takeover see Norman Salsitz and Amalie Petranker Salsitz, *Against All Odds: A Tale of Two Survivors* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1990), 5, 37–41. Of course, Poles could also be reported to the authorities and prosecuted through legal channels. See, for example, Salsitz, *Three Homelands*, 143–44, 202, whose author, an officer in the security forces, had Polish betrayers arrested; and Verstandig, *I Rest My Case*, 221–21, whose author pursued Józef Makson, a Home Army member, for the murder of some Jews (Makson was sentenced to death). Posecutions for alleged theft of property were also not unknown. Julian and Emilia Ajzner had Norbert Krotowski prosecuted criminally for allegedly misappropriating property they left in his possession, but after witnesses testified in court proceedings that the property in question had been destroyed during the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, the charges against Krotowski were withdrawn. See Barbara Engelking, "Czarna godzina: Rzeczy żydowskie oddana na przechowanie Polakom," in Grabowski and Libionka, eds., *Klucze i kasa*, 421–22. Lesser forms of vengeance were also extacted to settle even "prewar" accounts and then some, as in the case of Norman Salsitz, who ran into someone who had harassed him as a youth in Kolbuszowa, and was a soldier in Wrocław: "Years had passed, but the idea of revenge still seemed altogether fitting … When I learned that his commanding officer was a friend of mine, a plan took shape in my mind. I instructed that officer to proceed to make life miserable for Plaza, which he did. Week after week Plaza came under mounting pressure—endless drills, laborious work assignments, leaves canceled—altogether a nightmare. … Now we were even" See Norman Salsitz, as told to Richard Skolnik, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland: Remembering Kolbuszowa* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 198.

[458] The fate of Szymon Tob, referred to here as Topf, is described later on. After breaking out of jail, he was tried *in absentia*.

> the State Security office in Międzyrzec a bribe of $300 and fled. Afraid of standing trial, Szejmel left for Belgium.[459]

There was no need to resort to extrajudicial punishment of alleged Polish "collaborators." Jews and Jewish organizations had ample recourse to the Communist state apparatus to pursue any Pole suspected of involvement in crimes against Jews during the German occupation and afterwards. Charges could be laid easily and the authorities prosecuted hundreds of such cases expeditiously. It was highly unusual for an ethnic Pole to bribe his way out. There was no shortage of Polish witnesses who came forward to testify on behalf of victimized Jews, and punishment, including incarceration and sometimes death, was meted out to hundreds of Poles.[460] Norman Davies described the new "legal" framework put in place to eliminate alleged Nazi collaborators and all opposition to the Stalinist regime:

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[459] Testimony of Lejb Goldberg, April 15, 1948, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/3502.

[460] The Communist authorities were generally quick to take action against crimes allegedly committed against Jews during the German occupation, and often dealt with the perpetrators harshly. According to historian Alina Cała, there were many such cases:

> the most dramatic and conflict-engendering cases involving Jews and Poles were reflected in the interventions undertaken by the Legal Department of the CKŻP [Central Committee of Polish Jews], where Jewish lawyers were available to help. First of all, these cases concerned the [alleged Nazi] collaborators, who participated during the [German] occupation in the Holocaust, denouncing or murdering Jews. Basing themselves upon written denunciations of both Jewish and non-Jewish witnesses, these cases were forwarded to the courts or the UBP [secret police]. The first trials took place in 1944 in Lublin and their number was not small.

The Committee's lawyers occasionally intimidated witnesses or manipulated an investigation in their zeal to incriminate Polish defendants. See Alina Cała, "Mniejszość żydowska," in Piotr Madajczyk, ed., *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce: Państwo i społeczeństwo polskie a mniejszości narodowe w okresach przełomów politycznych (1944-1989)* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1998), 259–60. Numerous investigations and cases were brought against Poles in the Białystok and Łomża regions. See Machcewicz and Persak, eds., *Wokół Jedwabnego,* vol. 1, 22–23, 159–271 (Jedwabne, Radziłów); Waldemar Monkiewicz, "Za cenę życia: O ratowaniu Żydów w Białostockiem o okresie okupacji niemieckiej," in Dobroński and Monkiewicz, eds., *Białostoccy Żydzi*, vol. 2, 236 (a mentally unbalanced person who, out of fear, reported a Jew hiding in the village was sentenced to life imprisonment); Jerzy Morawski, "Kto ich zabił," *Życie Warszawy,* August 12–13, 1995 (Podosie); Anna Pyżewska, "Tragedia w Sokołach—17 lutego 1945 r.," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 12 (2005): 80 (Sokoły). For additional examples of the many prosecutions that took place throughout the country see: Krakowski, *The War of the Doomed,* 253; Grynberg, *Księga sorawiedliwych,* 236 (against a Gestapo confidant of undisclosed nationality); 444–45; Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust,* 88; Zdzisław Biegański, "Kara śmierci w orzeczenictwie Specjalnych Sądów Karnych w Polsce (1944–1946)," *Echa przeszłości* (Olsztyn: Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski, 2004), vol. 5, 197; Dariusz Libionka, "Polska ludność chrześcijańska wobec eksterminacji Żydów—dystrykt lubelski," in Libionka, *Akcja Reinhardt,* 317, 332; Ryszard Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Podziemie antykomunistyczne wobec Żydów po 1945 roku—wstęp do problematyki (na przykładzie województwa kieleckiego)," and Anna Pyżewska, "Losy ludności żydowskiej w województwie białostockim w latach 1944–1949—wybrane problemy," in Jacek Wijaczka and Grzegorz Miernik, eds., *Z przeszłości Żydów polskich: Polityka, gospodarka, kultura, społeczeństwo* (Kraków: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2005), 249–95; Alina Skibińska and Jakub Petelewicz, "Udział Polaków w zbrodniach na Żydach na prowincji regionu świętokrzyskiego," *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały,* vol. 1 (2005): 118–24, 136–38; Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc,* 365, 417, 420, 478; Alina Skibińska and Jakub Petelewicz, "The Participation of Poles in Crimes Against Jews in the Świętokrzyskie Region," *Yad Vashem Studies,* vol. 35, no. 1 (2007): 1–44; Dariusz Libionka and Paweł P. Reszka, "Święto zmarłych w Rechcie," *Karta* (Warsaw), no. 46 (2005): 122–35; Martin Dean, "Poles in the German Local Police in Eastern Poland and their Role in the Holocaust," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 18 (2005): 353–66; Andrzej Żbikowski, *U genezy Jedwabnego: Żydzi na Kresach Północno-Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej. Wrzesień 1939—lipiec 1941* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2006), 339; Amiram Barkat, "Poland to probe 1940s murder after Israeli meets alleged

> On 31 August, [1944] … [the Soviet-installed Lublin Committee, Poland's provisional government-in-waiting] passed a decree 'for the punishment of fascist-Hitlerite criminals … and of Traitors of the Polish Nation.' Published some weeks later but put into immediate effect, this draconian decree made provision for special penal courts and for the punishment of offenders, but equally of their aiders and abettors. It listed a huge range of punishments, from the death sentence to imprisonment, hard labour, confiscation, and loss of civil rights. Most shamefully, since it made no attempt to define treason, it placed all the Committee's political opponents in the category of potential traitors. Other organs were leaving no margin of doubt over who was to be targeted. On 4 September, the Committee's main newspaper issued an article entitled. 'We warn you', which contained the chilling sentences: 'He who opposes the Polish Camp (i.e., the Lublin Committee) is the same as a member of the Nazi Camp. No third camp exists.' In other words, since an earlier

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killer," *Haaretz,* April 2, 2006 (Przegaliny near Komarówka Podlaska); Engelking, et al., eds., *Prowincja noc,* 365, 417, 420, 438, 478; Doroto Sierpacka, Henryk Lubraniecki, who was confined in the ghetto in Krośniewice near Kutno, declared: "I want to underline that the Poles helped us a great deal." See Dorota Sierpacka, "Postawy Polaków wobec ludności żydowskiej w Kraju Warty," in Aleksandra Namysło, ed., *Zagłada Żydów na polskich terenach wcielonych do Rzeszy* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), 204–5, n59.

The following are but a few specific examples. Rozalia Borczyk of Wielkie Oczy was sentenced to prison by the military court for revealing to the Germans the hiding place of Wollf Kałman. See the account of Kazimierz Sawiński in Majus, *Wielkie Oczy,* which is also posted at <http://wielkieoczy.itgo.com/Memories/KS.htm>. A Czech who had deserted from the German army and joined the People's Army, where he took part in many daring missions against German troops, was denounced by his girlfriend after the war "for having killed Jews before joining us. He was tried by a Polish court, and served a term in prison." See Gruber, *I Chose Life,* 146. Two Home Army members who robbed and killed some Jews hiding in a forest bunker near Tomaszów Mazowiecki were sentenced to death in 1950 (the senetnce was later commuted to 15-years imprisonment). See Marcin Stelmasiak, "Mord Żydów pod Tomaszowem: IPN umorzył śledtwo," *Gazeta Wyborcza,* July 20, 2004. Jacob Silberbach filed charges against 6 persons in Kraków for having denounced his son to Germans and using their connections in the militia to organize an attempt on his life after the war, which was foiled, in order to cover up the crime. One of the denouncers, an illiterate "with imbecilic mentality," received a 10-year prison sentence; the other denouncer, who became an active member of the Communist Party, was sentenced to five years. The others received lesser sentences. See Leo Bach, *Coming of Age during the Holocaust,* Internet: <http://www.cheme.cornell.edu/cheme/people/profile/moreinfo/dlk15-leobach.cfm>, 320–21 (Epilogue).

Postwar crimes directed at Jews were also investigated and punished. After the pogrom in Kielce in July 1946, large-scale arrests and trials of civilians took place with lightning speed: nine persons were executed, one received a life sentence, and the other two received prison terms of 10 and 7 years. See Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 135. In the Kielce voivodship, 240 persons were detained by the authorities in 1945–1947 in connection with alleged anti-Semitic incidents. See Marek Jończyk, "Struktura aparatu bezpieczeństwa oraz siedziby instytucji publicznych w Lielcach w latach 1945–1946," in Leszek Bukowski, Andrzej Jankowski, and Jan Żaryn, eds., *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego,* vol. 2 (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), 104. Denunciations of members of the Polish underground in the postwar years were frequent. The contrast between the treatment of Poles and Jews was often striking. In Drop, a village near Mińsk Mazowiecki, a member of the Home Army was denounced to the Soviets even though none of the Jews hiding in that village had perished, and the Jews who informed on him went unpunished; on the other hand, two Poles who betrayed some Jews to the Germans in a nearby hamlet were imprisoned after the war for their misdeeds. See Henryk Grynberg, *Dziedzictwo* (London: Aneks, 1993), 23–24, 49–50.

Some Holocaust historians have voiced complaints that the sentences received by Poles were "light" and were often overturned on appeal. Regarding the first charge, as mentioned, in the case of the Kielce pogrom nine Polish accused were convicted and put to death in a matter of days, whereas Jewish collaborators with the Germans usually did not face prosecution, and Soviet collaborators were rewarded. As for the second charge, the quarrrel with the notion that due process might prevail in some cases involving ethinc Poles is simply bizarre given that confessions *were* routinely extracted under torture and testimonies were often given under duress.

> decree had declared all conspiratorial organizations to be illegal, all members of the Home Army, including those fighting the Nazis, were deemed to be Nazi supporters.[461]

Meanwhile, crimes committed by Jews and others during the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland in 1939–1941 went unpunished, while crimes by Stalinist henchmen in "liberated" Poland directed at Poles were sanctioned by the regime.

To accomplish the task of stamping out the Polish underground the Soviets and their proxy regime in Poland employed local collaborators in significant number. Many Jewish partisans were drawn into this process and speak openly of their involvement. Some of them, however, are vague about the exact positions they filled and, moreover, endeavour to put a peculiar twist on the role they played at the time.

Anatol Krakowski, a Jewish partisan from the Rudniki forest, describes the reception of his fellow partisans in the "liberated" city of Wilno:

> The Soviet authorities rapidly organized the civil life in the city. They distrusted everybody, the Lithuanians as well as the Poles, for different reasons. Cleansing operations were carried out, the anti-Semitic Home Army … was dismantled. Their officers were judged and condemned. …
>
> Given the circumstances, after the liberation of Wilno, the only elements of the population in which the Soviets could have confidence were the groups of partisans who, with them and with their aid, had fought the Nazis. The rest of the population was suspected, often with good reason, of having collaborated with the Nazis and thus were excluded from any participation in the official organs of the new Soviet government. Rapidly, the confidence that the Soviets showed in us took on concrete but rather cumbersome forms. It was thus that several of my partisan friends, all around twenty years of age, found themselves mobilized in the Soviet security forces, whether in the police, the NKVD, the NKGB …, the Ministry of the Interior or others.[462]

Joseph Riwash, one of the many Jews who joined the NKVD (where his commander, Major Zoltnik was also a Jew), recalls:

> I looked for survivors of the Vilna [Wilno] ghetto and enlisted their help in uncovering Lithuanians and Poles who had denounced Jews to the Germans. We reported these individuals to the Soviet occupation authorities, who (be it said to their credit) dealt with them swiftly and summarily.[463]

Miriam Jaszuńska, a member of a Soviet-Jewish partisan unit in Rudniki forest, stated that as soon as the Jewish partisans arrived in "liberated" Wilno, they started to check the identity documents of passers-by

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[461] Davies, *Rising '44,* 351.

[462] Krakowski, *Le Ghetto dans la forêt,* 91.

[463] Riwash, *Resistance and Revenge,* 66.

looking for "collaborators." Many of the partisans, such as Beniamin Brest and Gerszon Glezer, entered the ranks of the militia and NKVD.[464]

Another Jewish partisan who left his mark is Ben Kass, though the capacity in which he worked is not at all clear.

> Ben Kass, who spent most of the war years in the forests with partisans, spoke with relish of the wrath he exacted both during and after the official hostilities. Having fought for several years with a Russian [i.e., Soviet] partisan group of eighteen thousand men and women, Ben was in Poland during the closing months of the war. He arrested many Poles from the AK who had previously murdered Jews, and handed them over to the Russian authorities for imprisonment.[465]

There can be no doubt that this version of the events is simply implausible. The Soviets made no such fine distinctions among the Home Army partisans they apprehended. Nor would their henchmen have been inclined to search out only those Home Army fighters who may have been responsible for Jewish deaths, when the Soviet partisans themselves had their own numerous Jewish victims (and others) on their conscience. As Nechama Tec points out, all Home Army partisans were affected indiscriminately by Stalin's decree.

> [The Soviets] launched a ruthless persecution of all unauthorized underground groups. Their special aim was to destroy the powerful forces of the A.K. Many people were arrested only because they had been associated with the Home Army during its anti-Nazi days. Many of those arrested had nothing to do with postwar illegal operations. Because all former A.K. members were in danger, some tried to conceal their wartime affiliations. A virtual witch hunt ensued.[466]

Anyone caught, betrayed or handed over as Home Army member was routinely imprisoned and tortured, and then executed on the spot or deported to a remote prison camp in the Gulag. Furthermore, there would have been no way that Riwash, Kass or others like them could have identified with any certainty who the alleged Jew killers were (did they kill civilians? Soviet partisans? Soviet collaborators?), or restricted their activities on behalf of the Soviets to the arrest of "Jew killers." The Soviets would have never tolerated such niceties. Moreover, if all Home Army members were thought to have been *ipso facto* engaged in anti-Semitic activities, as many Jewish memoirs contend, logically it made no sense to make distinctions among them. All were presumed guilty.

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[464] See the following testimonies in the Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw): Miriam Jaszuńska, dated July 15, 1947, no. 301/2530; Beniamin Brest, July 8, 1947, no. 301/2531; Gerszon Glezer, dated October 9, 1947, no. 301/2799; Abram Mieszczański, dated June 10, 1947, no. 301/2536.

[465] Aaron Hass, *The Aftermath: Living with the Holocaust* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 170.

[466] Nechama Tec, *Dry Tears: The Story of a Lost Childhood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 230.

Other memoirs are much more open about who was targeted and how these deeds were accomplished. Leon Kahn, for instance, recalls visiting a group of captured Polish partisans with his colleague, Lippa Skolsky, to see if they recognized any of the prisoners, as he had "quite a few scores to settle" with the Poles. Surprisingly, among the prisoners he came upon was Yankele Stolnicki, a young Jew who had been appointed secretary of the Communist Party when the Soviets occupied Raduń in 1939–1941. In that post, he had compiled lists of affluent Jews for the Soviets, many of whom were deported to the Gulag. After the Germans invaded, a Polish farmer sheltered Stolnicki for three years. When the Soviet front approached Raduń, Stolnicki went to hide in the forest. There he met and teamed up with another Jew. One day, they spotted a large group of Polish partisans hiding nearby and wasted no time in informing the Soviets. The Poles were surrounded and captured and then marched off to Linica accompanied by Stolnicki and his friend who were to explain to the officers in command who the prisoners were. On the way, the guards were changed and the replacements were not told of the role being played by Stolnicki and his friend, so the two found themselves imprisoned together with the Poles. Stolnicki's friend, however, was able to escape in the confusion of the arrival at the stockade. Stolnicki's pleas with the Soviets fell on deaf ears. They considered him to be one of the "treacherous" Poles who would face the firing squad. Kahn's interventions at Soviet headquarters, however, resulted in the commanding officer issuing a release order for "poor" Stolnicki.[467]

It is worth noting that interventions by Jews were effective because many Jews held high positions in the Soviet bureaucracy and military and, despite their loyalty to Communism which ostensibly championed internationalism, many of them retained their strong tribal loyalties and endeavoured to favour Jews over others. Kopel Kolpanitzky, a Jew from Łachwa who had fought with the Soviet partisans, recalled a conversation he had with a captain of the Red Army and the special treatment that he reserved for Jewish partisans whom he wanted to spare at the expense of non-Jews:

> When I went to the table, the captain filled out all the details in the documents in front of him and placed my card aside, on another corner of the table, separate from the others. He did the same with Nisel Israelevich, whose card was placed on mine, and with Yosel Meier. Yosel Meier did not like that, and he asked the captain to place our cards in the general pile. … We wanted to volunteer and continue our fight against the Germans.
>
> At dinner that evening, the captain came over and sat down with us.
>
> *'Shalom,'* he said. 'From your names, I knew that you were Jews, so I put your cards on the side. I did not want to send you to the front. I am also Jewish. I wanted to send you to work at partisan headquarters in Kiev. Why did you insist on joining the others?'
>
> 'Thank you for your well-intentioned thoughts,' we answered, 'but we want to volunteer for the Red Army. We must continue to fight.'

[467] Kolpanitzky, *Sentenced To Life,* 148–49.

> … Among the thousands of partisans, several dozen had decided to keep on fighting. The other received discharge papers and returned home. Polish nationals were sent to Poland …[468]

Occasionally, Jews would intervene on behalf of Poles who had come to the assistance of Jews during the German occupation and were now in the grasp of the Soviet security police because of their Home Army connections. As Michael Kutz recalls,

> The Soviet authorities had begun arresting innocent citizens, such as the honourable … Mr. [Józef?] Zubowicz, who, at the beginning of the war, had risked his life and that of his children to hide, and therefore save, three Jews from Nieśwież. The Soviets had arrested Zubowicz for collaborating with the Nazis, which of course was totally fabricated. The NKVD tried to force him to sign a confession of his guilt, but he proudly refused. All of us survivors—most importantly, Jacob Lifshitz, whom he had hidden—went to Minsk to meet with the chief prosecutor and explain that Zubowicz was innocent. After spending two months in jail, Zubowicz was released. Then David Farfel and Itshe Mazin, two other Nieśwież survivors who now worked with the local NKVD, were arrested for trying to voluntarily resign from their positions. After much pressure, they too were released.[469]

Jews who remained in the Eastern Borderlands had no compunction about taking over property left behind by Poles who fled or were deported to People's Poland. A Jew who obtained the position of principal in a high school in Kobryń had his eye on a "very nice house" that used to belong to a Polish family who had left the area.

> It was not difficult for me to receive permission to occupy this house. It was a comfortable accommodation and completely furnished, including household utensils, dishes, and bedding. But the most important thing was that there was a garden in front of the house where the family had planted all sorts of vegetables and herbs … In addition, there was a small orchard with a few fruit trees. … Another amenity on the property was a barn …[470]

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[468] Maurice Shainberg, *Breaking From the KGB: Warsaw Ghetto Fighter… Intelligence Officer…Defector to the West* (New York: Shapolsky Books, 1986), 124–27, 194–95.

[469] Michael Kutz, *If, By Miracle* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2013), 60–61. The Zubowicz family of Nieśwież had hidden two Jewish boys from the Rutenberg family along with the lumber merchant Jacob Lifshitz. Ibid., 34. The two Jewish boys, identified as Lolek and Witek Neufeld, were later sheltered by the Zubowicz family of Pleszewicze, a Home Army bastion, before being given over to Jewish partisans. See Kazimierz Zubowicz, "Z Pleszewicz do Warszawy i dalej," in Łucja Jakubowska, et al., eds., *Nieświeskie wspomnienia* (Warsaw: Łośgraf, 2001), 285, 328. Another example is provided by Aba Gefen (Abel Weinstein), who was an NKVD interrogator, Gefen vouched for the two sons of Mrs. Zubrowa, a Polish woman from Simnas/Simno who had helped him during the German occupation, despite their ties to the anti-Soviet underground. See Aba Gefen, *Defying the Holocaust: A Diplomat's Report* (San Bernardino, California, 1993), 76.

[470] Sorid, *One More Miracle*, 119.

Jews in Communist Uniforms Settle Scores

Once firmly in command, the Soviet forces set out to finish the job Hitler had started: the total elimination of the pro-independence (i.e., anti-Nazi and anti-Soviet) Polish underground, the so-called independentists. The Soviets found little support among the native Polish or Lithuanian population so they turned to the Jews for support. They were not disappointed. According to Aba Gefen (Abel Weinstein) states,

> Immediately after the return of the Red Army to Lithuania, there was very close collaboration between the Jews and the Soviets, considered by the Holocaust survivors as their savior. Moscow trusted the Jewish survivors more than those who had been anti-Communists before the war; more than the Lithuanians who were Communists in the past but behaved in a doubtful way under the Nazis.[471]

Numerous Jews joined in this venture and, with a solid knowledge of local conditions and under Soviet protection, went out of their way to settle old scores. They not only arrested and denounced Poles to the security forces, but also embarked on a spree of revenge killings, something some of them had already undertaken on their own even before the "liberation." Hundreds, if not thousands, of Poles were murdered. This served to further drive a wedge between Poles and Jews. Eventually, however, the Jewish henchmen also became expendable once the task of defeating the Polish independentists was in hand.

Aba Gefen, a Lithuanian Jew who survived the war hidden by numerous Lithuanians and Poles, boasted that, on the arrival of the Red Army, he promptly provided the Soviets a list of 100 Lithuanians who had collaborated with the Nazis in his small town of Simnas, thus starting his personal quest for revenge. On the first day of his militia service, he helped the Soviets round up 40 of them. According to one version, they were imprisoned; according to another, they were executed summarily. Gefen then joined the NKVD in Alytus and was appointed the principal investigator for the district. He visited the towns in the district and supervised the interrogations there, and personally interrogated those who were brought to the prison in Alytus. In this task, he was helped by local Jews:

> When I visited the town of Varena [Varėna, in Lithuanian, and Orany, in Polish], I found a group of Jewish Holocaust survivors, Leon Kaganowicz, Benjamin Rogovsky, Lippa Skolsky and Abraham Widlanski, roaming the nearby villages and hamlets and exacting revenge on the Nazi sympathizers responsible for the murder of Jews, on farmers who had betrayed Jews to the Nazis, and on the civilian officials who had collaborated with the Germans.

Doubtless, farmers who simply resisted a raid on their property by Jewish partisans fell into this category of "Nazi sympathizers." Gefen then goes on to describe extrajudicial killings and the partisans' efforts and frustrations in bringing people to "justice":

[471] Gefen, *Defying the Holocaust*, 73–74.

> The group was executing prisoners found guilty and was sending to Alitus [Alytus] only those in whose cases there was no hard evidence of their participation in the murder of Jews. … Thus, criminals whom they had spent weeks tracking down were set free once they got to Alitus for lack of proper documentation. … We agreed that in the future they would send the prisoners to Alitus, to me personally, and I would interrogate them and document the cases before processing them. …
>
> Those were days of "partial" retribution, when not only Jewish survivors were anxious to track down the Nazi collaborators, but also Soviet officers were ready to carry out irregular activities to punish some of those who had lent their support to the Nazis. The Soviets were very willing to exact revenge on the Lithuanians … With the aid of my brother, myself, and other Jewish survivors, the Russians caught many Lithuanian collaborators, interrogated them, and judge them. Hundreds were either sent to prison for many years or faced a firing squad.

Gefen himself came under investigation because of the large number of reports he signed on escape attempts by prisoners who were shot in the process. This prompted him to leave. He and his brother obtained forged papers identifying them as Polish nationals and left for Poland with a repatriation transport.[472]

Leon Kahn, recalls how, in mid–1944, shortly before the entry of the Red Army, Jewish partisan groups descended on the Lithuanian village of Mostejki (which was allegedly responsible for the murder of hundreds of Jews from Marcinkańce who had escaped to the forest) and "selected" suspected Jew killers, who were then shot to death in the village square.[473] One of the Jewish partisans, Abraham Widlanski, befriended an orphaned Jewish boy named Hirsche who roamed the countryside exacting revenge on farmers who had betrayed Jews to the Germans. This boy accepted 5,000 rubles in order to eliminate a Lithuanian collaborator by the name of Danielewicz and his entire family. Bargains were struck with some of the farmers who committed "lesser crimes" in order to catch the big criminals (all of them Lithuanians, it seems). Their lives would be spared if they turned informer.[474] After joining the Soviet police force in Orany (Varėna, in Lithuanian), of which he would soon become the chief, Leon Kahn and his group were often helped by Aba Gefen, who was the assistant to the Soviet colonel in command in Alytus. Prisoners were interrogated and documented by Gefen before being taken to the colonel. Extrajudicial executions were routine. A Lithuanian collaborator, who was captured by Jewish policemen, met his end at their hands: "Each of us carried an automatic rifle containing seventy-two bullets, and at a signal, coldly and methodically we emptied every one of them into his body." Kahn described how he killed another Lithuanian collaborator: "I pulled out my revolver and shot the teacher between the eyes, killing him

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[472] Gefen, *Defying the Holocaust,* 74–79, 87–88; Interview with Aba Gefen, dated October 17, 2011, Israel Documentation project, Internet: <http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn50728>.

[473] Kahn, *No Time To Mourn,* 123.

[474] Ibid., 172, 176, 177.

instantly." Lithuanian partisans were rounded up in droves and imprisoned (all of the examples mentioned by Kahn involved Lithuanians). "We refused them food, water, or toilet facilities," recalls Kahn, "allowing only the supplies brought by their families." After a week, the trucks arrived with armed Soviet guards to take them to Alytus.[475]

Leon Kahn's colleague, Beniamin Rogowski, stationed in Orany, also describes the activities of former Jewish partisans like himself and Jankiel Asner, Avram (Abraham) Asner, and Jankele Kowalski, who combated the anti-Communist Lithuanian underground as part of the Soviet police. Many Lithuanian partisans were killed, and many more arrested. They Jewish policemen also took revenge on Lithuanians who were suspected of collaborating with the Nazis: "We carried out enough acts of vengeance on them. … It was evident that we now took our revenge, as much as we could. The Soviet authorities helped us, though not officially, but I had connections and knew how to arrange it."[476] Avram (Abraham) Asner recalled how, when on a mission to capture a Polish woman who had worked for the Polish underground, he dutifully turned over to the Soviets, likely the NKVD, a Pole who had confided in him that he was a member of the Home Army:

> I was going to Radun [Raduń] to go to that place where I have to go to that secretary, to get her. On the way, I met a fellow with a wagon and I ask him for a ride. And he saw me. I'm with a rifle, with a pistol. And he saw me, I'm walking. And then he gave me that ride. And I sitting … He's sitting in the front and I'm sitting in the back. And he's telling me the whole story of where he was fighting. He was in the Polish AK. When he was telling me all the story, he thought that I'm Polish, I speaked in Polish. When he told me the story he was fighting in Vilna [Wilno], and they wanted to liberate Vilna then the Russian come in, they, the sound them, all them, that's, everything. And he was going home to a place not far from Lida. And when they came close to Radun he got to go to the left and I got to go to Radun. He said, "I'm going there." I said, "No, no." I said, "You're going there, to Radun. You're, you're, you're going there." He says, "No, I have to go over here. This, this is my way to go." "No, no," I said, "you got to go over here where I wanted to go." "Oh," he said, "you're from them." Finally I get him to that uh, commandant uh, post down there. And I told the story, all about them, what it, what it is. And they search him and they find some grenades, ammunition. … What happened with him I don't know because I give it to them.[477]

A particularly dangerous functionary in the service of the NKVD was Dr. Benedykt Scherman, who went by the name of Szymański. Dr. Szymański was a member of the Moscow-based Union of Polish Patriots.

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[475] Kahn, *No Time To Mourn,* 183, 186–88.

[476] Testimony of Beniamin Rogowski, March 14, 1965, Yad Vashem Archives, 03/2820.

[477] Testimony of Abraham Asner, October 10, 1982, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, University of Michigan at Dearborn, Internet: <http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/asner/>, section 37 (Partisan Missions 2).

As a colonel in the Soviet-sponsored Polish Army in Wilno,[478] he excelled in tracking down the remnants of the disbanded Home Army in that region.[479] At the same time, as chief of recruitment for the army, Colonel Szymański—as well as other well-placed Soviet officials of Jewish origin—facilitated the departure, often through illegal schemes, of fellow Jews who wanted to leave Soviet Lithuania for Poland.[480] At the time, many Jews were employed as prison guards and even executioners. The guards were known to abuse Polish prisoners (former parisans) and stole packages and items sent to the prisoners by their families.[481]

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[478] Poles generally regarded the Communist Polish Army as a foreign-controlled entity and Polish soldiers deserted from its ranks in droves. Between December 1944 and March 1945, 53 percent of the officer corps was comprised of pre-1939 Soviet citizens, and over one half of the (remaining) non-Soviet officers were Jews with Polish citizenship. Moreover, the most important posts in the political apparatus of the army were held by Jews. Thus, in its early stages, fewer than one-quarter of all officers of the Polish Army were actually ethnic Poles who were citizens of Poland. See Edward Jan Nalepa, *Oficerowie Armii Radzieckiej w Wojsku Polskim 1943–1968* (Warsaw: Bellona, 1995), 17; Klemens Nusbaum, "Jews in the Kościuszko Division and First Polish Army," in Davies and Polonsky, eds., *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR, 1939–46*, 194–99; Rafał Wnuk, "Działania propagandowe niepodległościowe podziemia adresowane do żołnierzy Wojska Polskiego (lipiec 1944–styczeń 1947), *Dzieje Najnowsze*, vol. 34, no. 4 (2002): 57–73. As Nusbaum points out, Jews were instructed to change their names and conceal their identities and thus official Communist statistics grossly, and intentionally, understated the strength of the Jewish component. Michael Checinski, for example, describes the reception he received when he reported to the Military Counterintelligence Department in Łódź: "I met several officers there, including Lieutenant Colonel Stanislawa (Barbara) Sowinski [doubtless an assumed named—*M.P.*] … Her sister was a famous Israeli artist … I was told to fill out all kinds of forms … Then I was summoned for another conversation. This time, they tried to persuade me to change the first names of my father and other from Abram to Adam and Frymeta to Franciszka." See Michael Moshe Checinski, *Running the Gauntlet of Anti-Semitism: From Polish Counterintelligence to the German/American Marshall Center* (Jerusalem and New York: Devora, 2004), 51.

[479] Stanisława Lewandowska, *Życie codzienne Wilna w latach II wojny światowej* (Warsaw: Neriton and Instytut Historii PAN, 1997), 340. The preponderance of Jews in the political structures of the Polish Army at that time was overwhelming. According to a report from June 1944, 34 out of the 44 top officers, all of the directors, and all but one of the deputies at the division level were Jews. Jews occupied 17 out of 28 positions in the political apparatus of the divisions, and at the regiment level, 31 out of 43 positions, and so on. Most decisions were taken by Jews, and Poles had only token representation. On instructions from Major Mieczysław Mietkowski, himself a Jew, Jews were to declare their nationality as Polish even in internal documents. See the report of Major Władysław Sokołowski in Giennadij A. Bordiugow [Gennadii A. Bordyugov], Aleksander Kochański, Adam Koseski, Giennadij F. Matwiejew [Gennadii F. Matveiev], and Andrzej Paczkowski, eds., *Polska–ZSRR: Struktury podległości. Dokumenty KC WKP(b) 1944–1949* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN and Stowarzyszenie Współpracy Polska–Wschód, 1995), 75–76. The same held true for the Moscow-based Union of Polish Patriots.

[480] Krakowski, *Le Ghetto dans la forêt*, 98–99. After their disenchantment, in order to leave their positions and dirty work behind them, Jews who had joined the security forces and militia took advantage of a network of well-placed Jews in the medical corps and clinics to feign illness and obtain certificates dispensing them from further service. The moving force behind this was Professor Rebelski, the chief of the medical corps of the Third Army. This is yet another example that being a Communist, or even holding a high position in the Communist Party, was not incompatible with retaining one's Jewish identity and espousing Jewish nationalism. Ibid., 92–97.

[481] Dariusz Rogut, ed., *Przeżyliśmy łagry: Wspomnienia żołnierzy Okręgu Wileńskiego AK (1945–1949)* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2011), 54, 113, 230; Władysław Zarzycki, *Z Wilna do Workuty: Wspomnienia Komendanta Garnizonu Okręgu Wileńskiego AK* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2011), 62, 70, 77 (a Jewish executioner named Rabinowicz), 81, 92, 133, 242. Bernard Druskin, a Jew from Wilno who joined the Markov Brigade, also worked for the Soviets in an undisclosed capacity: "When the Russian army re-occupied Vilna [Wilno], they hired Druskin to work for them because he knew the streets of Vilna and was good at organizing things." See the testimony of Bernard Druskin, November 9, 1990, Holocaust Memorial Center, Farmington Hills, Michigan, Internet: <http://www.holocaustcenter.org/page.aspx?pid=523>. Instead of taking German soldiers as POWs, the Red Army disarmed them and handed them over to the partisans. Druskin also recounts, with great delight, how, as a partisan, he would fool the peasants into exchanging vodka for what they thought was soap, but was in fact dynamite. See Bernard

Another vivid example of what was happening was penned by Shalom Yoran (Selim Sznycer), a Soviet-Jewish partisan operating in the vicinity of Lake Narocz and the Kotłowska forest who joined the Soviet-controlled Polish Army in Wilno in September 1944. As a trusted Soviet partisan he was called on to draw up lists of "spies" and "counter-revolutionaries" from among Polish soldiers he scarcely knew.

> Most of the soldiers had previously been in the ruthless AK, and were patriotic nationalists who had fought against the Soviet soldiers and partisans, as well as the Nazis. …
>
> In the beginning of November 1944, the Second Polish Army finally arrived from the Soviet Union and we were united with them. … We were now an infantry regiment in the Second Polish Army … We moved for several days along the main road leading to Warsaw, then took side roads until we reached a large forest in the heart of Poland, where we set up a temporary camp. …
>
> Orders came from the Second Polish Army headquarters to expand our regiment from eight hundred to three thousand men. In order to comply with the order, we were told to draft all able-bodied men in the area from the age of eighteen. … [Yoran then describes the forced round-ups of local Poles.—*M.P.*]
>
> I was in charge of registering all those who were chosen for our company. … I grilled them about their activities during the German occupation. They were frightened, and I needed to use my intuitive skills to draw out the information, to calm them down, to play on their national patriotism …
>
> About a week after the recruitment, I was called one evening into the regimental headquarters and told to appear before the chief intelligence and security officer. … At the desk, clear of anything except a kerosene lamp and a revolver, sat an officer in Polish uniform with the rank of captain. … he was a Russian [i.e., Soviet] …
>
> He told me in Russian to sit down, and came straight to the point. He knew that I had been a Soviet partisan, fighting for Stalin and the homeland, so he could speak openly to me. He lectured me about spies, traitors, and counter-revolutionaries, especially among the Poles, who should be carefully watched and distrusted, even though they were in the Polish Army fighting alongside the Soviets. He then bent toward me across the table, and, looking me straight in the eyes, said, "By tomorrow you will bring me a list and the files of all the spies and counter-revolutionaries in your company." … [Yoran then describes the intimidation and threats he said he endured after initially suggesting that there weren't any such men in his company; obviously, he couldn't be too open about having tolerated their presence.—*M.P.*]
>
> The officer was the chief of the NKVD, the dreaded Soviet Secret Police … Markh advised me to look through the files, to see if I could find someone who seemed in any way suspicious, and not to discuss my meeting with anyone.
>
> I returned to the company headquarters, went straight to the files, and started reading through each one. I worked all night. Although I didn't know these men, I agonized over each name, wondering whether the men really were staunch supporters of the Germans [sic]. I wanted to be

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Druskin, Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation, Internet: <http://jewishpartisans.org/t_switch.php?pageName=mini+bio+short+bio+1&fromSomeone=&parnum=34>.

> reasonably sure before handing over their files and thus participating in their fate. By morning I had put together the names of five men who I found had been connected with the Nazis during the occupation. [Were there even any? How could Yoran possibly tell?—*M.P.*]
>
> I took their files, went to the NKVD officer, and explained that these files should be further examined. He came around the table toward me and patted me approvingly on the shoulder. "I see that you are quite a learner. If you have any further suspicions of anybody, come directly to me." I saluted smartly and left, hoping never to see the man again. I never found out what happened to the men on the list after they were taken in for interrogation.[482]

Another account was penned by Maurice Shainberg, who joined the Communist Polish Army in July 1944. In his capacity as Second Lieutenant in the Intelligence Section of the Fourth Pioneer Brigade of the Second Polish Army in 1944–1945, Shainberg, who then went under the name of Mieczysław Prużański, worked diligently under the watchful eyes of his Soviet commanders. He was rewarded for his diligence and soon rose to the rank of colonel in the Soviet-dominated security forces. (After "defecting" and a brief stay in Israel, he eventually settled in the United States.) Shainberg did not mince words as to who his enemy and targets were:

> My section was responsible for discovering persons or groups who were hostile to the new Polish government or to the Soviets. We arrested Gestapo collaborators like members of the Polish Fascist Home Army, and we uncovered the names of individuals who had worked with the Nazis. …
>
> My duties included overseeing the work of the staff, supervising their reports, evaluating the records of people with disreputable backgrounds, and briefing intelligence officers on new assignments. … I dedicated myself to my work, seeking out Polish collaborators and Polish Fascists wherever I could find them. …
>
> On February 26, 1946, Colonel Zaitzev called me into his office and told me that we were to search out two active anti-Soviet partisan groups in the Krotoszyn region. The groups—both Fascist—were called "Bor [Bór]" and "Cien [Cień]," and their leader was named Lopazko ["Łupaszko"]. …
>
> The Intelligence Office of the Krotoszyn regiment was a Major Dvoraninov … I was dispatched to Krotoszyn to serve as Major Dvoraninov's aide. …
>
> Within two months, thanks to the undercover work of agents …, the two guerilla groups were captured and arrested, and all documents pertaining to their activities were sent to Polish KGB Headquarters at 7 Chlebinski [Chlewińska] Street.
>
> The partisans were turned over to Major Piskunov, Intelligence Chief of the Division. When I reported to his office one day to turn in my monthly report, I saw the major and Captain Ivanov beating the prisoners and holding live electric wires against their shins.[483]

[482] Yoran, *The Defiant*, 237, 241–43, 244–45.

[483] Maurice Shainberg, *Breaking From the KGB: Warsaw Ghetto Fighter… Intelligence Officer…Defector to the West* (New York: Shapolsky Books, 1986), 124–27, 194–95.

After a brief stint with the Home Army, Martin Gray (Mieczysław Grajewski) joined the Communist People's Guard/People's Army and offered his services to the Soviets. As a 19-year-old recruit (then using the assumed name of Mietek Zamojski), he reported to Soviet command in Lublin in July 1944. He was soon dispatched by the NKVD to Zambrów on his first mission with these instructions: "Do your best, find us the N.S.Z., the informers, the denouncers, the collaborators, the people who don't like us." Gray recalls:

> I arrived in Zambrow one morning in civilian clothes, a peasant. … I went from village to village, and mingled with the peasants … I started them talking. … I found some N.S.Z. men, and an N.K.V.D. car came and picked them up in the morning. … We had to purge the countryside; it was their turn to pay. I went from village to village, tracking them down in a pitiless, bitter spirit of revenge. …
>
> In Zambrow they were waiting for me. Some men appeared before me … Three of them were barring my way, arms outstretched … I leaped aside and made off through a cornfield … They were behind me … I gradually outstripped them. … They'd given up the chase but the warning was clear: I was no further use in the Zambrow area. The N.S.Z. had spotted me. I slept in the *Kommandatura*, revolver in hand, and the next day the captain in charge at Zambrow decided to send me back to Lublin. …
>
> At the *Kommandatura* [in Lublin], the gray-haired [Soviet] colonel called me. … He had me attached to an N.K.V.D. unit that followed up the front-line troops and moved in, behind the rocket batteries, purging Russian-occupied territory of suspicious elements. … I knew the N.S.Z. I was a Jew with a private score to be settled. To the colonel, I was a good recruit. I was given a uniform and a cap with green N.K.V.D. trimmings. This time I'd earned my ticket to Berlin.
>
> For weeks I scoured the countryside around Lublin, sometimes in uniform, sometimes in civilian clothes, collaborating with the Polish police of which I had officially become a member.[484]

Yet another Jew who offered his services to the Stalinist state security in Mielec confirms this state of events. Mark Verstandig also insists that the Home Army "had inflicted remarkably little damage on the Germans by confining itself mainly to murdering and robbing Jews," and intensified its efforts "to finish Hitler's work—to murder every survivor, every hidden Jew" after the Soviets arrived. Allegedly this was done on instructions from the London-based Polish government in exile![485] His loyalty to the Soviets knew no bounds:

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[484] Gray, *For Those I Loved,* 233–38. Earlier on in his memoir, at 169, Gray had written: "Almost the whole of the village [of Zaręby near Zambrów] supported the A.K."

[485] Verstandig, *I Rest My Case,* 196, 179. Verstandig elaborates on this theme as follows: "The key to the enigma … was the resolve of the government-in-exile, which they communicated to the Polish people, to create a new post-war order entirely free of Jews. Previously, the leadership in London had planned to drive the Jews out of Poland and resettle them in an autonomous enclave near Odessa. But now, with the Soviet army stationed along the old Polish border, the Polish leaders in London belatedly realised that they would be unable to get their hands on any Russian territory for this purpose. So the signal was given to finish Hitler's work—to murder every survivor, every hidden Jew. There is no documentary evidence of this policy, just as no documents have been ever been [sic] found showing that Hitler ordered the Final Solution."

> Neither did I have much faith in the local branch of the security services, the UB [Urząd Bezpieczeństwa—Security Office]. When I saw the rabble of no-hopers and local riff-raff who were their recruits, I went straight for the headquarters of the Soviet military security service, whose brief was to arrest any armed akowcy (AK members) found behind the front.[486]

The head of the security office in Mielec was also a Jew, Cezary Monderer-Lamensdorf, who went by the assumed name of Jan Garliński.[487]

Shneor Glembotzky, who fought as a Soviet partisan in the northern part of Lublin province, also made the transition to the Communist police where he was able to wreak vengeance.

> When the Russians returned in 1944 and liberated Poland, I joined the regular Red Army. I returned to Biala Podleska [Biała Podlaska] and was there assigned as chief of the department of criminal offenders in the District Police. I served there for half a year till I felt I could no longer stand being in Poland. The chief of Police hinted to me that I must leave for there were many complaints about me from the personal vengeance I took on the White Poles (of the "Armia-Krayova") and on the other anti-semitic hooligans who had showed excessive cruelty to the Jews under the German rule. I understood the hint.[488]

Józef Kapłan (Kapłański), who served as a Soviet partisan in that region posing as a Pole (Jews were not accepted into his unit commanded by Mikhail Sanikov), after working in the militia in Zalesie where he scoured the countryside looking for collaborators, became a jail guard in Biała Podlaska for more than a year.[489] Yosel Epelbaum (later Pell), who returned to his home town of Biała Podlaska in August 1944, recalled the mood and loyalities of the Jewish returnees. He also noted that there was no run on abandoned Jewish shops by the impoverished Polish population:

> In the fall of 1944, even before Warsaw was liberated, the committee that would soon declare itself the provisional Polish government denounced anti-Semitism and even placed a number of Jews in top posts. Most of us were pleased to see this communist group, organized by Moscow, gain the

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[486] Ibid., 205.

[487] Krempa, *Zagłada Żydów mieleckich,* 110.

[488] Shneor Glembotzky, "From a Prisoner's Camp to a Partisan Troop," in Alufi and Barkeli, *"Aishishuk"; Its History and Its Destruction,* 77–78. In Polish records Glembotzky appears as Morduch Głębocki or Glembicki; he was employed by the County Command of the Citizens' Militia in Biała Podlaska as an investigator. Another Jew who joined the Security Office in Biała Podlaska was Baruch Golczer (Goldscher or Goldszer), a former ghetto policeman in Łomazy. See Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust,* 87, 100 n76; Bechta, *Pogrom czy odwet?,* 348–50. Examples from other localities include Michał Figowy and Rubin Figowy, former policemen who worked in the security office in Sokołów Podlaski until their removal.

[489] Account of Józef Kapłański (Kapłan), Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), no. 301/2532.

upper hand. It seemed much better than the alternative, the right-wing London-based Polish government-in-Exile and its Home Army, both of which were filled with Jew-haters.

… my older cousins, Sarah and Gittel, both communists, who had fled to the Soviet Union in 1939, received further indoctrination there, and now returned to Poland as mid-level functionaries in the provisional administration. They worked in another town …

It was devastating devastating enough to see what had become of the town square that had been so full of life before the war. Nearly all the shops had been Jewish-owned, and now they were vacant. Commercial life was dead.[490]

A similar situation prevailed in Włodawa where Jakob Friedmann, then Jakob Rotenberg, was second in command of the militia outpost.

The Poles were not very sympathetic to communism. There was a minority who were, but not very many people supported it. After we met the Russian army we went to Lublin, which had been freed.

The war was about to end when we arrived in Lublin. We became part of the Polish *milicja* and were given uniforms.

Everyone who had fought [in the Soviet-backed partisan movement] and had had some rank was made an officer, whether or not they had been trained for it. I automatically became a lieutenant in the Polish *milicja.* …

As Deputy Commander of Wlodawa, in the beginning I felt strange returning to my home town … While I had this position one of my jobs was to maintain a curfew. If somebody didn't know about the curfew we warned them, but we didn't shoot; we never shot anybody. However, there was once an incident where a man called Jankele Lederman shot a Pole in the middle of the market-place. Jankele knew he was an antisemite and decided to get rid of him. We found out about the crime but didn't do anything about it. Jankele, who left Wlodawa in a hurry and now lives in New York …

I knew that Jews were still vulnerable to attack so I created a city guards unit which meant that every Jew had a gun. …

The Commander-in-Chief of Wlodawa was called Alexander Russokovsky, and I was his lieutenant. He had been dropped into our area by parachute [from the Soviet Union]. I had more work ro do than he did, because he was always drunk and spending time with some woman, even though he had a beautiful wife.

I was with him for a short time, then they sent me to Stargard Gubinski [Gubiński], a village in the occupied territories of northern Poland near Sztzetzin [Szczecin]. It was just a small township but I was the Military Commander there for quite a time. I had a car, an assistant, a secretary, and even a girlfriend—everything I needed in life …

I was the commander not only of the city but of the whole area.[491]

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[490] Pell and Rosenbaum, *Taking Risks,* 119–21. Yosel Epelbaum (later Pell) left for Germany and eventually immigrated to the United States. Ibid., 142–43.

[491] Friedmann, *Reluctant Soldier,* 68–70. Historian Mariusz Bechta established that the Pole murdered by Lederman in Włodawa with impunity was Ryszard Kossakowski, and that this occurred on April 26, 1945. See Bechta, *Pogrom czy*

The county office of the Security Office in Włodawa was headed for a time by Chil Grynszpan, the partisan leader from Parczew forest. According to Friedmann, who was a partisan in the same area, Chyl was illiterate: "He couldn't even write his own name … so they taught him how to write C-h-y-l, and it took him a long time even to learn that."[492] The outcome proved to be lethal for the local population and, understandably, aroused resentment. The county supervisor (*starosta*) reported (in September 1945):

> Jews during the first months of independence were too aggressive vis-à-vis everybody else. The attitude toward other nationalities especially among those [Jews] employed in the militia and in the Security Service was openly hostile. Several months ago two Aryans [i.e., non-Jews] perished by the hand of a Jewish militiaman, and such facts do not produce harmonious coexistence in a democratic spirit. It is comforting that the number of citizens of Jewish nationality in the militia was reduced and that the rest have a somewhat more positive attitude toward everybody else.[493]

Ben Kamm, who fought as a partisan in Grzegorz Korczyński's People's Guard detachment and later in the Soviet Fyodorov Brigade, was appointed chief of police in Chełm, where he reportedly "sent forty Poles to jail for crimes against Jews." Although Kamm witnessed the murders of Jewish prisoners of war, who had escaped from a POW camp in Lublin, by Korczyński's Communist partisans, he did not pursue those culprits but intead targeted persons simply because they belonged to the anti-Communist underground. Attributing his postwar problems to anti-Semitism, Kamm complained bitterly, "Even after the war, when the Poles found out I was Jewish, they screamed that a Jew should not be chief of police and send Poles to jail. … After that happened, I said, 'To hell with it; I don't want to stay here.' And I left and came to America …"[494]

Eta Chajt Wrobel, who was a member of a Jewish partisan group with ties to the Communist People's Army, was appointed the first postwar mayor of her home town of Łuków. In that capacity,

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odwet?, 245, 365 n.56. Friedmann had no trouble being "cleared" by United States intelligence after fleeing to Germany, despite revealing that he had been a high ranking Communist officer, and emigrated to Australia. See Friedmann, *Reluctant Soldier*, 75–76.

[492] Ibid., 42.

[493] Cited in Jan T. Gross, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz: An Essay in Historical Interpretation* (New York: Random House, 2006), 62 (note).

[494] Cited in Glass, *Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust*, 92–93. See also Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation, *Study Guide*, "Ben Kamm: Determined to Fight," Internet: <http://www.jewishpartisans.org/pdfs/JPEF_Bio_Ben_Kamm.pdf> and <http://www.1939club.com/VideoTestimonyList.htm>. In the latter video recorded in 1983, Ben Kamm describes how his partisan group used intimidation tactics, such as threatening hanging, to scare farmers into giving up their weapons. He also claims, improbably, that the sole reason he was shot at and some of his Jewish colleagues were killed when they were with the militia in Chełm was because they were Jews. Kamm's testimony is replete with obvious exaggerations and often degenerates into an anti-Polish diatribe.

> I also made sure the Russians knew who the collaborators were during the war and where AK members might be hiding.
>
> The security police force we created was of higher rank than our regular police officers and assigned to track down members of the dreaded AK. I worked with them as well. …
>
> … we ran an investigation of the two plotters and discovered that they were linked to our friendly head of security police, who we discovered happened to be an undercover AK agent. A few days later, the AK … marched more than 200 men down the main streets of Lukow [Łuków]. The Russians, however, had no problem surrounding them and forcing them into the marketplace … While a few AK troops managed to escape, the Russians immediately executed the rest. When the Russians eventually came to our offices, we informed them of the results of our investigation, but the head of the security police blew his brains out before they could arrest him.[495]

Understandably, retaliations ensued. According to Polish sources, on May 1, 1945, a Polish partisan detachment set an ambush for a truck carrying functionaries of the District Public Security Office and militiamen from the District Command in Łuków. Among those killed was militiaman Chil Finkielstein. Four militia funtionaries were let off, whereas five, including Mojżesz Mancarz and Chaim Kaufman were abducted. The five vanished without a trace.[496]

Bronka Klibanski, one of the five liaison women of the Jewish underground who "constituted the executive core" of the largely Jewish "antifascist committee" set up by the Communists in Białystok in May 1944, states:

> After the liberation of Bialystok [Białystok], we helped arrest collaborators who were known to have revealed the hiding places of Jews and handed them over to the Germans.[497]

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[495] Wrobel, *My Life My Way*, 112–13.

[496] Wnuk, *Lubelski Okręg AK DSZ i WiN, 1944–1947*, 306; Adam Kopciowski, "Anti-Jewish Incidents in the Lublin Region in the Early Years after World War II," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials* (Journal of the Polish Center for Holocaust Research, Warsaw), vol. 1 (2008): 185.

[497] Ofer and Weitzman, eds., *Women in the Holocaust*, 185. Two Jewish women couriers who joined the Forois ("Forward") partisan group made up of fugitives from the Białystok ghetto, which was later subordinated to the Soviet partisans, were reportedly instrumental in the betrayal of some Home Army members: "Upon special orders from Moscow to unite all the anti-fascist forces, she [Liza Czapnik] was given the task of trying to contact the Armia Krajowa, AK … which for political reasons fought against the Soviet partisans. With the help of Bronia Klibanski, several members of the AK were brought to the headquarters of the partisan brigade, joined in the fighting and were afterwards relieved of their weapons." See Tikva Fatal-Kna'ani, "Liza Czapnik," *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*, March 1, 2009, Jewish Women's Archive, Internet: <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/czapnik-liza>. Women partisans also took part in raids on villages, as Eva Kracowski recalls: "We lived in the forest ziemlanka … We had four or maybe five shotguns … For food we went out to surrounding villages. Whenever we came close to a peasant's hut, we would make a lot of noise, talking, from the outside: 'Surround the house! Stand in rows'—we used all kinds of names [generally, Russian] of people who did not exist. We did this to give the impression that there were many of us ... Two people would go in the hut. Seeing the guns, the peasants would have no choice and would hand over their provisions. … We also confiscated *wagons with horses*. We would only take food. [Why would they need wagons for just a modest amount of food for a group of ten partisans?—*M.P.*] We came to the edge of the forest with the wagons, the horses, and the provisions. The horses and the wagons would then return to their homes. … And then each of us would carry, on our backs, our supplies back to our ziemlanka. Actually, we were the poorest group in the area, with the least amount of provisions. … There was another group of Jews there whom we called 'the bourgeois.' It was a family unit. It had contacts with a Polish woman.

Joseph Elman, who joined the Soviet partisans and returned to his hometown of Prużana with the Soviet "liberators" in 1944, worked hard to "identify … all those collaborators who didn't have a chance to escape" in his new assignment with the "internal police."[498] Harold Zissman (Hersh Cukierman), a former partisan who worked as a "bookkeeper" for the NKVD in Baranowicze (the head of the finance department, Captain Trussov, was also a Jew, who allotted Zissman extra food coupons), recalled:

> While working there, within the web of Soviet bureaucracy, I attended NKVD school. I also helped round up draftees and helped pursue former collaborators, who were hiding in the same forests that once hid the Partisans.[499]

In an oral interview conducted ten years before he published his memoir, Harold Zissman was more forthcoming about his activities. He described candidly who was targeted and who received favourable treatment.

> … any roundups, I had to go [on] duty as a KGB which I was assigned with maybe two more guys and go to the houses. … So every time before a holiday was nearing, we used to have to go to search homes and search passports and different documents. Because we were told there are crime[s] going on, and there are many people who resist the Soviet system because we used to give our political speeches. And it's our job to go and turn all of these here criminals in. On one of these journeys, one day it happened I was again the head of the group, there were three of us. …
>
> So with that mission at that particular time, we were assigned to look for criminals. What was the criminal? Somebody who did not report to be inducted. That was a criminal. Everybody in their passport had to have a separate page stamped from the induction center that he's released from induction because maybe he was not fit medically—I mean physically. … on the passport if you did not have that stamp or that page proving to you that you were released from service becoming a soldier in other words, being inducted, you had to turn them in. And believe me a lot of times maybe the people have fear, did not have the documents with them, and we used to round up so much time. And then if they were questioned, they didn't find anything to hold then, they would let them out. Now, that particular night I'm knocking on the door, and I was the first to knock on the door. And I keep telling them, I said, "Make the lights. This is the KGB coming for an inspection. Everybody come out holding their passports ready for examination." In it comes a voice in Yiddish with Hebrew stating say … which translating that into English means Hebrew or Jew, keep on walking. … I went outside, closed the door, and I said—the others say, "Something going on?" I says, "Everything is in order. Everything is fine. Let us proceed to the next mission." … I feel like

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They had money; they paid this woman for getting them provisions. And so they didn't have to go on expediyions for food." See Tec, *Resilience and Courage,* 274–75.

[498] Interview with Joseph Elman, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, May 19, 1998, 66–67.

[499] Zissman, *The Warriors,* 162.

> I must go back to that place. Find out who was that guy who was talking. … the next day in the middle of the day I'm coming there in uniform. I knock on the door, and I met him in there. … I says, "Who was the guy last night. Who was the one who said, "—"? that was a cousin. A first cousin to my wife who was also a partisan … And he was trying to beat, because the war was coming over, who wanted to be inducted? … So they were really hiding out sort of waiting all of the days until it will come to an end and the induction probably won't be here. … I tried to tell, I says, "I'm working the KGB. I hope you understand. We met now, but I can't give my head for you guys' hiding. At this moment, you better do what you want to do. I don't want to find you again when I come here. I really cannot protect you, so you got to do what you got to do." Which they moved away back, you know what I mean, someplace else. And you know, it so happens that neither of them was inducted. They got themselves secure jobs that they shouldn't be able to be inducted.[500]

Katriel Lashowitz, a former Soviet partisan, recalled his days as a prison guard in Brześć, now Brest in the Soviet Union:

> After several days, I was asked to assume a new position—the deputy for a shift of the prison, in which there were three shifts all 12 hours consecutively, with 24 hours of rest or relief. Together with my friend Hillel [Schneider from Baranowicze], we set up quarters in a solitary house, that had belonged to Jews, after evicting the gentiles that had been living there. Hillel's job as a policeman was to bring prisoners that had not yet been tried to court, and then return them to prison after their sentence had been passed. Hillel and I had an agreement that any prisoner that was suspected or murdering Jews or informing on Jews, would get a double dose from us, even before they came to trial, and for sure after sentence was passed. It was enough for Hillel to give me a sign, before the prisoner was brought to my office, to know how to treat the prisoner. Also a sign from the officer to the jailers was sufficient to let then know how to treat a prisoner of this type.[501]

Conditions in Volhynia, a largely Ukrainian part of interwar Poland, are described in several accounts. Ephraim Schwarzmann, a Jew from Volhynia who was conscripted by the Red Army in 1940 and spent the war years in the Soviet Union, recalls:

> I was put in charge of a special unit which was to act as a liaison between the Polish and Russian Armies. For my unit I chose Poles who had suffered at the hands of the Germans and former underworld characters. I knew what I intended to do—to be revenged at all costs.
>
> … my only inclination was to stay as close to the front as possible in order to take my revenge on the Germans and their Polish and Ukrainian collaborators. In the villages of Golova [Hołoby?], Midniovka and Grosovka [Gruszówka] (near Kovel [Kowel) I gave the underworld characters in

[500] Interview with Harold Zissman, May 24, 1995, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.

[501] Katriel Lashowitz, "From the Memories of a Partisan," in Lashowitz, *Volkovysk*, 151, Part III of *The Volkovysk Memorial Book*.

my unit a free hand to deal with any collaborators and they did their work so thoroughly that I received a severe reprimand from General Headquarters. …

I knew that most of the population of Western Poland cooperated with the Nazis in the extermination of the Jews. [The Jewish population of Western Poland was, for the most part, removed to the Generalgouvernement before the Holocaust got under way, and thus the inhabitants of that region did not even witness these events.—*M.P.*]

When the [Red] Army entered Germany the soldiers were allowed to do more or less as they pleased. Many of the Russians had cause to take revenge on the Germans but the Jews had even more cause and took every opportunity to make the Germans suffer. In the early days there was hardly a German prisoner left alive. …

I heard of many acts of revenge at this period. One had only to hear that there were families of Nazis in a village and it would be burnt to the ground. A great deal of Nazi property was destroyed. There were also cases of imitating methods used by the Germans in similar circumstances.

… This was enough for the soldiers of my unit and they decided to make the women of the village pay for what their husbands had done. [502]

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[502] Ephraim Schwarzmann, "With the Red Army from Stalingrad to Berlin," in Kariv, *Horchiv Memorial Book,* 73–75. Revenge directed at the Germans was widespread and brutal. In "liberated" Wilno, Germans were not permitted on the sidewalks and were required to wear distinctive armbands. Germans were even found on the street with their throats cut. Cohen, *The Avengers,* 154. Benjamin P., a Jew from Warsaw who during the last months of the war succeeded in disguising himself as a wounded SS man with a medical discharge, ended up as overseer of forced labourers on a farm in the Sudetenland: "On the 3rd of May they said that Hitler had died. People hung out black flags. People cried. … On the 8th of May the Russians entered Aussig. … And among [the Russian soldiers] was a lieutenant leading the detail. He was a Jew from Baranowicz [Baranowicze], from Poland, who … had volunteered for the [Red] Army. … In the end he saw that I am a Jew. I was there two weeks. I lived well. I became an interpreter, from German into Russian. … I took a bit of revenge on the Germans, and later on I left. For instance, I struck down a few people. Yes, killed dead. I, too, tortured a few people. And I also did the same things with the German children as the SS men did in Majdanek with the Jewish children. For instance, they took small children by the little legs and beat the head against the wall until the head cracked. I did the same to the German children, because the hate in me was so great. … In two weeks I … left for home, in Poland. … In Krakow [Kraków] I went to the Polish Committee and received help and aid, but first of all I wanted to return to Auschwitz. I [did so and] kept an eye on the people who were there, on the SS men. … I talked, and I also harassed them a little. The Russians in the camp didn't permit that they be killed, but at work one was able to harass them. … After three weeks I returned home to Warsaw." See Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds,* 133–34. Another Jew, who became chairman of the Central Committee of the Jews in Lower Silesia, instigated the Communist "governor" in Legnica to introduce measures directed against the remaining German population, namely that German homes be marked by white flags, that Germans wear white armbands on their left arms, that Germans step aside when they encounter a Jew on the sidewalk, and that Germans being repatriated to Germany be limited to sixteen kilograms of belongings. (These measures soon ceased at the intervention of the central government because of the understandable negative publicity they were attracting abroad.) This Jew also records other instances of harassment directed against Germans and the protection that Jews enjoyed: "eighteen Jews had been arrested in Rychbach (Dzierżoniów) on charges of vandalizing German homes. I telephoned the Rychbach police and asked for their release. … I gave them an ultimatum. If they did not free the Jews within two hours I would send in my Jewish militia. … Not all the survivors were angels. Some of them felt justified, in view of what they had suffered at the hands of the Nazis, to exact their own justice by vandalizing German homes and exacting physical violence. From time to time, they were arrested by the Soviets. I arranged with the Russian commander that these apprehended Jews be turned over to our committee. As soon as the police left, I would call them into my office and sternly reprimand them. … But my exhortations did not always work. … The attitude of the Soviet military authorities towards Jews in Lower Silesia was on the whole very good. Within the Soviet division stationed in Lower Silesia were many Jewish officers and soldiers and the head of the army in the district was a Jew, General Silver." See Jacob Egit, *Grand Illusion* (Toronto: Lugus, 1991), 50–53. Another memoir by a high-ranking officer, allegedly the chief of State Security in the city of Wrocław, then going by the name of Tadeusz Zaleski, notes that he "assisted in the forced removal of Germans in the Breslau [Wrocław] area back to Germany. It could not have been accidental when he ordered large groups to leave in the middle of the night, limiting them only to what they could carry." See Salsitz, *Against All Odds: A Tale of Two Survivors,* 392. The activities of the Red Army, Nazi Germany's erstwhile ally, were particularly brutal. German soldiers who surrendered were often killed

on the spot; those who belonged to the SS were interrogated before their execution.

> A group of Germans, unarmed and hands waving from side to side, came out. I discerned on the faded collar of one soldier an SS emblem, which upset me. I went over to him and said: *'Ich bin ein Jude.'*
>
> His face paled. He knew his end had come. We usually did not take small groups of Germans prisoner; it wasted too much of our manpower to guard them and transfer them to regiment headquarters. This time we did not hesitate. I explained to my comrades that these were SS soldiers. 'My great day has come. … Now they were going to be killed in cold blood, just like they had done to their victims. And by whom? By Kopel Kolpanitzky, the Jewish youth who had survived the Lahwah [Łachwa] ghetto. This was my victory over the Germans. This is called revenge.' But my victory was tinged with regret; I did not have anyone to tell what I had done. …
>
> We were glad to be in battle and searched for more and more Nazis to kill. We did not treat German soldiers who were wounded. The hatred for the Germans that each of us felt made us, and not necessarily just the Jews, brutal avengers. …
>
> Our division took Zagan [Sagan], and our brigade remained in the city to maintain control there. Small groups of Germans surrounded the city, and we went out daily to eliminate them. In one of the battles, our platoon commander was killed. In anger, we combed the city, house by house, taking out young men and handing them over to brigade headquarters. Many houses were vacant of people, but the contents remained. We took everything we could. …
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> Among these objects [floating in the river] were many bodies of German soldiers. The bodies had been in the water for a long time and had become bloated … Soldiers wading in the river used to insert their bayonets into the bellies of the bloated bodies, releasing an awful stench of gas, after which the body sank to the bottom of the river. We regularly went to the river to see if the current had brought more German bodies.
>
> In the meantime, the regiment and company officers as well as the soldiers filled sacks with clothes and other booty, which we intended to send home.

See Kolpanitzky, *Sentenced to Life,* 174–77, 184. Kolpanitzky also hatched a plot together with another Jewish soldier to massacre the German residents of Sagan, and even secured the approval of their commander, a Jew, for this undertaking. However, he gave up on the plan when the commander warned him that, should they fail in their mission, the regiment commander would disclaim any knowledge and they might suffer the consequences. Ibid., 182–83. One Jewish partisan recalled the instructions his Soviet brigade, which contained about 80 Jews, were given: "we were promised that when we reached Germany, especially the area known as East Prussia, we could do and have whatever we wanted, including women. It was open country." See Silverman, *From Victims to Victors,* 227. Virtually every German woman whom they came upon was raped. Even after the territory came under Communist control abuses continued to be perpetrated against Germans on a daily basis. One Jew recalled how he and his companions ejected German women and elderly men from their seats on streetcars in Gliwice and flagrantly seized bicycles from their German owners in the streets. See Henry Friedman, *I'm No Hero: Journeys of a Holocaust Survivor* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1999), 60. Another Jew recalled that, in Piotrolesie (Peterswald) near Rychbach (prewar Reichenbach, later renamed Dzierżoniów), a former Jewish partisan thrust a stick between the spokes of the front wheel of a bicycle driven by a young German boy carrying a bottle of milk. As the boy lay twisted on the sidewalk with milk running down his face, the Jewish screamed at him, "Apologize, you bloody fascist!" He then seized the boy's bicycle on the pretext of not having a licence as other Jews laughed. See Jack Kuper, *After the Smoke Cleared* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1994), 6–7. Local Germans considered the Jewish settlers in Rychbach (Reichenbach) to be "a great plague for us" and complained that they "robbed and plundered" in the area. See Benjamin Lieberman, *Terrible Fate: Ethnic Cleansing in the Making of Modern Europe* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006), 232. However, relations between Poles and Germans who had not yet been been transferred to Germany were often friendly. A young girl whose family was removed from the Kołomyja region and settled near Zgorzelec (Görlitz) recalled: "We played with other children and we each spoke our own languages and still understood each other. Even though we were different nationalities, there was understanding among us and we learned to sing German songs and they learned polish ones." See Anna Gres, *We Survived the Horrors of World War II* (New York: Vantage Press, 2010), 116.

Looting of German property in the postwar period was widespread, as was black marketeering. Poverty and massive unemployment in a country ravaged by war drove tens of thousands of Poles to improve their conditions by seeking out property abandoned by Germans and others. But these activities were not carried out exclusively by ethnic Poles, as some sources suggest. Historian Marcin Zaremba, for example, posits that plundering was ethnically based and makes no mention that Jews were also engaged in such activities, thereby suggesting that it was the exclusive domain of the Poles. See Marcin Zaremba, "Gorączka szabru," *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały,* vol. 5 (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów IFiS PAN, 2009): 193–220; Marcin Zaremba, "*Szaber* Frenzy," *Holocaust: Studies and Materials* (Warsaw), vol. 2 (2010): 173–202, and in Rejak and Frister, eds., *Inferno of Choices,* 364–407. However, there is ample evidence that Jews, both groups as as individuals, travelled from central Poland on expeditions (known as

"s*zaber*" or "*shaber"*) to loot in the former German territories awarded to Poland. Jews who settled in those territories took over German property and also engaged in looting. In some cases, Jews gave young German women "protection" in exchange for sexual favours. See Blumstein, *A Little House on Mount Carmel,* 379–80, 382–85; Sylvie Gerche, *Tout se paye dans la vie: Less terribles pérégrinations d'une famille juive polonaise, pendant la guerre. Témoignages* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003), 232; Gutenbaum and Latała, eds., *The Last Eyewitnesses,* vol. 2, 303; Eugene Bergman, *Survival Artist: A Memoir of the Holocaust* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland, 2009), 174 (the author describes how young Jews from Łódź returned from looting trips with trucks filled with valuables and furniture). According to a Jewish eyewitness, Jewish currency traders, speculators and plunderers of German property became rather conspicuous clientele of the most expensive establishments, unaffected by the poverty and hardship that most Poles had to endure. See Danuta Blus-Węgrowska, "Atmosfera pogromowa," *Karta,* no. 18 (1996): 103. Well-to-do Jews, as Joseph Tanenbaum reported, bought up art "for nearly nothing." See Robert L. Cohn, "Early Postwar Travelers on the Future of Jewish Life in Poland," *The Polish Review,* vol. 53, no. 3 (2008): 334. A group of Jews, notorious for trade in contraband and black market currency, took up residence in the border town of Wałbrzych on fictitious permits that allowed them to acquire apartments. Since housing was in short supply for repatriates from the Soviet-seized territories, tense relations arose between local officials and the leaders of the Jewish community, who unjustifiably alleged anti-Jewish prejudice in the allocation of housing. See Hana Shlomi, "The Reception and Settlement of Jewish Repatriants from the Soviet Union in Lower Silesia, 1946," *Gal-ed: On the History of Jews in Poland,* vol. 17 (Tel Aviv: Center for Research on the History of Polish Jewry, Diaspora Research Institute, Tel Aviv University, 2000), 85–104, here 91–92. Jews involved in plundering and black marketeering who travelled on trains with large amounts of goods and luggage could become the targets of robbers. See Langberg, *Sara's Blessing,* 171–72. A number of Jews took part in illegal trafficking of goods between Poland and Germany, which often entailed bribing the police. See Frances Dworecki, *The Autobiography of Frances Dworecki,* Internet: <http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/lida-District/fd-toc.htm>, chapter 19, which describes the activities of such a ring. Yosel Epelbaum (later Pell), who had fought with the Communist partisans in Volhynia, became involved in the black market after returning to Biała Podlaska: "For a couple of years, in Biala Podlaska, then in Katowitz [Katowice], and later in Munich, I would be up to my hips in illicit transactions, smuggling merchandise, currency, and gold from one end of Europe to the other." In Katowice, he made the acquaintance of a wealthy Jew named Chaban who, along with his family, has passed as Catholic during the war. Chaban emerged as "one of the kings of the black market." Epelbaum returned to Poland on several occasions from forays to Germany. He recalled the suppressed anti-Semitism of the Germans, now "under the tight control of the Allied occupation", and the fights that sometimes broke out in the D.P. camps between the Jews and the German police. Posing as a junior Soviet military attaché, he seduced German women with false hopes of obtaining information about missing relatives: "I felt I was getting back at them with my deception and performing an act of revenge." He managed to obtain by fraud a birth certificate indicating his place of birth as Germany in order to immigrate to the United States under Germany's large, unfulfilled immigration quota. See Pell and Rosenbaum, *Taking Risks,* 123–432. For additional descriptions of lucrative black market and other shady activities in Germany, see Henryk Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories: True Tales from the Holocaust and Life After* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 157–61. It was not as if the Jews arriving from Poland were all destitute. The head of the DP operations for UNRRA in Germany thought a secret organization was behind the arrival of so many "well-dressed, well-fed, rosy-cheeked" Jews who appeared to have "plenty of money." See MacDonogh, *After the Reich,* 330. Not only were Jews prominent in the black market and committed their share of crimes, but they also received special treatment including significantly food higher rations in the DP camps. The former led to raid by some 200 German police on a Jewish camp near Stuttgart on March 29, 1946, in which one Jew was killed, many others roughed up, and property plundered and destroyed, thus triggering a riot and a massive protest rally in Stuttgart; the latter resulted in a riot by several hundred Austrians in Bad Ischl in the Salzkammergut on August 20, 1947. The German police were severely criticized and the U.S. military commander in Europe rescinded their authority to enter Jewish DP camps. See MacDonogh, *After the Reich,* 296, 331–34, 360, 377; "Germans Raid the Stuttgart Center: An Unprovoked Attack," in Lipson, *The Book of Radom,* 87–89; Ruth Gay, *Safe Among the Germans: Liberated Jews After World War II* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 86–87. (It should be noted that the attitude of the U.S. military was not necessarily pro-Jewish and anti-German. In fact, 22 percent of American soldiers stationed in Germany admitted that the Germans were justified in ridding themselves of the Jews. See Samuel A. Stouffer, et al., *The American Soldier* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949], vol. 2, 571.) Similarly, in Jewish refugee camps in Italy, "the majority of the camp committee looked on their position not as a responsibility but rather an opportunity for grabbing better food and accommodations for themselves. Thus there were abuses at the expense of the rank and file of the refugees." This informant witnessed the misappropriation of food from storerooms (it was sold on the black market), the theft of thousands of letters containing cash from relatives in America, and the receipt of hundreds of parcels addressed to non-existent persons in response to bogus begging letters sent to "landsmandfshaftn" organizations in America. In 1947 the American Joint was embarrassed by the discovery of large-scale pilfering in their Rome warehouse and by the arrest by the Italian police of twenty of their employees. See "Life Story of Perella née Esterowicz (Pearl Good)," Internet: <http://www.eilatgordinlevitan.com/vilna/vilna_pages/vilna_stories_perella.html>.

In Germany and Austria, violent acts of revenge were also commonplace, though apologists for Jewish conduct claim the opposite was the case. (For example, Giles MacDonogh states: "There were occasional incidences of fury directed

at the Germans, but they were rare." See MacDonogh, *After the Reich,* 334.) As one Jew candidly admitted, "Revenge also meant living with German women." See Gay, *Safe Among the Germans,* 90. Saul Stabitski, a Jew who had been imprisoned in a camp in Austria, "hated all Germans and Austrians and … experienced fits of rage. At regular intervals … he would board a trolley and pick fights with people in the car, unleashing his fists on the passengers one by one, until perhaps as many as ten men staggered off the train, bruised and bleeding." See Pomerantz and Winik, *Run East,* 181 (the Jewish inmates of the D.P. camp protected Stabitski). Another Jew who was taken to Ebensee, a camp in the Tyrol Mountains, wrote: "We killed every one of the German oppressors who fell into our hands before the arrival of the Americans in the enclosure of the camp." See 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), 39. Another Jewish prisoner liberated from Ebensee recalls: "Stores belonging to Austrian shopkeepers were fair game. We walked around with guns and any 'deal' we proposed was accepted. … We were entitled to whatever we wanted, much in the way that the Children of Israel were entitled to the booty they took from the Egyptians after their long enslavement. … The looting raged for a few days, and in the ensuing chaos, even American food supplies vanished—from trucks, warehouses, and kitchens. … the Austrian women were sex-starved because most of the local able-bodied men were not back from the front." See 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), 165–66. See also Anton Gill, *The Journey Back From Hell: Conversations with Concentration Camp Survivors* (London: Grafton Books, 1988), 176 (former female inmates of Thersienstadt beat up a German woman with a young child and engaged in widespread looting); Lauren Lior-Liechtenstain, Philippe Lior-Liechtenstein, and Sarah Gibbons, ed., *Remember Never to Forget: The Life Story of Israel Lior* (Bloomington, Indiana: Xlibris, 2010), 135. Upon liberating Dachau on April 29, 1945. American soldiers machine gunned dozens of German camp guards. See Jonathan Mayo and Emma Craigie, *Hitler's Last Day: Minute by Minute* (New York: Short Books, 2015). Jews and other prisoners liberated from Dachau set out on hunts to find Nazis: "Anybody who can catch a Nazi, they used to beat him. Even if the survivor was on clutches, he said, 'Let me hit him one time.' [The Americans gave us] three days. We could do anything. We did all kinds of things, trying to revenge. For three days anything we wanted, we could do. And we felt better. The Germans were scared …" See account of Martin Wasserman, Louisiana Holocaust Survivors, The Southern Institute for Education and Research, posted online at <http://www.tulane.edu/~so-inst/martin.html>. An inmate of a small camp in Vaihingen an der Enz near Stuttgart recalled: 'The next day the rumor spread that the Frenchmen gave us permission to go to town and loot. 'Take revenge on those Germans!' A hoard of prisoners poured out of the camp. … We swarmed like locusts from house to house. Petrified, the inhabitants gave us anything we asked for at once. These were women, old men, a few middle-aged persons. … At the end of the day we returned to camp. The town was completely looted." See Joanna Wiszniewicz, *And Yet I Still Have Dreams: A Story of Certain Loneliness* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2004), 102–103. According to another account, "after the German defeat, the young Jews used to travel on trains and take the German people's luggage. The youth took the luggage in the right moment the train was stopped, and then threw it through the train's window. He jumped off the train, took the luggage and escaped." See Zalman Urievich, "Pruzhany Jews in Ghettos and Camps," in *Pruzhany Yzkor Book,* Internet: <http://www.purs.org/yzkor-pruzhany/guettos_camp.htm>; translation of M. W. Bernstein, ed., *Pinkas me-hamesh kehilot harevot…* (Buenos Aires: Former Residents of Pruzana …, 1958), chapter 93. Harry Haft ran a brothel with his brother, smuggled leather into Poland, and later became a driver in the bustling illegal trade in cigarettes. See Alan Scott Haft, *Harry Haft: Auschwitz Survivor, Challenger of Rocky Marciano* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 86–92. Michael Berger also recalled widespread Jewish black marketeering and a run-in with some young Germans who tried to cut off the hair of one of his many German girlfriends for associating with a Jew. Tellingly, he turned to a garrison of Polish troops who were part of the Allied forces in Germany for protection and revenge against the Germans who had attacked him. See Berger, *Constructing a Collective Memory of the Holocaust,* 94–95. There was even a booming black market trade in Munich involving blank documents taken by Jewish prisoners from concentration camps and doctored to "prove" one's imprisonment. The documents (camp identity books) were sold complete with an appropriate photograph of the bearer in a prison uniform and a tattoo on his arm. See the interview with Stanisław Milczyński (Home Army Lieutenant "Gryf") by Andrzej Kumor and Jerzy Rosa, "Skąd wiesz, który Bóg ją ocalił…," *Goniec* (Mississauga), May 5–11, 2006. The German police embarked on a campaign against Jewish black market activities with frequent raids on the DP camps. In March 1946, accompanied by dogs, they carried out a particularly aggressive raid on a camp near Stuttgart. As camp inmates attempted to drive the Germans from the camp, a melee ensued in which the police fired and killed one of the bystanders, a concentration camp survivor named Samuel Danziger. From then on, the German police were forbidden access to the DP camps. See Gay, *Safe Among the Germans,* 86–87; Lipson, *The Book of Radom,* 87–89. However, the American Military Police still had its work cut out for it: "From time to time, the American Military Police (MPs) would enter the camp, carry out searches looking for smuggled merchandise, and arrest suspects. From time to time, there were disputes between different groups of camp inhabitants, which evolved from verbal arguments to blows and sometimes, to unsheathed knives. The quarrels mostly broke out for no particular reason, over trivialities. On one of the dance evenings, a group of young people, known as 'the group from Bialystok [Białystok],' entered the hall. … The anger on both sides escalated and turned into a quarrel that quickly came to blows. Friends on both sides joined the melee, and within moments the dance hall had become a battlefield. There was

no alternative but to call the MPs, who came quickly in a convoy of jeeps. The sound of the sirens rising and falling was enough to scatter the fighters." See Freiberg, *To Survive Sobibor,* 507. Israeli television carried a program in which elderly Holocaust survivors (among them Simcha Rotem) came forward with accounts of a death squad they formed to take revenge on their Nazi persecutors. Disguised as British or American officers, they hunted down former SS officers, dragged the men out of their homes and killed them. See Ramit Plushnick-Masti, "Holocaust Survivors Recall Revenge on Nazis," *Washington Post,* December 23, 2005. Israeli historian Tom Segev revealed a shocking plot hatched by former partisan Abba Kovner to bring a small group of fighters, named the Avengers, back to Germany in order to poison the water supply of Nuremberg as part of a grand scheme to kill six million Germans. Apparently tipped off by Zionist leaders, who saw the plan as dangerous to their state building, the British jailed Kovner as he was trying to leave Palestine in late 1945. He got word to his colleagues, however, and a much scaled-back version of his plot was carried out several months later and did have some effect. A few thousand Nazi officers and officials imprisoned in an American POW camp (Nuremberg-Langwasser in southern Germany) were fed bread laced with arsenic. Some 200 Germans were reportedly hospitalized but it is unclear if any died. See Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 140–46. Two Holocaust survivors who confessed to putting arsenic in the bread supplies were exonerated by a German court which ruled that they were not culpable "because of persecution experienced" by the two during the Holocaust. See "Survivors cleared," *The Canadian Jewish News,* May 18, 2000. One of the Jews involved in the plot was Joseph Harmatz, a former partisan in Rudniki forest. See Ramit Plushnick-Masti, "Holocaust Survivors Recall Revenge on Nazis," *Washington Post,* December 23, 2005; Smith, *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust,* 304–305. For examples of postwar murders carried out by the Jewish Brigade's revenge squads see Morris Beckman, *The Jewish Brigade: An Army with Two Masters, 1944–1945* (Staplehurst, Kent: Spellmount, 1998), 126–27. The Jewish Brigade also left its mark when it was called on to act as an army of occupation in Germany: "Together with a few dozen soldiers they used to leave the central camp at Tarvisio at night to execute those they deemed as having committed crimes against the Jewish people; the names came from lists compiled from informers. … They carried out their night missions from the time the war ended in May until the Jewish Brigade was moved at the end of July, a matter of three months. It is difficult to give an exact number, but it can be estimated that they killed a few hundred people." When the British found out what was happening, they cancelled the Jewish Brigade's assignment. See Porat, *The Fall of a Sparrow,* 214–15. Paradoxically, as Tom Segev recounts in his book *The Seventh Million,* Zionists forged close links with Nazis, who supported training camps for Zionists inside Germany as late as 1942 and provided arms and large monetary subsidies (some $70 million) for the Zionist cause in Palestine. A Zionist conference was even convoked in Berlin in 1936. High-ranking SS officials paid cordial visits to Palestine where they met with David Ben-Gurion and Levi Schkolnik, future Israeli statesmen, and the "Lehi" faction in even proposed a political and ideological alliance with Nazi Germany in January 1941 but their plaintive overtures were rebuffed. See also Lenni Brenner, ed., *51 Documents: Zionist Collaboration with the Nazis* (Fort Lee, New Jersey: Barricade Books, 2002).

It must be acknowledged that, despite the defeat of Nazi Germany, many, if not most, Germans were still unrepentant Nazis at heart and hardened anti-Semites but, for obvious reasons (i.e., fear of being punished), were reluctant to display their true sentiments, and if they did it was mostly done verbally. This was especially true in the Eastern German territories awarded to Poland, which had voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Nazi Party in the interwar elections, and the Sudetenland. Had Poles, who were expelled from the Eastern Territories seized by the Soviet Union, had to settle among millions of Germans allowed to remain in the newly acquired Western Territories, they (the Poles) would have doubtless faced a large-scale bloodbath. In June 1945, Germans attacked the town of Brzeg (Brieg) in Silesia, killing 15 Soviet soldiers and 5 Polish women. Other attacks on Polish and Soviet soldiers are known to have occurred. See Marcin Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga: Polska 1944–1947: Ludowa reakcja na kryzys* (Kraków: Znak and Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2012), 571, 572. A Pole of Jewish origin recalled the following reception when he found himself among Germans expelled or fleeing from Czechoslovakia:

> 'Where do you come from? Are you *Volksdeutsche,* German nationals?'
> 'We are Polish.'
> 'What?!'
> 'Next time we shall finish off your lot for good!'
> 'Every fucking Czech, Pole, every bloody Slav!'
> 'Just you wait and see, we'll be attacking the USSR again soon, this time together with the Americans.' Threats were coming from all sides.
> 'I am a soldier of the SS. Not for nothing did the Americans release me from the prisoner-of-war camp,' a young boy, no more than seventeen or eighteen years of age, added with pride.

See Likiernik, *By Devil's Luck,* 168. Boys as young as five years went up to Allied soldiers, raised their right hand and said loudly, "Heil Hitler." See Wolfgang W. E. Samuel, *The War: Memories of Our World War II Childhood* (Jackson, University Press of Mississippi, 2002), 240–41. A Jewish survivor recalled the hostile climate to Jews in postwar Germany: "One day while riding on a streetcar in Munich, Margot overheard a German girl telling her companion, an American soldier, to bully a group of Jewish passengers. The soldier began to push the Jews around. At this point, an

American Jewish chaplain showed the soldier his ID and ordered the soldier to get off the streetcar with him." See Yehudi Lindeman, ed., *Shards of Memory: Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 2007), 155. Sabina Zimering, who attended medical school in Munich until 1950, recalled: "In psychiatry class a patient came out with an anti-Semitic tirade, and hundreds of German students were applauding, whistling, yelling approval." See Lewin, *Witnesses to the Holocaust,* 178. Such sentiments, and even defiance, continued to be widespread among the defeated Germans. It probably didn't help matters that the Americans were known to evict Germans from their homes which were then given over to Jews: "in Lampertheim, a rich suburb of Frankfurt, General Dwight D. Eisenhower came to visit and ordered all the Germans to abandon their houses, leaving them intact. Then he moved 1,000 Jews into these homes. We were among the first ones to move in—we got the largest house, with a garden and orchard, even a swimming pool. … We also hired three women to help with the chores and the baby, paying them with room and board." See Wrobel, *My Life My Way,* 122–23.

Today, Poles are left to account for countless acts of revenge and atrocities perpetrated by Russians and Jews in the postwar era, very often on civilians and prisoners of war. Historian Antony Beevor notes that "Contrary to German expectations, forced labourers were responsible for surprisingly little violence, when one considers how they had suffered after their deportation to Germany." See Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin 1945,* 409. While much is written about the misdeeds of the Soviets, little publicity is given to those committed by the Americans and British. In autumn 1944 the Americans burned down the village of Wallenberg because they had encountered resistance. See MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 235. Declassified Foreign Office files have revealed that the British government operated a secret torture centre in London (the so-called London Cage) during and after the war to extract information and confessions from several thousand German prisoners. See Ian Cobain, "Revealed: UK wartime torture camp," *The Guardian* (Manchester), November 12, 2005. Another secret interrogation camp operated by the Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre, a division of the War Office, was located in Bad Nenndorf near Hanover, and stayed open until July 1947. Conditions there were reportedly "far worse" than in the London Cage and some of the more than 400 prisoners were tortured to death. One of those who died was a former SS officer called Abeling, a member of an annihilation squad in Warsaw sought by the Polish authorities. His death was kept a close secret at the insistence of the American authorities, who had employed Abeling to spy on his former Nazi comrades under the codename Slim. Of the 20 interrogators ordered to break the inmates, 12 were British, and the remaining were mostly German Jewish refugees who had enlisted on the outbreak of the war. Most of the warders were soldiers barely out of their teens. See Ian Cobain, "The interrogation camp that turned prisoners into living skeletons," *The Guardian* (Manchester), December 17, 2005. The concentration camps of Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, Theresienstadt and Dachau were reused after May 1945 by the Allies, and German prisoners died here in droves. At Schwäbisch Hall, a particularly infamous prison near Stuttgart for officials suspected of major war crimes, the Americans used methods similar to those employed by the SS in Dachau such as mock executions, kicks to the groin, deprivation of sleep and savage beatings. When the Americans set up a commission of inquiry into the methods used by their investigators, they found that, of the 139 cases examined, 137 had had their testicles permanently destroyed by kicks by kicks received from the American War Crimes Investigation team. Another target group were persons who had any contact with the Soviet Zone as a deserter, refugee or ex-POW of the Soviets. If such persons fell into American or British hands they could find themselves in one of the interrogation centres charged with intelligence-gathering about the Soviets, and exposed to appalling brutality such as savage beatings, starvation, and deprivation of sleep. In the British-run prisons, when nothing could be got out of a prisoner he was brought before a secret military court where he would be tried on a trumped-up charge; his silence about the methods of interrogation was ensured by a severe prison sentence. See MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 397–415, where many additional examples are detailed. German prisoners endured brutal treatment in reactivated former Nazi camps and prisons. Ibid., 214–15, 343, 420–25. The treatment of German POWs, especially by the French, was also appalling. Ibid., 392–96, 416–20. The German population was punished by starvation. Ibid., 362–71. While initially the Allies were determined to bring Nazis to trial, their interest soon began to wane and some of the worst killers were not punished at all. Ibid., 355–57, 359.

Jewish-American historian Norman Naimark, who eschews the topic of transgressions perpetrated by Jews (as well as the expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs), attempts to reduce the Allied-decreed transfer of the German population from the territories Poland acquired from Germany after the war, as well as the spontaneous flight of the German population and the enormous population losses sustained during the brutal Soviet offensive (both of which were augmented by German military policies), to alleged "Polish" vengeance and ethnic cleansing of Germans. See Norman A. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2001): 108–38. Important factors are relegated to mere details, such as the enormous wartime losses sustained by the Poles and level of atrocities directed against them, which were incomparably greater that the relatively mild treatment meted out to the Czechs and German allies such as the Slovaks, Hungarians, Rumanians, and Croatians, who nonetheless drove out their German minorities after the war with much cruelty. (The Czechs mastered the art of accommodation. The Czech economy as a whole obediently produced about 10 percent of the Reich's industrial output in exchange for handsome salaries. Czech munitions workers received higher rations than even their German counterparts and workers' salaries were more or less the same. Fewer than 2,000 German officials were required to keep tabs on a Czech administration employing more than 350,000 people. Czech businessmen made vast profits, and the average Czech family lived quite comfortably. A German dragnet successfully hauled in practically the entire

membership of the Czech underground in the summer of 1942, leaving the country without a functioning resistance organization. The inhabitants of the Protectorate were not called up for military service, thus the loss of non-Jewish lives was minimal, perhaps no more than 25,000. The Czechs survived the war with far fewer casualties than any other country in Central and Eastern Europe. Damage to property was not extensive, thus the country emerged from German occupation nearly unscathed. See R. M. Douglas's *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012], 22; István Deák, *Europe on Trial: The Story of Collaboration, Resistance, and Retribution During World War II* [Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2015], 33–35. On conditions for Germans and Hungarians in Yugoslavia, for example, see Ahonen, et al., *People on the Move*, 78–79.) It was not the Poles who set the wheels in motion. The borders of Polish state were radically altered at the insistence of the Soviet Union and Poles were removed from the Eastern Borderlands and resettled on former German lands awarded to Poland as compensation for its lost territories in the East. This was the continuation of a process initiated by the Germans and Soviets when they divided up Poland 1939 and deported Poles en masse to the General Government and the Soviet interior. The architects of the postwar reshaping of Poland were likewise not the Poles, whom no one asked about their wishes, but primarily the Soviet Union, whose actions were sanctioned by the Allies, knowing full well that there would be consequences for the civilian population. The expulsion of the Poles from Eastern Poland began already in the autumn of 1944, and therefore the Polish Communist authorities could not wait until the Potsdam Conference (in July and August 1945) to start to remove Germans and resettle expelled Poles on the German territories that, according to the Yalta Conference of February 1945, were awarded to Poland to compensate for the lands seized by the Soviet Union and, understandably, they did not look favourably on Germans who were returning to those territories by the tens of thousands. Moreover, while Poland's territorial losses and the expulsion of Poles from the Eastern Borderlands were irreversible, as long as large numbers of Germans remained in the former German territories Poland's new Western border could not be considered secure. (These two important considerations are not recognized in Western literature on this topic such as R. M. Douglas's *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012) and Keith Lowe's *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II* (London: Viking/Penguin, 2012).) Indeed, the conditions under which the Poles were driven from their homes in the Eastern Borderlands were often scarcely better than those faced by German expellees. The Poles were given short notice of their evacuation, were robbed or forced to leave their belongings behind, and were harassed during their long, gruelling trips in primitive cattle cars. The Poles who settled near Rychbach, in Silesia, were forced to give over property they acquired to the chairman of the Jewish community, who was charged with the task of allocating to them houses abandoned by resettled Germans. See Janina Hera, "Losy ekspatriantów z Kresów po zakończeniu wojny," Marcin Zwolski, ed., *Exodus: Deportacje i migracje (wątek wschodni): Stan i perspektywy badań* (Warsaw and Białystok: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), 120–22, 124; Pertti Ahonen, Gustavo Corni, Jerzy Kochanowski, Rainer Schulze, Tamás Stark, and Barbara Stelzl-Marx, *People on the Move: Forced Population Movements in Europe in the Second World War and Its Aftermath* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2008), 130–32. Moreover, unlike Israel and the Soviet Union, Poland did not receive any reparations from Germany for the massive destruction visited on her and her population. It should be borne in mind that the Allies also oversaw the return of former forced labourers—then DPs—from Germany to the Soviet Union, resorting to coercive methods to again deprive them of their freedom. See Ahonen, et al., *People on the Move*, 183. Moreover, the Germans by and large were not "driven from their homes by the Poles," as Naimark and other historians of his ilk now claim, nor did they flee in fear of the Poles. The Polish Army did not take part in the offensive in East Prussia, Upper Silesia or much of the other territories Germany lost. Most of the Germans were massacred wholesale, driven out of their homes and brutalized by the Red Army, whose soldiers were incited by a wide-scale indoctrination program to perpetrate indiscriminate massacres of Germans. They were urged in flyers and verbally to take revenge against the German civilian population by raping women and killing men. The flyer is believed to have been authored by Ilia Erenburg (Ilya Ehrenburg), Stalin's favourite journalist and propagandist whose articles in the Red Army newspaper *Krasnaia Zvezda* called for revenge on Germany. In his most famous and oft-quoted article of the war, "Kill," published on July 24, 1942, Erenburg wrote: "The Germans are not human beings. … If you have not killed at least one German a day, you have wasted that day. … If you kill one German, kill another—there is nothing more amusing for us than a heap of German corpses. … Kill the German … Do not waver. Do not let up. Kill …" As historian Chris Bellamy points out, "Vengeance was the theme, stressed over and over again, with lurid tales of what the Germans had done to their people, and encouraged by political officers, backed up by Russia's top writers, notably Il'ya Ehrenburg. … But that instruction from the political officers meant that revenge—cruelty over and above the already horrific and brutal necessities of war—was not merely condoned. It was a *duty*. There was a legal obligation for any soldier, as the representative of the 'court of people's justice', to exact retribution. … The murder and rape that followed … was deliberately encouraged." See Chris Bellamy, *Absolute War: Soviet Russia in the Second World War. A Modern History* (Basingstoke and Oxford: Macmillan, 2007), 638–39. (There is no evidence that General Berling's Polish Army issued any such instructions.) British military historian Antony Beevor believes that at least two million German women and girls were raped, often many times over. In many towns and villages every female, aged from 10 to 80, was raped. To avoid further violations females were known to have taken their own lives. Most of the violations were gang rapes, usually in front of German eyewitnesses—especially before the eyes of husbands, sons, and fathers. The atrocities were not confined to rape, as women and girls were often murdered

and their bodies desecrated. It was not unheard of for Soviet soldiers to drive a bottle into a woman's vagina with a kick of their feet once they had finished abusing their victims. See Bożena Aksamit, "Branka Armii Czerwonej," *Gazeta Wyborcza (Duży Format),* May 5, 2009, and Józef Krzyk, "Uderzeni palcem Stalina," *Gazeta Wyborcza,* April 13, 2011. Eyewitnesses recalled grisly scenes of women's naked bodies nailed spread-eagled on the sides of barns. Looting was also rampant as Soviet soldiers descended on German villages and towns. Soviet soldiers also raped large numbers of Polish and Jewish women, including those who survived German concentration camps and forced labour, and even abused many Russian (Soviet) women they encountered along the way. On May 5, 1945, when the demands of intoxicated Russian soldiers to deliver for their amusement young girls from among a group of Polish women liberated from the Ravensbrück concentration camp were rebuffed, they fired three shots killing 19-year-old Danuta Pawlak and her protector 45-year-old Helena Piotrowska. The Soviet military authorities showed no interest in the case and did not take any proceedings. See Bogusia J. Wojciechowska, ed. and comp., *Waiting To Be Heard: The Polish Christian Experience Under Nazi and Stalinist Occupation, 1939–1945* (Bloomington, Indiana: AuthorHouse, 2009), 263. On atrocities committed by the Red Army see: Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin 1945*, 410, passim; Samuel, *The War*, 139–41, 198–200, 271, 282; Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 69–140; Max Hastings, *Armageddon: The Battle for Germany, 1944–1945* (London: Macmillan, 2004), 524, 552ff, 567, 569; Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World: Twentieth-Century Conflict and the Descent of the West* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 580–81; Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War: Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939–1945* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006), 283–84, 305, 309–14, 318–20; Davies, *Europe at War,* 340–42; David Stafford, *Endgame, 1945: Victory, Retribution, Liberation* (London: Little, Brown, 2007), 314–15, 331; MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 25–27, 33–34, 42–43, 46, 48–49, 52, 55–57, 89, 98–103, 114–15, 133, 138, 166, 170, 175, 180, 182, 210, 289, 301, 303, 538; Ahonen, et al., *People on the Move,* 134–36; Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, 710–11; Blaichman, *Rather Die Fighting,* 180–81 (describes how young Jewish women who had survived concentration camps were turned into sex slaves by Soviet soldiers). On conditions in Poland, where even trains were unsafe for anyone regardless of their nationality—Soviet soldiers looted with abandon, murdered at least 1,500 Polish civilians, and raped tens of thousands of Polish women, all with virtual impunity (the Polish Communist authorities were powerless to stop it and imposed censorship on press reports), see Mariusz Lesław Krogulski, *Okupacja w imię sojuszu: Armia Radziecka w Polsce 1944–1956* (Warsaw: von borowiecky, 2000), 83–87; Janusz Wróbel, "Wyzwoliciele czy okupanci? Żołnierze sowieccy w Łódzkiem 1945–1946," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 7 (2001): 39–42; Andrzej Chwalba, *Dzieje Krakowa,* vol. 5: *Kraków w latach 1939–1945* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002), 441 (Kraków); Grzegorz Baziur, *Armia Czerwona na Pomorzu Gdańskim 1945–1947* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2003), passim; Andrzej Tłomacki, *Akcja "Wisła" w powiecie bialskim na tle walki politycznej i zbrojnej w latach 1944–1947* (Biała Podlaska and Warsaw: n.p., 2003), 24–25; Janina Szych, "W niewoli i u wyzwolicieli," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 9–10 (2005): 145–46; Tomasz Konopka, "Śmierć na ulicach Krakowa w latach 1945–1947 w materiale archiwalnym krakowskiego Zakładu Medycyny Sądowej," *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość,* no. 8 (2005): 149–50; Grzegorz Miernik, "Życie codzienne w Kielcach 1945–1946/1947," in Bukowski, Jankowski, and Żaryn, eds., *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego,* vol. 2, 74; Joanna Hytrek-Hryciuk, *"Rosjanie nadchodzą!": Ludność niemiecka a żołnierze Armii Radzieckiej (Czerwonej) na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945–1948* (Wrocław: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2011); Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga,* 151–184, 193. A shocking example was the murder (shooting) of two Ursuline nuns, Sister Akwila Podskarbi and Sister Kajusa Trznadel, on January 25, 1945, in Pokrzywno near Poznań, for standing up to a group of Soviet soldiers who came to the convent intending to rape the nuns. More than 60 Polish civilians were murdered in Przyszowice, in Upper Silesia, on January 27, 1945, including survivors of German concentration camps and young women who had been raped. See "Przysowice we krwi," *Gazeta Wyborcza,* October 8–9, 2005. At least 80 Catholis nuns, both German and Polish, perished at the hands of Soviet soldiers in Opole Silesia. In Nysa (Neisse), 27 nuns were shot or imjured and 150 nuns were raped, often repeatedly, including those who were elderly, ill and even paralyzed. See Adam Dziurok, *Kruchtoizacja: Polityka władz partyjno-państwowych wobec Kościoła katolickiego w latach 1945–1956 w województwie śląskim/katowickim* (Katowice: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przecwiko Narodowi Polskiemu, Oddział w Katowicach, 2012). It must be pointed out that rape, as a weapon of war, was initiated by the Germans: "The rape of Polish and Jewish women by German soldiers was common in the early months of the occupation." See Evans, *The Third Reich at War, 1939–1945*, 52.) A young Holocaust survivor who worked for Soviet soldiers in the Gorlice area recalled: "The soldiers in the back of the wagon were wild and boisterous. Every now and then they had me drive into a farm that was close to the road and they would get off the wagon and knock on the door of the house and ask for women. All the young women were taken to the various outbuildings, and I could hear them pleading and screaming and sometimes crying. The Russians would say, 'I have liberated you. Now let me have you.'" See Samuel P. Oliner, *Narrow Escapes: A Boy's Holocaust Memories and Their Legacy* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House, 2000), 149. A Jew in the Soviet army recalled: "I was pleased to see the rapid end and the revenge taken against the Germans. Here in the villages were whole families, most of them women. … the attacking forces, including senior officers, took advantage of the opportunity. … Holding an automatic rifle in one hand, they raped the local women. They saw nothing wrong in this. It is hard to blame soldiers on the front, who believed that the Germans had committed crimes thousands of times worse against us. … In many cases, commanders

with whom I was close tried to rape not only German women, but also Czech women and Russian refugees returning to their homeland." See Berestizki, *Run For Your Life, My Child!*, 137, 142.

German wartime propagandists endeavoured to exploit Soviet atrocities against Germans, but this backfired as they only encouraged a massive flight. As Norman Davies points out, when the Soviet Army first entered prewar German territory in East Prussia on October 21, 1944, "At the village of Nemmersdorf they committed numerous rapes and atrocities [and then relinquished the village to the Wehrmacht]. Goebbels [Göbbels] sought to exploit the incident and to strengthen German resolve by sending in a camera team and publishing pictures of the women of Nemmersdorf who had been stripped, raped, and crucified upside-down on barn doors. He achieved the opposite of what was intended. Most of the inhabitants of Germany's eastern provinces determined that if and when the Soviet Army returned they would flee." See Davies, *Rising '44,* 446. In actual fact, the extent of Soviet atrocities in Nemmersdorf was grossly exaggerated by German propaganda, the number of victims was probably closer to twenty, and the photograph of the two women nailed to a barn was not from Nemmersdorf. See Bernhard Fisch, *Nemmersdorf, Oktober 1944: Was in Ostpreußen tatsächlich geschah* (Berlin: Editions Ost, 1997). According to historian Richard Blanke, "the Red Army seems to have had a *carte blanche* unparalleled in modern European history to do as it pleased with conquered civilians; and Nazi atrocities in the Soviet Union had given its members every incentive to do their worst." When Soviet soldiers entered the unresisting East Prussian village of Kronau, they raped most of the females and shot virtually all the men (52 of them), including 18 French conscript labourers. Among the numerous women shot resisting rape were even some conscript labourers from the Soviet Union. In Gottesdorf (Boguszyce), in Upper Silesia, the Soviet Army massacred 200 inhabitants and 100–150 other civilians. See Steven Béla Várdy and T. Hunt Toley, eds., *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Boulder, Colorado: Social Science Monographs, 2003), 284, 296. According to Jewish sources, half a million Jews fought in the ranks of the Red Army and thus bear a share of the responsibility for the atrocities perpetrated on German civilians by that army. By the time the Soviet forces seized control of East Prussia, most of the German population had fled, and by the time the territory came under Polish rule in March 1945, no more than 15 percent of the prewar population remained. See Richard Blanke, *Polish-speaking Germans? Language and National Identity among the Masurians since 1971* (Köln, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2001), 279–85. Likewise, the bulk of expulsions from Gdańsk (prewar Danzig) were carried out by the Soviet military authorities well before the Polish Repatriation Office took over in 1946. During that period Red Army soldiers were known to mistreat the Polish population, as well as the remaining German population, with impunity: robberies, assaults, rapes and even murders were common occurrences. A Jewish resident of Wrocław recalled: "The Russians' brawling could be heard throughout the neighborhoods all night: drinking, singing, loud music—the screams of women being raped." See Stevens, *Good Morning,* 196. "Young German girls wandered in the streets asking any man in uniform to take them home. They promised to cook and keep house and live with a man, so long as they would be given some protection. There was no morality in the city for weeks on end … There were many cases where a mother and a daughter would open their home to two soldiers and thus have double protection." See Friedman, *Nazi Hunter,* 89–90. Curiously, the Soviets soon forged friendly links with the remaining German population, which, because of a change of policy dictated at the top, started to receive favourable treatment in the allocation of housing, jobs, food, and administrative positions. While now opportunistically advocating pro-Communist views, many Germans continued to harbour pro-Nazi sentiments and openly displayed hostility and contempt toward Poles. Some of the Germans joined up with Soviet marauders who assaulted and robbed Poles and took part in looting. In February 1946, they even burned down a Polish school in Gubin. The prospect of another German-Russian or Soviet-Nazi alliance directed at Poland was something that was secretly relished by the German population which, by and large, still retained its loyalty to the defeated Third Reich. When they eventually faced deportation, as Tuviah Friedman recalled, they were "bitter, and they cursed us for what was being done to them." See Friedman, *Nazi Hunter,* 90, 103. See, generally, Olejnik, *Polityka narodowościowa Polski w latach 1944–1960,* 81–82; Stanisław Jankowiak, "Wysiedlenia Niemców z Polski po II wojnie światowej," *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość,* no. 2 (2004): 146; Stanisław Jankowiak, *Wysiedlenie i emigracja ludności niemieckiej w polityce władz polskich w latach 1945–1970* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2005), 86–89, 100–102; Janina Hera, "Losy ekspatriantów z Kresów po zakończeniu wojny," in Zwolski, *Exodus*, 126–29; T. David Curp, *A Clean Sweep? The Politics of Ethnic Cleansing in Western Poland, 1945–1960*, (Rochester, New York: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 52–53, 68; Hytrek-Hryciuk, *"Rosjanie nadchodzą!": Ludność niemiecka a żołnierze Armii Radzieckiej (Czerwonej) na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945–1948,* passim. For additional reports about conditions for Poles in Pomerania and Upper Silesia see Anna Kołakowska, "Klęska pookupacyjna na Pomorzu," *Nasz Dziennik,* March 26, 2004; Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin 1945,* 420; Jarosław Neja, "Problemy z sojusznikami," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* nos. 1–2 (2005): 59–63. To be fair, some German testimonies acknowledge that they were treated kindly by Poles and even turned to Poles to protect them from the Russians. See Johannes Kaps, ed., *The Tragedy of Silesia, 1945–46: A Documentary Account with a Special Survey of the Archdiocese of Breslau* (Munich: "Christ Unterwegs," 1952–1953).

It is abundantly clear that almost all of the German losses in Germany's eastern provinces were directly attributable to two factors unconnected to the later arrival of the Poles: one, German own military policies which turned towns into besieged fortresses; and two, the actions of the Red Army, their erstwhile ally. The latter are vividly described in the memoirs of Jews who served in the Red Army:

> The Russians wanted to catch their prey on German soil; it was there they planned to exact their vengeance. Once we crossed the border just west of Katowice, I saw large posters that had been put up along the road by troops of the front lines. The words that had been printed on them were carefully chosen to goad their second-line comrades: "Red Army soldier! You are now on German soil! This is your hour of revenge! Kill all Germans! Kill! Kill!" … I shudder to recall all the atrocities I witnessed at the hands of the Russians: looting, rape, plunder, dismemberment, murder, and other horrors of unimaginable cruelty and depravity, all directed against the German population. … Revenge against the German military was one thing … But the murder of civilians trying to flee the onslaught, along with the wholesale rape of females from little girls to grandmothers—that turned my stomach. In German-occupied homes the Russians spared no one, including the family pets. Men were forced to watch as their wives and daughters, screaming for mercy, were savagely raped by Russian soldiers—who, after having their way, slashed each German throat. From what I could tell, the Red Army authorities made no effort to reign in the barbarity. … Entire families who lived in aboveground apartments were rounded up. Then, accompanied to the sounds of their own screams and the shattering of glass, they were thrown through their windows onto the pavement. That happened day after day, in one village after another.
>
> The Russian soldiers began to steal whatever they could find … Rape was commonplace.
>
> Just short of the Oder River, southeast of Frankfurt-on-the-Oder, most of the Russian Army units stopped and gathered. A general announced [belatedly] that anyone caught raping women would be executed. He said that rape was not the way to take revenge on Germany.
>
> In spite of the order, the raping continued. The only thing that changed was that after raping, the soldiers killed the women and girls so there wouldn't be any witnesses. …
>
> As dusk approached on that first night, I walked down to the banks of the Oder to get some water to boil. I smelled something foul—my stomach began churning with nausea. There, near the water's edge, were fifteen naked German women with bayonets sticking through their bellies. They lay pinned to the ground, with the rifle stalks standing up in the air. I could not tell how long they had been lying there, but I figured they were probably raped before they were murdered.
>
> The corpses remained there for the duration of the campaign. Every night for ten nights I saw the still, decaying bodies.
>
> Halfway back to camp, I heard screams coming from behind a barn. Six Soviet soldiers, armed with submachine guns, were clustered together. The screams came from a young German boy, maybe thirteen, who was pounding his fists on one of the soldiers. I ran closer; close enough to see the drunken full-moon Mongol faces of the soldiers, descendants of the Golden Horde of Genghis Khan. …
>
> A woman was being held on the ground by two of the soldiers while another raped her to the rhythmic clapping of the surrounding comrades. *"muti, Muti"* (Mommy. Mommy in German), the boy yelled in a futile attempt to rescue his mother. One of the soldiers reached for him, but the boy grabbed a rake with a long handle and swung it at the soldier. *Yob tvoyu mat,* yelled the soldier in pain. How ironic, I thought. The curse translates as, "Fuck your mother," and that was exactly what they were doing. The boy started to take another swing at the soldier, but did not finish. A volley of bullets from an automatic hit him. He recoiled from the impact and a fountain of blood squirted from his chest. …
>
> I ran back to my unit and reported the incident. "Can we do anything to save the woman?" I asked the duty officer. "They will kill her, too!" He shrugged his shoulders. "Are you crazy, Sergeant? Just look around at what is going on. Forget it and go back to your unit." …
>
> In the first few weeks of the Soviet occupation of Germany, rape and plunder of the German population were not isolated incidents but a mass frenzy.

See, respectively, Larry Stillman, *A Match Made in Hell: The Jewish Boy and the Polish Outlaw Who Defied the Nazis. From the Testimony of Morris Goldner* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 177–78; Paper, *Voices from the Forest,* 241, 243; Langberg, *Sara's Blessing,* 161.

After the hostilities were over, however, relations between Soviet troops and the Germans changed dramatically. The Germans willingly succumbed to abject, sycophantic subservience. George Sten, who served near Dresden, recalled:

> we could not sleep much because of the German girls—they kept coming to our tent and throwing themselves at us. You can imagine what happened with sex-starved girls and us also sex-starved, young and healthy. This went on for a few days and nights. The German girls obviously did not remember that we were sub-human slaves, and that they were the members of the master race. All the

> Germans wore white armbands as a sign of surrender. They were servile and bore no resemblance to the sadistic monsters who had killed unarmed women and children.

See Sten, *Memoirs of a Survivor,* 81. Dov Freiberg reported on his experiences as follows:

> … in Berlin every German woman, from the youngest to the very old, was ready to sleep with anyone, without exception. … At the [railway] station and around it, there were dozens, perhaps even hundreds of women, one prettier than the next, all nicely dressed. … "All of these women here are waiting to catch an American soldier who will take them for a night, or even for a few minutes." … He was right. When the train arrived. Many American soldiers got off. The girls pushed their way through and tried to attract the soldiers, but only one or two were lucky enough to find a customer. Many of the soldiers already had beautiful girls with whom they were walking arm in arm, and what especially impressed me were the number of black soldiers with their arms around blond girls.
>
> We left the station and walked down a lovely, quiet street, which appeared to be decent and respectable. Schneider suggested, "Take a good look and choose the most beautiful woman, one who looks completely respectable, and point her out to me." … I looked carefully at every woman who passed by. They seemed to be normal women, as might be found anywhere, but most of them were dressed very nicely, in clothes which were rarely seen in Poland. … After some time, a woman appeared coming toward us who was beautiful, dressed nicely and modestly. … "That one!" I exclaimed … the two of us walked after her. … Schneider greeted her in German and suggested that she come for a walk with us. … "We have American cigarettes and real coffee," replied Schneider. The girl stood hesitating for a moment and said, "But there are two of you and one of me. Come with me and I'll call my friend." …
>
> Since I left Poland and stepped onto German territory, I had been unable to bear the Germans' behavior. The subservience, the attempts to hide the past and to appear incorruptible which seemed to characterize every German, without exception, increased the disgust I felt. … Everyone, every German, lied shamelessly … It was also impossible for me to understand the self-abasement of the Germans, who were willing to bow before you and to kiss the soles of your feet just to get a cigarette; they were ready to sell body and soul for any minor necessity. … Just as, in the days of their "greatness," the Germans knew no limits to their arrogance and humiliation of others, now, they had slipped to the lowest level of degradation. …
>
> We lived in the German village, but we remained a closed group … more and more of us—young men began to disappear in the evenings, after dinner, even skipping kibbutz meetings, as they were going out to spend time in the fields or in the farmers' homes with village girls. … The girls would seek out the boys anywhere and at any time, and when night fell, there were many who disappeared. On Friday evenings … the girls of the village would wait outside until "their" boys could come out.

See Freiberg, *To Survive Sobibor,* 496–97, 506–7, 518–19. When Freiberg rented a room in Szczecin (Stettin) on his way to Berlin, the landlady sent her daughter to sleep with him. Teenaged German girls were abundant and more than willing for the taking. Ibid., 489, 535–36. However, the average German soon tired of the Jewish refugees in their midst and "became more and more insolent" towards them. See Sorid, *One More Miracle,* 190. For similar accounts from Munich see Edith S. Weigand, *Out of the Fury: The Incredible Odysssey of Eliezer Urbach* (Denver: Zhera Publications, 1987), 118.

Rapes perpetrated by Allied troops were also quite common, especially in Germany where they were widespread and treated rather leniently. It is estimated that U.S. troops raped an estimate 14,000 women in England, France and Germany (11,000 of them in Germany), and that the vast majority of these crimes went unpunished. A disproportionate number of Blacks were prosecuted and received harsher sentences than white soldiers for the same crime. See Davies, *Europe at War, 1939–1945,* 338–39; J. Robert Lilly, *Taken by Force: Rape and American GIs in Europe during World War II* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); MacDonogh, *After the Reich,* 74, 240–41. (Unlike in Eastern Europe, German perpetrators of rape in occupied France and other Western countries, where the Wehrmacht was concerned about its reputation among the civilian population, were regularly sentenced to serious punishments. See Birgit Beck, "Rape: The Military Trials of Sexual Crimes Committed by Soldiers in the *Wehrmacht,* 1939–1944," in Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, eds., *Home/Front: The Military, War and Gender in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2002), 262; Birgit Beck, "Sexual Violence and Its Prosecution: Courts Martial of the Wehrmacht," in Roger Chickering, et al., eds., *A World at Total War: Global Conflict under the Politics of Destruction, 1937–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).) After the Battle of Monte Cassino in May 1944, Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian and Senegalese soldiers attached to the French Expeditionary Corps were reported to have raped more than 5,000 Italian women in village after village, menfolk who tried to protect their wives and daughters were murdered, and the troops were allowed to plunder ruthlessly. This episode inspired Alberto Moravia's *La Ciociara* and Vittorio De Sica's film *Two Women,* based on the novel. On April 17–18, 1945, colonial French soldiers raped at least 600 women in the small Black Forest town of Freudenstadt, before

going on to Stuttgart where they rounded up 3,000 women and herded them into the underground subways to be raped. See MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 78–79, 269. According to one source, it was the practice in German hospitals for mulatto babies (children of German women and black GIs) to be left unattended to die in their cribs. See Wrobel, *My Life My Way*, 123. This was not surprising, since babies born to foreign workers in wartime Germany were—if not stolen for Germanization when determined to be of "good racial stock"— placed in special nursing homes run by ordinary German personnel where the vast majority of them died from disease or malnutrition. (Hundreds of infants taken from Polish female slave labourers died in the home for infant children in the village of Velpke near Helmstedt and in other such institutions.) See Evans, *The Third Reich at War, 1939–1945*, 362.

Moreover, Norman Naimark thoroughly exaggerates, and conflates with the massive wartime losses (to which German strategies such as turning towns into besieged fortresses also contributed), the incomparably smaller casualties occasioned by the actual expulsion of the remaining German population. German claims of losses in excess of two million due to the expulsions have been authoritatively discredited by historians such as Rüdiger Overmans and Ingo Haar. German losses attributable to all sources likely did not exceed 400,000 to 600,000. The vast majority of German losses occurred during the spontaneous flight of the German population and are attributable to the Soviets. See Robert Żurek, "Gra w ofiary," *Rzeczpospolita*, July 24, 2009. For a careful and reliable computation which reduces German losses in Poland, see Rüdiger Overmans, "Personelle Verluste des deutschen Bevölkerung durch Flucht und Vertreibung," *Dzieje Najnowsze*, vol. 26, no. 2 (1994): 51–65. German losses as a result of expulsions carried out by the Polish Communist authorities, as well as internment in Communist camps, were probably in the range of 20,000 to 30,000. According to a report compiled by a joint Czech-German commission of historians in 1995, the number of deaths due to considerably smaller expulsions from Czechoslovakia is estimated at 15,000 to 30,000, and not the 250,000 claimed in German nationalist sources. See also the recent studies by Bernadetta Nitschke, *Vertreibung und Aussiedlung der deutschen Bevölkerung aus Polen 1945 bis 1949* (München: Oldenbourg, 2003), and Stanisław Jankowiak, *Wysiedlenie i emigracja ludności niemieckiej w polityce władz polskich w latach 1945–1970* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2005). For an earlier but still valuable treatment of this topic see Jędrzej Giertych, *In Defence of My Country* (London: Roman Dmowski Society, 1981), 521–77, 651–65. As Giertych and German sources point out, suicides among the German population which was fearful of Soviet revenge also took a heavy toll, especially in Pomerania where mass suicides were frequent occurrences, and resulted in tens of thousands of deaths. See MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 48, 55, 74; Evans, *The Third Reich at War, 1939–1945*, 732–33; Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga*, 557–58. Outbreaks of epidemics also took tens of thousands of lives, both German and Polish. See Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga*, 541–45. One of the reasons for the sorry state of German historiography on this topic until very recently is attributable to the prevalence of post-WWII German revanchism regarding the expellees, or *Vertriebene*. As German historian Ingo Haar points out, "It is one of the most noteworthy problems of postwar German historiography that the same historians who helped plan deportations of Jews and Poles under National Socialism assumed responsibility for researching the deportations of Germans from East-Central Europe after 1945. The result is an apologist historiography that continues to exercise strong influence in German academic and public spheres to this day." See Ingo Haar, "German *Ostforschung* and Anti-Semitism," in Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch, eds., *German Scholars and Ethnic Cleansing, 1919–1945* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), 21. Indeed, as recent studies shows, the leadership of the German expellee association was dominated by former Nazis, often high ranking ones, and every German federal government cabinet, from Adenauer to Kohl, contained former Nazi Party members up until at least 1992. See Michael Schwartz, *Funktionäre mit Vergangenheit: Das Gründungspräsidium des Bundes der Vertriebenen und das "Dritte Reich"* (München: Oldenbourg, 2013); Malte Herwig, *Die Flakhelfer: Wie aus Hitlers jüngsten Parteimitgliedern Deutschlands führende Demokraten wurden* (München: Deutsches Verlags-Anstalt, 2013). It is little known, or publicized, that the Western Allies were also responsible for considerable carnage in Eastern Germany. More than 650 American bombers devastated the harbour of Swinemünde on March 12, 1945, killing some 5,000 German fleeing from the advancing Red Army. (According to other sources, as many as 20,000 German civilians, mostly refugees, perished in this American assault.) On May 5, 1945, British fighter-bombers launched an attack on two German ships thought to be carrying troops killing some 7,000 people. In fact the ships were crammed with prisoners evacuated from Neuengamme concentration camp. The *Thielback* sank, drowning all but fifty of the 2,800 prisoners on board. 4,250 of the prisoners on board the *Cap Arcona* were drowned, burned to death, or shot by the bullets that filled the air as the planes exchanged fire with a group of U-boats in the nearby harbour of Lübeck. See Evans, *The Third Reich at War, 1939–1945*, 695, 699. (This event is reminiscent of the deadly Soviet atack on the *Struma*, which was carrying as many as 800 Jews fleeing the Holocaust in Romania, on February 23, 1942. The shipwas barred from entering Palestine by the British, interned in Turkey for over two months after its engines failed, set adrift without power and torpedoed by a Soviet submarine in the Black Sea. Another clear case of intentional killing of innocent persons was the July 1940 bombing by British battleships of the French fleet at Mers-el-Kébir, a French North African naval base, in which more than 1,100 French sailors lost their lives. See Deák, *Europe on Trial*, 56. British and American bombing was also responsible for killing around 950 civilians in Brusssels and 1,850 civilians in Paris during these cities' liberation.) Other German wartime losses have also been officially lowered in recent years. For example, a special commission investigating the Allied firebombing of Dresden in 1945 determined that no more than 25,000 people were killed with 18,000 confirmed deaths, far fewer than previous estimates running as high as 135,000. See "Researchers reduce Dresden death toll," *The Globe and Mail*, October 3, 2008. (It should be noted that

There are similar accounts describing the activities of former Jewish partisans in the vicinity of Rokitno and Stepań, in Volhynia.

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the British bombed German cities in May 1940 before the Germans bombed British ones. However, unlike the British, mobs of ordinary Germans lynched hundreds of downed Allied airmen. See Evans, *The Third Reich at War, 1939–1945,* 436, 465.) During the bombing of Dresden, in which thousands of forced labourers also perished, Germans were known to evict these people from bomb shelters. However, little is said about some 5,000 Germans who were executed by the Nazis on the vague suspicion that they might support subversive activities. See MacDonogh, *After the Reich,* 261–62. Tellingly, Norman Naimark links the transfer of the German population from territories awarded to Poland at the close of the war, which followed in the wake of mass deportations of Poles by both Germany and the Soviet Union and was necessary to accommodate the Polish population expelled from Poland's lost Eastern territories, to the unilateral deportation of Germans from the Sudetenland engineered and carried out by the Czechs without any Soviet assistance, for which there was no compelling historical or demographic justification since there was no displaced Czech population. Unlike Poland, Czechoslovakia was not under Soviet domination at the time, and the Soviet forces had withdrawn after driving out German forces. Moreover, spontaneous violence directed at Germans, including civilians, was far more prevalent in Czechoslovakia than in Poland. On Czech vengeance and atrocities against the Germans and their expulsion from Czechoslovakia, whose victims likely exceeded those of ethnic Czechs at the hands of the Germans, see MacDonogh, *After the Reich,* 125–61; Douglas, *Orderly and Humane,* chapters 4, 5, 6; Tomáš Staněk, *Poválečné "excesy" v českých zemích v roce 1945 a jejich vyšetřování* (Prague: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny, 2005); Tomáš Staněk and Adrian von Arburg, eds., *Vysídlení Němců a proměny českého pohraničí 1945–1951: Dokumenty z českých archivů,* 3 volumes (Středokluky: Zdeněk Susa, 2010–2011). See also the testimonies found in Samuel, *The War,* 140 ("I recall the Czechs were the most brutal"), 306 ("They were afraid of the Russians … even more afraid of the Czechs. The Russians didn't kill anyone; they only raped the women and took jewelry and watches. But the Czechs came to our village and systematically robbed us, evicted us from our houses, and beat people brutally, killing some at random before my eyes"), 322. While the Soviets certainly led the pack in terms of exacting vengeance, as MacDonogh documents in *After the Reich,* there was no shortage of cruel treatment meted out to the Germans by the French, Americans, British, and others after the war, often surpassing what the Germans had done to them. It is important to bear in mind that, had they not been defeated and democratic values imposed on them by force, the Germans (including the expellees), who for the most part were staunch supporters of the Nazi regime and had no qualms about utilizing millions of Slavs as forced and slave labourers for their own personal enrichment, would have continued in their murderous ways and likely begun to implement a "final solution" for the Poles and other Slavs after they had completed the genocide of the Jews. The Allies, who lost millions of soldiers (mostly Slavs) fighting the Germans, harboured no such genocidal designs for the Germans. After the initial rounds of selective punishment and postwar hardships, the vast majority of Germans soon resumed normal lives, enjoying the benefits of democracy and prosperity that the peoples of Eastern Europe they helped to enslave were denied for the next 45 years. Many Poles would have gladly jumped at the opportunity of being expelled from Stalinist Poland. Leaving the German population in the German territory transferred to Poland would have been a sure impetus for continued German revisionism. The Germans had received no beating at the hands of the Poles, as they did from the Soviets, and it took the Germans decades, and much international pressure, to begin to shed their imperialistic ways (by recognizing Poland's western border) and their condescending attitude toward the Poles. Despite benefiting from the Marshall Plan, Germany did not pay Poland one penny of reparations for all the destruction carried out under a democratically elected leader (Hitler), who enjoyed massive popular support when he ordered the invasion of Poland. On the contrary, German expellees took Poland to the European Court of Human Rights in an attempt to force Poland to pay restitution for lost property in the East. (The claim was rejected by the Court on October 9, 2008.)

Another example of a kindred approach is Anita J. Prażmowska's monograph *Civil War in Poland, 1942–1948* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), which singularly fails, at least in the case of postwar Polish-Ukrainian relations, to fulfil the primary stated aim of the book: "to link the debates and conflicts which took place under occupation to those which continued after the war" (p. xi). The author neglects to mention the widespread killing of Poles by various Ukrainian factions in September 1939; the scale of the ethnic cleansing campaign embarked on by Ukrainian nationalists in Volhynia in 1943, which fanned out and continued unabated well past the arrival of the Red Army; and the desire of the nationalists to wrest from Poland territories that remained on the Polish side of the new border imposed by the Soviets (the so-called Zakurzonie). The upshot is that one impressionable academic reviewer claimed that, after the war, the Poles simply "turned on" the Ukrainian minority. See Jane L. Curry's review in *Journal of Cold War Studies,* vol. 9, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 163–65. This skewed study also whitewashes the GL–PPR at the expense of the NSZ, which she demonizes, by attributing to the NSZ all partisan killings of Jews, even though the historical record shows that the vast majority of such documented occurrences relate to the GL and AK.

> A few days after Rokitno was liberated I came back to town. I found there three Ukrainian policemen who had served during the German occupation. I transferred them to the NKVD in Rovno [Równe] …[503]

> I was appointed representative of the Soviet government. I had to organize offices to deal with ongoing problems of the civilian population as well as the many passing through town. That same day I issued orders asking the population to cooperate with the authorities and to hand in any arms in their possession. It was important because we did not have enough time to take revenge on the Poles [sic] who had collaborated with the Germans. On the first night, only a few Poles were killed by Jewish partisans and that was that. The next mission was to bring the traitors to the Soviet security authorities. Some tens of Poles and Ukrainians were sent to Siberia or to prison. They were never seen again.[504]

> … there were several attacks of the Bandrovechim [Ukrainian insurgents, followers of Bandera] on Red Army units, and they also attacked several Jewish youths who served as volunteer policemen trying to search for the Bandrovechim … to avenge the non-Jews who abused and butchered their relatives.[505]

Regina Hader Rock, a female avenger from Rohatyn, a predominantly Ukrainian area of Eastern Galicia, joined the NKVD in search of revenge, as did Abraham Tracy (Trasawucki) in Skała Podlaska.

> After three months in the town, regaining strength, I first went to the NKVD (Russian Secret Police, now known as the KGB), to take revenge on those who killed our brothers and sisters and fellow Jews. I worked with the NKVD and turned over fifty farmers, also Dr. Melnik of Rohatyn, all who collaborated with the Nazis and the Gestapo. He received twenty years in jail. Many of the others were shot.[506]

> One of the things [the Soviets] did was to create a special battalion, whose task was to catch the Ukrainian partisans who had opposed them during the war. Since many of these Ukrainians had had a hand in murdering Jews, many of us were willing to join. …
>
> Like the others, I helped to search for as many Ukrainian traitors as I could. We arrested each one we found, and brought them to the small storage room in the community center, which served as

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[503] Account of Asher Binder in E. Leoni, ed., *Rokitno (Volin) ve-ha-sevivah: Sefer edut ve-zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Rokitno in Israel, 1967), 339ff., translated as *Rokitno-Wolyn and Surroundings: Memorial Book and Testimony,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/rokitnoye/Rokitnoye.html>.

[504] Account of Baruch Shehori (Schwartzblat) in ibid., 358ff.

[505] Account of J. Peri, in Yitzhak Ganuz, ed., *Ayaratenu Stepan* (Tel Aviv: Stepan Society, 1977), 302ff., *Our Town Stepan,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/stepan/Stepan.html>.

[506] 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>; translated from *Kehilat Rohatyn ve-ha-seviva* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Rohatyn in Israel, 1962), 250 ff..

> the jail. All this was done with the consent of the Russians, and all of these men we brought in were given a fair [sic] trial.[507]

A Jew from Żupanie near Skole (south of Stryj, in Eastern Galicia), who survived the war posing as a Pole, denounced Zygmunt Turzański, a Polish co-worker, to the NKVD as a Home Army member. Turzański was sentenced to hard labour in a copper mine in Kazakhtan for ten years.[508] The case of Dawid Lipnicki, a Jew who was rescued by Wacław Misiuro and denounced his former benefactor, a Home Army member, to the NKVD in 1946,[509] was mentioned in Part Two of this book.

Herman Stelcer, who survived the war as a member of the Home Army, returned to his native Krosno and joined the NKVD to exact revenge.

> After the Russians came I joined the NKVD. I wanted to take revenge on the Poles who had denounced my siblings. I worked for the NKVD for 18 months. I liquidated members of the Home Army who had attacked Russians and Jews. While in the service of the NKVD I avenged not only my family but many other Jews.[510]

A Jew was sheltered on an estate in Żyznów near Strzyżów, not far from Rzeszów, whose residents were active in the underground. When the Soviets arrived he started to collaborate with them. When he was accidentally killed a list of seventeen Home Army members who had been betrayed to the Soviet security forces was found in his possession.[511]

Florian Majewski (Moshe Lajbcygier) was sheltered by Poles and became a member of the Home Army. After the war, he was conscripted into the Polish army and was attended a military college. Upon his return, he was engaged in anti-insurgency operations direct against anti-Communist forces.

> The army made use of my experience as a partisan and gave me a unit of 25 men to command. Our first action was near Kostrzyn, close to the German border. A former nationalist sympathizer was operating as a bandit [i.e., an anti-Communist partisan]. We heard through intelligence that he was expected to visit his family, and searched his home but found nothing. I decided to wait in the

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[507] Tracy, *To Speak for the Silenced,* 210.

[508] Szczepan Siekierka, Henryk Komański, and Eugeniusz Różański, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie stanisławowskim 1939–1946* (Wrocław: Stowarzyszenie Upamiętnienia Ofiar Zbrodni Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów we Wrocławiu, 2008), 612.

[509] Wiktor Noskowski, "Czy Yaffa Eliach przeprosi Polaków?" *Myśl Polska,* July 20–27, 1997.

[510] Elżbieta Rączy, "Ludność żydowska w Krośnie 1939–1946," *Biblioteka Krośnieńska (Seria historia),* no. 15 (1999): 32. During the German occupation Stelcer was provided with false identity documents in the name of Henryk Pieniowski. He joined a Home Army unit commanded by Edward Kurcoń. Ibid., 29–30.

[511] Information of Piotr Szopa, historian at Rzeszów branch of Poland's Institute of National Remembrance. See Anna Gorczyca, "O trudnej przeszłości Polaków i Żydów," *Gazeta Polska,* March 13, 2008.

> house with some men in case he turned up. … Our bandit had managed to hide away in the chimney.
>
> By now it was the latter half of 1946 … Over the next year I was involved in several actions, not so dissimilar to what I was engaged in as a partisan, though in this period I did not shoot anybody and none of my group were injured. We arrested a few Germans and Ukrainians, but mostly they were individual Poles who we handed over to the [security] police.[512]

Iosif Ushomirski, who served in the Soviet army, was assigned to the NKVD where he fought Polish anti-Soviet forces. "I was so patriotic," he recalled. Ushomirski was one of many Stalinist security personnel welcomed to the United States during the "Cold War" period.[513]

William Dunwill (Witold Duniłowicz, formerly Tenenbaum), who joined the Communist Polish Army after the "liberation," recalls being summoned before the state security office in Koszalin to answer questions about his suspected connections to the Polish underground. Tenenbaum had been provided a false identity card by a Polish friend in the Union of Armed Struggle (*Związek Walki Zbrojnej*), a predecessor of the Home Army, which enabled him to survive posing as a Pole. The director of the security office, Lieutenant Józef Pieczeń, and his assistant, Lieutenant Orliński, were Polish Jews who had spent the war years in the Soviet Union. On returning to Poland they offered their services wholeheartedly to the Stalinist regime and dedicated themselves to ferreting out Home Army members. Tenenbaum was accused of being involved with a fascist or pro-German organization, but was able to extricate himself by revealing that he was a Jew who had to resort to this measure to save himself. He was informed that that would have entitled him to a six-month reprieve from military service and his case was closed. Had he been a Pole, he would doubtless have been arrested and sent to the Gulag.[514]

One did not have to be a member of the Polish underground to attract the attention of the Soviet apparatus of terror. The net of undesirable Poles was cast very wide:

> Mrs. K. was from a well-to-do Jewish family … Her servant girl from before the war, the daughter of a prostitute, became her rescuer. She did everything that she could for Mrs. K., often risking her life …
>
> The girl spoke in the language and slang of her milieu, such as, "Jews are the business people." "They are the doctors." "They stick together." "You should know. You have a Yiddish head." Such phrases were often used by Jews themselves, but when used by Poles they became "anti-Semitic."

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[512] Mayevski, *Fire without Smoke*, 146. Majewski survived the war in central Poland, near Sulejów, as a member of a Home Army unit that pursued collaborators; he does not record any activities by the Home Army directed at Jews. Ibid., 81–117

[513] Zvi Y. Gitelman, "Internationalism, Patriotism, and Disillusion: Soviet Jewish Veterans Remember World War II and the Holocaust," in Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union: Symposium Presentations* (Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2005), 118.

[514] William Dunwill (Witold Duniłowicz), *Trzy kolory mojego życia* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny IN–B, 2000), 182–83.

> The servant often meant them with love and respect for Mrs. K., or in some cases simply believed them. Her use of such phrases proved to be her downfall. …
>
> Some weeks later [after the Soviets entered eastern Poland], Mrs. K. and the servant went to work for a Russian hospital. … There she was overheard making some of her "anti-Semitic" remarks by a Russian doctor, who happened to have been Jewish. He reported her as being a pro-Nazi and an anti-Semite. She was not only fired, but was sent to Siberia and, like so many others, was never heard of again.[515]

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[515] Saul S. Friedman, ed., *Holocaust Literature: A Handbook of Critical, Historical, and Literary Writings* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993), 150. Another example of a rescuer from the Chełm region being falsely accused of mistreating his Jewish charges during the German occupation, this time by one of the charges who became a lieutenant in the Polish army, is noted in the account of Zbigniew Małyszczycki, dated November 23, 1997 (in the author's possession). Małyszczycki also notes the preferential treatment Jewish army deserters received from Jewish prosecutors: while Christian Poles were treated brutally, Jews were pardoned. In another case, a Jew who became a member of the security police after the war "saw to it" that his Polish benefactor would not come around for any favours. See Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twardych,* 41, an important book which touches on the neglected theme of lack of gratitude on the part of Jews who owed their lives to the rescue activities of Poles. This book also describes the return of a Jewish family to Kamionka, a village near Lublin, along with Red army soldiers; their benefactors were interrogated about villagers who may have harmed Jews. Ibid., 130. It also mentions the case of a Jewish woman who did not want to return to the rightful Polish owner items looted from the latter's home during the war. Ibid., 178. Cottages from which Jews had been expelled by the Germans in Biała Rawska remained vacant throughout the war; the poor people in the area were encouraged to move into them when the Communists seized power at the end of the war. Ibid., 59. For details of the shameful postwar fate of Zofia Kossak-Szczucka and Władysław Bartoszewski, both prominent members of Żegota, the wartime Council for Aid to Jews, at the hands of Jakub Berman, who exercised control over the Ministry of Public Security, see Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 132–33, 342. Jerzy Gabrielski, a promising director who began shooting a film about the Warsaw Uprising, was denounced to the NKVD in 1946 by Aleksander Ford, the Jewish director of "Film Polski," as a "reactionary" and "anti-Semite" and was jailed and physically mistreated. See Jerzy Robert Nowak, *Zagrożenia dla Polski i polskości* (Warsaw: Inicjatywa Wydawnicza "ad astra", 1998), vol. 1, 49. Aleksander Ford was not the only Jew to advance his career at the expense of Poles. Similar allegations have been levelled against Rachela Ginsburg, who changed her name to Stefania Jabłońska after the war, joined the security office where she worked as a doctor in the Mokotów prison verifying the death sentences carried out on political prisoners, and usurped the position of the renowned dermatologist Professor Marian Grzybowski (she had been his assistant) after he was arrested and put to death by the security police in 1949. See Marek Wroński, *Zagadka śmierci prof. Mariana Grzybowskiego* (Warsaw: Artgraf, 2004). Jerzy Filip, a doctor in a Home Army unit in the Lublin area, who provided medical assistance to Jews hiding in a forest shelter near Józefów, was, after the war, pursued by a Jew working in the Ministry of National Defence whose life he had spared. See Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 341–42. A Pole from the village of Sąsiadka near Szczebrzeszyn was denounced by the Jews he had sheltered and imprisoned as being a member of the Home Army. See Czesław Stanisław Bartnik, *Mistyka wsi: Z autobiografii młodości 1929–1956* (Źrebce: n.p., 1999), 300. As a member of the Diversionary Command of the Home Army, Kazimierz Moczarski organized a cell which liquidated Nazi collaborators and denouncers of Jews and others. After the war he was tortured under the watchful eye of a Jewish interrogator (Jakub Różański) and sentenced to death for allegedly "murdering" Communists and Jews. See Henryk Pająk, *Dwa wieki polskiej Golgoty, czyli samotni wśród łotrów* (Lublin: Retro, 1999), 253–54. One of the many priests persecuted in the Stalinist era, Rev. Czesław Białek, was arrested for assisting members of a student organization branded as a "counter-revolutionary band." Although during the German occupation, as a Jesuit seminarian, he had assisted Jews in escaping from the ghetto in Nowy Sącz and even fell into the hands of the Gestapo at one point, Rev. Białek was arrested in 1953 after an anti-Semitic brochure was planted in his church. See Danuta Suchorowska, *Gurgacz: Popiełuszko lat stalinowskich i wspólnicy jego losu* (Kraków: Biblioteka Obserwatora Wojennego, 1987). Władysław Bruliński, who, as head of the Białystok Distrtict Home Army Bureau of Information and Propaganda, provided Jews with false documents and helped to shelter them, recalled that, when he was arrested in 1946, the persons who arrested him, prosecuted him, and totured him in prison were all Jews. He was setenced to a prison term of ten years his underground activity against the Communist regime. See Władysław Bruliński, *Czerwone plamy historii* (Warsaw: Unia Nowoczesnego Humanizmu, 1981), 51.

In Holocaust literature it has become commonplace to claim that Poles wanted to keep their rescue activities a secret out of fear of fellow Poles and postwar anti-Semitic disapproval. However, the reality was that it was prudent not to remain silent because the Communist regime associated such activities with involvement in the anti-Communist underground. As American sociologist Nechama Tec explains,

For two years Aleksandra Sadkowska had sheltered Roman Chwedkowski, a Jew with whom she had an intimate relationship. After the war, in a dispute over property coloured by jealousy, Chwedkowski's Jewish wife accused Sadkowska of anti-Semitism after she was assaulted by Sadkowska, a charge that Chwedkowski himself did not support.[516]

> Faced with a deteriorating situation, the Russians launched a ruthless persecution of all unauthorized underground groups. Their aim was to destroy the powerful forces of the AK. Many people arrested had nothing to do with postwar illegal operations but were targets because of former involvement with the AK. Thus some former AK members tried to conceal their wartime affiliations. In their case, to mention having shielded Jews would only stimulate interest in their other wartime activities and eventually reveal their AK affiliation.
>
> Wojtek Kominek explained that he remained silent about his aid to Jews until 1978 because of his belief that admitting to these acts would have aroused suspicion about his other underground activities. In time his wartime memories faded and he saw no reason to bring them. Only a newspaper article discussing righteous Christians brought him to testify before the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. Kominek was very independent in all aspects of his life. He belonged to no party and identified himself only as a soldier who fought the Nazis.
>
> Another rescuer, Jan Elewski, concealed his AK affiliation until 1950. Even then he revealed it reluctantly and only because he was afraid of being arrested. Elewski explained: *At work they were murmuring that I was an AK, they suspected me. It was then that I tried to testify that I saved Jews—to counteract the possible persecution of me as an AK.* During the war Elewski had protected seven Jews and it was this evidence that helped avert persecution. …
>
> Adela Uszycka, a rescuer and a Yad Vashem recipient, was imprisoned twice after the war because of her continued protection of the needy, including the persecuted AK, and because of her previous AK affiliation. …
>
> Thus we know that the political climate in postwar Poland prevented nonleftist groups from publicizing their aid to Jews. It is reasonable to assume that this political climate caused some of the evidence about protection by nonleftist groups to be suppressed or lost.

See Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness*, 125–26.

Many Jews in postwar Poland occupied important positions in the Stalinist regime, or simply wanted to forget about the past and go on with their lives, and it did not help matters, for either them or their Polish benefactors, to acknowledge assistance from sources that were potentially suspect. Stanisław Gajewski, whose mother was Jewish and who served as a diplomat in the Foreign Ministry of postwar Poland (his final posting was as ambassador to France), explains: "Nobody wanted to return to those times. About the London Government and the Underground … it was (politically) correct to say that the help came from the PPR (Communist Party) … Those who were saved did not want to talk. They wanted to forget, bury it. They had false name, false biographies." See Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Zegota*, 156, and *Żegota,* 2nd edition, 144. There were other reasons for silence too, as one Jewish woman confided: "I survived the occupation in a village near Lublin. The entire village knew about my presence and rescued me. They all wanted me to survive. After the Germans were chased out, I left the village and will never return. I would have to repay the entire village. That's why I left and will not return." See Klara Mirska, *W cieniu wiecznego strachu: Wspomnienia* (Paris: n.p., 1980), 455. Other cases are more problematic. Historian Jan Gross claims that Antonina Wyrzykowska, the rescuer of several Jews who survived the July 1941 massacre in Jedwabne, was beaten up by the local underground after the war and had to flee the area simply because she sheltered Jews. See Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 130–31. In fact, members of the underground came to Wyrzykowska's home in March 1945 looking for Szmul Wasersztejn, one of her charges and an informant, and roughed her up so that she would divulge his whereabouts. They did not seek out any of her other charges who lived openly in the area. Afterwards Wyrzykowska denounced the assailants to the security office in Łomża, as well as number of persons who allegedly took part in the pogrom in Jedwabne on July 10, 1941, thereby causing a large number of arrests. Wyrzykowska subsequently deserted her husband and children and left Poland with her lover Wasersztejn. At his urging Wyrzykowska soon returned to her family in Poland. See Krzysztof Sychowicz, *Ziemia Łomżyńska i jej mieszkańcy w latach 1944–1956 (czyli jak to było naprawdę)* (Łomża: Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Ziemi Łomżyńskiej, 2005), 25–26; Anna Bikont, *My z Jedwabnego* (Warsaw: Prószyński i S-ka, 2004), 253–54.

[516] Hera, *Polacy Ratujący Żydów,* 101 n. 223.

Some Jews took advantage of their circumstances and started to take revenge against *random* Poles before the war had come to a close. Benjamin P., a Jew from Warsaw who during the last months of the war succeeded in disguising himself as a wounded SS man with a medical discharge, ended up as overseer of forced labourers on a farm in the Sudetenland.

> I was sent to Neuland, a village two kilometers from Aussig. In that village was a large estate with seventeen people [i.e., labouers], and I was sent out there as an overseer. These seventeen people were Ukrainians and Poles, not prisoners but civilian workers … I worked there for a month. I harassed the Poles terribly just out of hate which I still had for them from Warsaw. Because they are big anti-Semites … So they suffered a lot at work. I didn't allow them to have a free hour there. I shortened the dinner [hour] to half an hour. And the German peasant woman was on my side because I was a military man. And I also made the acquaintance there of a German girl. I went around with her, had fun, carried on a kind of love affair with her.[517]

In other cases, the motive was blind revenge disproportionate to any alleged misdeed. A Jewish teenager from Łosice remembered the demise of one her teachers with relish. Her family enlisted the support of their Soviet-Jewish protectors to accomplish this dirty deed.

> All our cash was gone, and we had none of our other prewar assets. We had only the clothes we wore. But because my dad was still remembered fondly by some of the townsfolk, and especially by some of the surrounding Polish noblemen with large estates, he soon managed to gather some money and goods that these people owed him from before the war. In addition, one kind Polish pharmacist, who knew and respected my dad, immediately offered him five hundred zlotys [złotys] (roughly $20) for food and basic necessities. The pharmacist offered more as needed, but my dad soon managed to carry the burden on his own.
>
> We had all the food we desired. Even the Red Army was kind enough to feed us occasionally, if we volunteered to peel potatoes for the soldiers … I enjoyed laughing with them and singing their beautiful songs, and I learned Russian fast. …
>
> Finally, school began again in September 1944. I was nearly thirteen and allowed to enter the third grade. I didn't care. I was thrilled. I knew that I would be a good student and would catch up quickly. I spoke Polish well and the teacher, Władysław Gołąbek, was quite sympathetic to my family. I felt alive … The Gentile kids were amazed at my courage and watched me carefully. …
>
> One day one girl was very sad and almost in tears. She told me that the tall female teacher of English and religion had told the students not to play with me because I was a Jew. The girl told me not to worry, that she would continue to be my friend. I went home crying and complained to my mother. Mom insisted that I go back to the school the very next day. Now we are equals, she said, and we will fight back. She immediately reported the incident to the Soviet administrative officer. The next day he sent a secret agent to the school who arrested the teacher and sent her off to Siberia for reeducation.

[517] Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds*, 133.

> The Soviets [who were busy persecuting Jews in the Soviet Union at the time—*M.P.*] had no sympathy for such discrimination toward people victimized by the Nazis or Polish collaborators. Furthermore, many Russian soldiers were Jewish and empathized with us. Occasionally, one would throw out a clue such as *amcha,* a Hebrew word meaning "one belonging to your people," to signal that he was Jewish and on our side. The Red Army protected us for a while …[518]

Among the numerically large Polish underground there were also criminal elements who preyed on Jews and others. Jews were known to turn to Soviet military and secret police to square accounts with these elements. However, the Soviet net was cast wide and caught many others, thus reinforcing the notion that Jews enjoyed special protection and were above the rule of law that applied to ordinary Poles. These denunciations in turn set off retaliations as the situation spiralled out of control.

> My mother took revenge on the man who shot at my brother and almost killed him. She knew who he was. [This person was a Polish policeman in Przemyśl who had helped the boy leave the ghetto, and then chased him away when he continued to follow him on the outside—*M.P.*] She went to his house with the Russian police asking for my brother. He started to stumble in his words. He didn't know what to tell her. So she told him what he had done. The Russians arrested him and hung him. The same thing happened to one of my cousins. My uncle, the one that was in the concentration camp, had also given his daughter to a Polish woman along with a good deal of money. The woman was supposed to hide my cousin with her relatives in a small village. Instead she gave up my cousin for two kilos of sugar. After the liberation my mother went to look for her and went to the Polish woman. She said she didn't know what happened to her. She did not want to stay so she ran away. … The Russian police pressed this woman and she confessed that she turned my cousin over to the Gestapo. The Russians executed her, too.[519]

> After walking a few blocks [in Chełm], they suddenly came across several German POWs surrounded by Russian soldiers.
>
> As soon as Yeedle laid eyes on the Nazis, he suddenly went berserk. His facial features became contorted and his eyes turned wild … Overwhelmed by pain and frustration, Yeedle rushed toward the German men. He grabbed one of the wooden clogs off his foot and began beating them mercilessly with it.
>
> The Russian soldiers were startled by the attack. Yeedle looked like a frenzied madman, and they quickly tried to restrain him.
>
> "Leave him alone," Esther said to the soldiers. "This man has suffered a great deal. … Let him vent his rage."
>
> The men stepped back and let Yeedle strike the Germans freely. …

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[518] Renée Glassner, "Life, Death, and Angels," in Martin Ira Glassner and Robert Krell, eds., *And Life Is Changed Forever: Holocaust Childhoods Remembered* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 172–73.

[519] Account of Teodora (Cesia) Zimmermann Miller in Hartman and Krochmal, eds., *I Remember Every Day…,* 51–52.

"It's okay," Esther said. "I understand how you feel. In fact, there is one man against whom I want to take revenge. Do you remember Suski, the man who had a newspaper stand at the corner? He tormented me to no end after the invasion. Besides, he helped the Germans identify Jews, and a number of people died because of him." …

The Russians had turned City Hall into their temporary headquarters, and leaving Yeedle and Samuel on the front steps, she went directly inside.

"I would like to speak the the *Kommandant*," she said to the first soldier she saw. …

He led her to the *Kommandant's* office and opened the door for her.

When Esther walked in, she found a tall man standing deep in thought behind a large desk. …

"Finally, a Polish Jew who is alive!" he said with emotion. …

Esther stared at him in surprise. … she hadn't imagined that he would actually be a fellow Jew who was appalled by the annihilation of the Polish Jews. …

The *Kommandant* heaved a deep, anguished sigh. "How can I help you?" he asked Esther. "Is there anything I can do?"

"Yes," she said, there's a Polish man, Suski, who has caused great suffering to many Jews. Before we were deported to the ghettos, he regularly identified Jews for the Nazis, which often resulted in their deaths. He eagerly assisted the Nazis in eliminating Jews."

The *Kommandant* clenched his fists, and his face turned bright red. "Where is this man?" he asked, gritting his teeth. …

Now he jumped at the chance to take action against someone who had maliciously harassed his people.

Curious to see what he would do, Esther hurried out after him. She met Yeedle and Samuel outside, and together the three watched as the Jewish soldier called to a wagon driver who was standing nearby. He ordered Suski to climb into the wagon and then sat down beside him.

"Take us to the prison downtown," he said to the driver. …

They waited for some time until they saw the Jewish *Kommandant* returning. This time, though, he was the only passenger in the wagon. When the horse pulled up in front of City Hall, he thanked the wagon driver and came up to where Esther was waiting with her brother.

"Don't worry. I took care of him," he said. "That man will never bother any Jews again."[520]

There were already Russians in the yard, and the captain informed that he was Jewish.

Along the way, I met the Golembiowski's son, the one who had said that a golden statue should be erected in honor of the liquidator of the Jews. He told me that the wife of the postmaster searched for me with the help of the police the day after I disappeared from her house [in the village of Rudnik near Leżajsk]. He spoke to me with hypocrisy …

His self-righteousness nauseated me. I left him without answering. I ran to the Russians and informed the Jewish captain about who were the collaborators with the Germans. My list was complete. The Golembiowskis and the wife of the postmaster headed it.

This was my small revenge to the lowlife Polish collaborators.

[520] Perl, *Tell the World,* 196–99.

> I don't know what they did with them. The next day the captain told me to escape from town and to flee for my life from the members of the Polish Krajowa Army terrorist organization.[521]

Aharon Moravtchik describes the activities of an informal network of Jewish avengers within security police in Poland who used their offices to track down collaborators implicated in the destruction of the Jewish community in Dawidgródek, Polesia. These Belorussian collaborators had moved to Poland after that area had been incorporated into the Soviet Union and were posing as Poles.[522] Indeed, many Jews who held high positions in the Soviet army and security police displayed ethnic solidarity with Polish Jews by providing them with their services and with favours that they denied ordinary Poles.[523] Occasionally, Jews used their influence with high-placed Soviets and Polish Communists for the benefit of Poles to whom they owed a debt of gratitude for saving their lives during the German occupation.[524] Miriam Kolodny Goldwasser, for example, appealed to a Soviet captain, a Jew, on behalf of a Polish farmer who had sheltered her and her cousin in a village near Kamień Koszyrski. For some unknown reason the farmer had been labeled a traitor and was about to be executed summarily. She persuaded the captain by telling him that the Pole was "a friend to the Jews." The captain acknowledged, "I, too, am Jewish," and halted the execution.[525] When Bolesław Topolewski, who had sheltered Mindzia Kirszenbaum in the village of Przeradz near Bieżuń, was arrested after the war for his underground activities, Topolewski's wife turned to Kirszenbaum for help. Kirszenbaum intervened with the Jewish intevestigating officer at the security office in Mława and was able to secure his release.[526] Shlomo Wolkowicz was approached by the wife of a Pole from his hometown of Jagielnica who had once saved his family during the German occupation. The Pole and been arrested by the Security Office in Kraków and charged with collaborating with the Germans.

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[521] Henia Kopel (nee Reich), "Among the Gentiles Who Were After My Life," in *Memorial Book of the Martyrs of Lezajsk Who Perished in the Holocaust,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/lezajsk/Lezajsk.html>, translation of H. Rabin, ed., *Lizhensk: Sefer zikaron le-kedoshei Lizhensk she-nispu be-shoat ha-natsim* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Lezajsk in Israel, 1970), 61–71.

[522] Aharon Moravtchik, "My Small Revenge for the Heinous Crime," in Norman Helman, ed., *Memorial Book of David-Horodok* (Oak Park, Michigan: David Horodoker Women's Organization, 1981), 119–29, Internet: <http:davidhorodok.netforms.com/yizkor/8a.html>.

[523] See, for example, Naftali Dov Fuss, *The Imposter* (Jerusalem and Woodmore, New York: Gefen, 1992), 184–85 (a Jewish smuggler was given a reprieve by an NKVD officer); Goldstein, *For Decades I Was Silent,* 153–54 (Jews received economic benefits and protection from senior military officers stationed in Mława, who identified themselves as Jews; this close association of the Jewish residents with the Soviet occupying forces doubtless had a deleterious effect on the attitude of the local Polish population).

[524] A number of suc examples can be found in Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust*, chapter 9.

[525] Shoshana Goldwasser Schwartz and Azriela Jaffe, "Friend of a Farmer," in Yitta Halberstam and Judith Leventhal, *Small Miracles of the Holocaust: Extraordinary Coincidences of Faith, Hope, and Survival* (Guilford, Connecticut: The Lyons Press, 2008), 112–14.

[526] Wołosz, *Księga pamięci Żydów bieżuńskich,* 100, n.69. Topolewski was later rearrested. The Topolewski family never received recognition from Yad Vashem.

Although he did not know anyone at the Security Office, Wolkowicz's intervention on behalf of his ersrtwhile benefactor proved successful—a feat that few ethnic Poles could have managed.

> When I arrived, I was shown into the office of a pleasant looking young man, of about my own age. We immediately seemed to hit it off. I told him why I was there and asked what exactly Kominowski was accused of. The officer, whose name was Marian, gave me a brief account of the case. I asked permission to speak in his behalf, and to relate something of his actions in Jagielnica. …
>
> Marian kept his word and telephoned me next day. However, it was for an invitation to his home, for dinner, when we could discuss some aspects of the case further. … It didn't take me long to realize, once I was there, that Marian was a Jew. His girlfriend, who was also present, was Jewish, too, and so were his other friends. …
>
> About two weeks later, Kominowski was freed. I was delighted t have been able to help him, as he had once helped us.[527]

But many Jews who survived the Holocaust held Poles co-responsible for their misfortune and did not hide these sentiments. Sidney Zoltak, who, along with his immediate family, was rescued by Polish farmers near Siemiatycze and helped by several other Poles, wrote: "In 1947, I was angry not only towards the Germans but also the Poles. At that time, I put the two nations on same plane. Now I put the two nations into separate categories."[528] A survivor of German camps, who returned to his hometown of Sosnowiec, did not lose any opportunity to berate Poles to his Polish friends, who "opened their home to us for as long as we stayed in the city."

> One night my emotions overflowed. I raged to my friends at the indifference of our fellow Poles. "You have seen the stories and pictures the Russians published of Auschwitz and the other camps. I tell you one day history will judge the Germans and the Polish people as well for what they have done and for what they could have done and did not do. The world is not just going to forget it [if we Jews can help it—*M.P.*]. Some day when the history of this is written, it will be almost impossible for people to believe that such atrocities were committed in the twentieth century and that most of our fellow Poles did nothing to stop it. … For this reason and many others, but mainly for this reason, I will never in my life want to see this city or these people again!"
>
> In this one long talk I poured out every ounce of hatred and truth that had built up inside me to the few Poles who had befriended me.[529]

Anti-Polish sentiments could take many forms. In addition to the standard charges of complicity in the Holocaust, Szlama Leszman, who joined the Socialist underground in Kraków, chose to denigrate Poles for

[527] Shlomo Wolkowicz, *The Mouth of Hell* (Haverford, Pennsylvania: Infinity, 2002), 100–1.

[528] Zoltak, *My Silent Pledge*, 246.

[529] Nathan Shapell, *Wtiness to the Truth* (New York: David MacKay Company, 1974), 175–76.

their lack of support for the underground, even though Poland was the only occupied country that produced an underground state and had the largest underground movement in Europe. Leszman wrote:

> This was not a movement on a national scale. The loss of their liberty did not matter to the Polish nation as a whole. The Poles were accustomed to living under the rod. In addition to this, the Germans had implemented and were carrying out all that the anti-Semitic Poles had schemed to do in the depths of their hearts.[530]

Polish memoirs confirm this general picture, which was, however, universal. A Jewish woman sheltered by the Zajączkowski family in Włodzimierz in Volhynia betrayed their underground connections to the Soviet secret police, thereby resulting in the arrest and deportation of five Home Army members.[531] Zygmunt Turzański, a member of the Home Army active in the vicinity of Stryj, was denounced by a Jew who had survived thanks to false documents furnished by the Polish underground. Turzański was arrested by the NKVD and sentenced to ten years of hard labour in Kazakhstan.[532] Władysław Dytel and other Home Army members from Sokołów Podlaski were betrayed by Jewish partisans with whom they had contact during the German occupation.[533] A Jewish woman from Lwów who was sheltered by Poles compiled a list of Poles which she intended to hand over to the NKVD.[534] Another Jewish woman sheltered by Poles in Siemianówka near Lwów threatened to lodge a complaint with the Soviets regarding farmers who were not willing to help her. One of her Polish benefactors dissuaded her from doing so, pointing out that people were afraid but were not her enemies, as none of them had betrayed her.[535] A Jew sheltered by the Korża family near Łomża denounced the head of the family to the Soviets; fortunately, he escaped captivity and survived.[536] For reasons that are unclear, the sons of a Jewish family named Kurland, who were sheltered on the farm of a Polish family named Caban on the outskirts of Częstochowa, came to their rescuers' home with Soviet soldiers in the spring of 1945 and murdered the head of the family and his two sons.[537] Indeed, many Polish rescuers recall being interrogated in the State Security Office by Jews.[538]

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[530] Bussgang, *Działoszyce Memorial Book,* 331.
[531] Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity,* Part One, 270.

[532] Account of Zygmunt Turzański in *Na Rubieży,* no. 79 (2005): 47.

[533] Józef Górski, "Na przełomie dziejów," *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materały,* no. 2 (2006): 280–91, here at p. 290.

[534] Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny,* Part One, 71.

[535] Ibid., Part One, 151.

[536] Ibid., Part Two, 111.

[537] Ibid., Part Two, 10.

[538] Ibid., Part Two, 155 (Antoni Skwierczyński); S. Burza-Karlinski, "Poles Have Brave Record of Aiding Jews," letter, *The Toronto Star,* July 25, 1992 (Stanisław Burza-Karliński).

Witold Sągajłło, a Home Army leader in the vicinity of Opatów, in the Radom district, who was astute enough to escape capture, recalls his own face-to-face meeting with the NKVD in August 1944.

> During the briefing the sentries reported that a Russian Major had come to see Raven [AK Major Kruk]. … An hour later he reappeared with a message from the Russian [Soviet] Divisional Commander inviting all the officers of the 2nd Division of the Home Army to attend a special meeting at the Russian Divisional Command Post. … [Inspector] Tench [i.e., Żółkiewski ("Lin")] decided that only Raven should go and should make any necessary excuses for refusing to join the Russians and submit to their command.
>
> Raven asked me to accompany him. Together it would be easier for us to wriggle out of this situation and my presence would boost his morale. … I do not know why, but I agreed. After all, I spoke Russian fluently and knew something about them. We decided to take our runners with us. All were armed with sub-machine-guns. We mounted our horses and, with the Russian Major, entered the forest. Immediately we were surrounded by at least a platoon of Russian cavalry.
>
> At about 1930 hours we arrived at the Command Post of the Divisional Commander. Two officers met us. Both were in Russian field brown uniform, both Colonels, with NKVD flashes in their collars. They apologized profusely for the fact that the Divisional Commander could not attend the meeting owing to pressure of other work. They had been authorized to speak in his name. They introduced themselves as *Politruks* of the Division. The older, a tall, stout Jew, mentioned that he was from Bialystok [Białystok] (a town in the north-east of Poland). The younger … came from Kharkov.
>
> At once they asked Raven why it was that the other officers of the Division he commanded had not come with him. …
>
> The conversation kept to the typical interrogation pattern of the NKVD. The elder of the two Russians was trying to pump us about the essentials: what were our numbers, equipment, ammunition, morale? …
>
> 'Would you be willing to recognize the [Soviet-installed] Lublin Committee?' asked the older Colonel. 'After all, this is now the only Polish government truly representative of the masses.'
>
> 'We do not know anything about this Committee. We obey orders from the Polish Government in London.'
>
> 'But you had orders to fight side by side with us. How can you do it without being members of General [Zygmunt] Berling's Polish Army, which is under our command?'
>
> … On and on it went in this vein. The tension was becoming unbearable. Eventually one last question was put in a sharp tone to Raven and me:
>
> 'And if we give you an explicit order to join us, what will you do?'
>
> 'We have our orders. And if you do not mind, we have to leave you now. We have to join our men, who are already on the move.'
>
> A heavy silence fell, broken only by the occasional explosions of German heavy artillery shells in the distance. The corner of my eye caught the slight movement of my runner's hand towards the safety-catch of his Sten. My own fingers moved delicately towards the safety catch of my Udet, sliding it into the firing position. If we have to go, I thought, at least the two of them will go first.

> The two NKVD men looked at each other in silence for what seemed like an eternity. Eventually the older one said, '*Nu, chtozh. Puskay yedut.* (Well, let them go).'[539]

The collaboration of many Jews with the Soviet regime continued unabated throughout the Stalinist era. Ryszard Kasprowicz recalled that when a group of Polish partisans was transferred from the NKVD camp in Diagilev-Riazan', where they had been imprisoned from 1944, to a "repatriation" centre in Biała Podlaska in November 1947, they were interrogated and screened by Jewish officers from the Polish state security office.[540]

Shortly after the Soviet "liberation," a group of Jews, mostly former partisans (among them Abba Kovner, Chil Grynszpan, Tuviah Friedman, Yitzhak Zuckerman, and Simon Wiesenthal), formed a secret organization in Lublin known as *Nekama* or "Revenge."[541] While one can only surmise about the extent of their activities in Poland, and where they found their support (likely with Jews in the security office), the nature of their mission leaves little to the imagination:

> [Abba] Kovner … was overtaken by the idea of revenge; it took hold of him and his comrades until they could think of nothing else. It became the most important goal, dictating their actions: A group of survivors dedicated themselves to *nakam* (revenge), ready to pay the price, whatever it might be, and to give up everything else. They numbered about fifty men and women, mostly partisans … Most of them were from Vilna [Wilno], Rovno [Równe], Częstochowa, and Krakow [Kraków].[542]

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[539] Witold Sagajllo, *Man in the Middle: A Story of Polish Resistance, 1940–45* (London: Leo Cooper in Association with Secker & Warburg, 1984), 136–40. Contrary to the picture painted in Communist and Jewish sources, Lieutenant-Commander Sągajłło states that the Communist partisans in the vicinity of Opatów, who included many criminals in their ranks, did not actively fight the Germans and that the Germans generally left them alone; rather the two of them took turns attacking Home Army partisans. Ibid., 75–76, 79–80, 99, 113. When two groups of armed Jews made their appearance in the forest around the villages near Ostrowiec and Opatów and demanded food with threats, they were told to submit to the authority of the Home Army or else leave the area, as the farmers already had to carry the burden of supporting several partisan groups. From the Ostrowiec group only one Jew agreed to join the Polish underground, and the three who refused were ordered to leave the area. Ibid., 93. After the war, when Sągajłło attempted to hide his identity from the Communists, a Jewish lawyer from Warsaw by the name of Polikier, who had been sheltered on a Polish estate near Opatów, became the "moving spirit" behind the NKVD and security search for him. Ibid., 50, 168.

[540] His testimony is quoted in Grażyna Dziedzińska, "'Riazańczycy,'" *Nasza Polska*, July 22, 2003.

[541] Bernard Mark, the director of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, disclosed the existence of such a group in a press conference held on June 13, 1960, after the capture of Adolf Eichmann, which was reported in the Warsaw daily *Express Wieczorny* the following day. See Peter Raina, *Mordercy uchodzą bezkarnie: Sprawa Bohdana P.* (Warsaw: von borowiecky, 2000), 79–82, 115. For additional confirmation of the existence of *Nekama* see Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory*, 579, and Porat, *The Fall of a Sparrow*, 190–91, 211, 215, which, like most Jewish sources, refer only to its anti-German activities or, in the case of Porat, simply allude to activities carried out against Poles. According to historian Peter Raina, *Nekama* continued to be active in Poland until well into the 1950s. It may have been responsible for the murder of the teenage son of Bolesław Piasecki, the leader of ONR [*Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny*]-Falanga, an extreme right wing interwar political organization. (There is more about this murder later.) Another member of this group was Shlomo Kantorowicz Kenet, from Wilno, who mentioned some unsuccessful attempts to cause damage. See "Wilno: Shlomo Kenet," Interview résumé, Internet: <http://www.sztetl.org.pl/en/article/wilno/16,accounts-memories/13115,shlomo-kenet/>.

[542] Porat, *The Fall of a Sparrow*, 211.

On revenge directed against non-Germans historian Dina Porat writes about "secret isolated executions at night" and alludes to "conventional methods, such as shooting or strangulation, or to go on killing Lithuanians, Ukrainians, and Poles who had been identified as murderers and informers, whether by survivors or by the Soviet authorities."[543] (The activities of a revenge squad based in Palestine, headed by Abba Kovner, whose activities were directed at Nazis in Germany, are described later.)

These were not the only Jews, however, bent on revenge:

> The desire for *nakam*—expressed in last wills and testaments, in words written on walls in blood, in poems and conversations—burned within Jewish hearts. Those who were the only survivors of their families or towns viewed vengeance as the only justification for staying alive: to take revenge, to pay back the murderer and the torturer in his own coin.[544]

Private revenge actions are described by a number of Jews. Some of the Jews who returned to Kurzeniec after it liberation at the end of June 1944, "took part in acts of revenge against local collaborators."[545] The following account is from a small town in the Wilno region:

> The Germans … they came and they started killing the Jews … they killed the entire town. …
>
> And I went back to my place, where I was born, and I burned the place. And I settled the account with the goyim that killed the Jews. I settled the account completely. … I am not sorry for what I did to them, I did give them justice! …
>
> I burned all of their houses. … I didn't want the goyim to use our houses. There were a few of us who remained alive and we did enough. Enough, enough.[546]

Samuel D., who is silent on his postwar affiliations, records:

> After the liberation we were motivated by a terrible hatred with respect to those Poles who had denounced Jews to the Germans and who had amassed fortunes on the backs of their victims. We squared a number of accounts with profiteers and thieves of all kinds. In the villages we burned farms, mills, houses … abandoned by the Jews before suppressing the plunderers who had appropriated the property. Our action was but a drop in the ocean but what was one to do? I think that if we had had the means we would have killed more Poles in exchange for the services they had rendered to the Germans.[547]

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[543] Porat, *The Fall of a Sparrow,* 215.

[544] Porat, *The Fall of a Sparrow,* 211.

[545] Yehuda Bauer, "Kurzeniec—a Jewish Shtetl in the Holocaust," *Yalkut Moreshet,* vol. 1 (Winter 2003); 150.

[546] Account of Ze'ev Lerman (pseudonym) in Bar-On, *Fear and Hope,* 98–99, 101.

[547] Marc Hillel, *Le massacre des survivants: En Pologne après l'holocauste (1945–1947)* (Paris: Plon, 1985), 96.

A survivor from Biłgoraj named Vermut tracked down alleged local collaborators and turned them over to the authorities. In his acts of vengeance, he found an answer to the question of why he had survived.[548] On December 5–6, 1944, a group of Jewish partisans led by the brothers Shloyme and David Grude (Gruda) murdered six people in Miłkowice-Maćki, including an 11-year-old boy. Later that night they attacked the home of the Jarocki family in Kłyżówka, who had sheltered a Jewish family from Drohiczyn. The Grude band murdered two people including a 12-year-old girl and wounded two others whom they left for dead. The victims' farms were plundered and set on fire.[549] Kesil Karshenstein, whose family members were denounced to the Germans and killed, took revenge on the Polish farmer who betrayed them by shooting the Pole's entire family.[550]

Isadore Hollander, a former partisan turned soldier in the Polish Army, recalled how Jews organized a vigilante death squad and roamed the countryside around Łódź settling scores with Poles who had allegedly harmed Jews:

> It was an illegal procedure [but] I had a little bit of power. I wore a [Polish] uniform and I found more Jewish soldiers already in the [Polish] army. I [also] found Jewish soldiers in the Russian army … We went out every night for a little bit of a ride. We had a list, Poles [i.e., likely the secret police] giving us lists of all those names. … We went out two, three soldiers at night. … We did use guns … It was my commitment. … That's why I enlisted myself [in the army]. I didn't have to enlist myself to become a volunteer [in the death squad] … but I did it because of revenge. I wanted to do it and I did it. … As it went on, I felt satisfied. We didn't touch … German [civilians].[551]

A vigilante group composed of Jews and Soviet Jewish officers was also formed in Gorlice, instigated by Jakub Peller, who had survived the war in a nearby village in an attic above the stable of a kindly peasant widow. Peller became the self-proclaimed leader of the surviving Jews in that city.

> My duties as messenger boy for the Russian officers in charge of Gorlice put me in contact with some officers who were Jewish … They were particularly horrified at the complicity of some of the Polish informers … Even though these Russians had no particular authority in the matter, because

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[548] B. Vermut's account, "I have remained alive in order to take revenge," is found in Avraham Kronenberg, ed., *Khurbn Bilguray* (Tel Aviv: Hapoel Hamizrachi, 1956), 281–88.

[549] Andrzej W. Olędzki, "Banda Herszla Szebesa: Mord w Czartajewie, marzec 1944," *Głos Siemiatycz Online,* Internet: http://box.zetobi.com.pl/glos_siemiatycz/histor_zydzi_1944.htm; Waldemar Monkiewicz, "Za cenę życia: O ratowaniu Żydów w Białostockiem o okresie okupacji niemieckiej," in Dobroński and Monkiewicz, eds., *Białostoccy Żydzi*, vol. 2, 189–90. Compare with Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka,* 51, 140–41 (Miłkowice). The Polish underground liquidated the Gruda (Grude) brothers early the following year. (Szmul Gruda was killed by the Home Army in January, and David Gruda by the NSZ in February 1945.) According to Communist sources both brothers had links to the regime. See Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust,* 116, 127, 162, 178; Bogdan Brzeziński, Leon Chrzanowski, and Ryszard Halaba, *Polegli w walce o władzę ludową: Materiały i zestawienia statystyczne* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1970), 166.

[550] Shmuel Mordechai Lev, "Diary of Pain and Suffering," in Shtokfish, *Sefer Drohiczyn,* 42ff. (English section).

[551] Fisher, *The Persistence of Youth,* 117.

there was now a newly constituted Polish government, they decided to pay a visit to a couple of these informers, including the two men Lega and Krupa.

It was Peller who first told the officers about Lega and Krupa. They had been the ones responsible for the deaths of the Schiff brothers. Also, Krupa had discovered and turned in to the Gestapo the insane man who had escaped from the mass grave at Garbacz …

First, Krupa denied he had ever done such things. Then, when he was beaten and almost blinded, he admitted his guilt and begged for mercy, saying he needed the money the Gestapo had given him for his family … He protested that the Russian officers had no right to beat him, that they had to go through the Polish courts and that he wanted his gentile, Christian lawyer. They kept repeating they were giving him the same justice he had given old man Menashi and many, many others. They reminded him of the deaths he was directly responsible for, one by one.

… Krupa cringed when the Russians went into details. … Telling the story made the officers madder than they already were and one of the officers crippled the wretched Krupa with a blow on the head with his revolver.

So that was the end of a Polish traitor. His fate didn't bring to life those he had killed, but there seemed some justice in it.[552]

As Yitzhak Zuckerman acknowledges, former partisans were known for their unruly behaviour:

> The partisan delegates expressed special difficulties in their report. … an incipient demoralization of our current Jewish life in Poland is also evident in them. Incidents happen to them … For instance, a group of partisans riding a train threw a Polish gentile off a moving train because he insulted a Jew. They beat up a Polish *Porucznik* (lieutenant), who didn't move aside for them in the street. A cloddish force and a hooliganism bursts from them.[553]

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[552] Samuel P. Oliner, *Restless Memories: Recollections of the Holocaust Years* (Berkeley, California: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1986), 185–86; Samuel P. Oliner, *Narrow Escapes: A Boy's Holocaust Memories and Their Legacy* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon Books, 2000), 156–57. See Krupa had denounced one of the Schiff brothers to the Gestapo; he was found in the house of his Polish lover and shot in front of her. Oliner, *Narrow Escapes,* 125. Oliner became known as a "tough guy" in Gorlice: "I went around with a group of older boys who had survived the concentration camps … If a peasant was treating a Jew badly we turned the tables." Ibid., 156. He obtained an apartment of his own from the newly constituted Jewish Committee where his friends, who dealt on the black market, took advantage of local peasant girls. "These friends of mine included friendly Poles as well as Jews, and the girls they managed to pick up were peasants who came to town on market day with their fathers." Ibid., 157.

[553] Zuckerman adds: "If our Movement can … not [take them firmly in hand], they are the first who are liable to turn into a terrorist gang in Eretz Israel and, even worse, God forbid, into criminals." See Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory,* 591. During this period of lawlessness robbing and throwing people off trains, whether Jews or Poles (including Communist state functionaries), was carried out by various groups, usually criminal elements, occasionally Polish partisans and also Soviet soldiers. See Marcin Zaremba, "'Człowiek drży jak liść'—trwoga przed badytyzmem w okresie powojennym," in Jerzy Eisler, et al., eds., *Niepiękny wiek XX: Profesorowi Tomaszowi Szarocie w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin* (Warsaw: Instytut Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk and Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2010), 380. A Jewish survivor witnessed the following scene in Western Poland: "The Soviet soldiers were beating and robbing the German passengers and raping the women. One woman screamed, 'I serviced five today already!' They slapped her and threw her out of the speeding train." See Tannenzapf, *Memories From the Abyss,* 69.

After leaving the Red Army a Jew who had settled in Łódź recalled:

> While working on the newspaper in Novogrudok [Nowogródek], I encountered some young Jewish guerrillas who survived the war in forests … They were bitter with the Poles for anti-Semitism in the country, and equally disdained the Germans and Russians. …
>
> I looked up the youth gang who address I had kept, but did not stay long in their company because their way of life was appallingly brutal. They were still guerrillas, five boys and a girl, who crossed the border to Germany, entered homes, stole goods, and even killed people. They brought back loot which they sold on the black market.[554]

Sometimes the road to service in the Security Office followed a seemingly incongruous path. Stanisław Taubenschlag, a scion of a prominent Jewish family from Kraków (his father was Professor Rafał Taubenschlag, dean of the Jagiellonian University), traced the fortunes of Danek (Danko) 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.

> 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). In the 1950s he went to Venezuela where he met his death in a car accident in Caracas.[555]

The close association of Jews with the Stalinist order imposed on the unwilling Poles was not lost on ordinary Jews who lived in Poland at the time. Henry (Chaim) Dorfman, who was sheltered by a Polish family near Głowaczów, recalled:

> And the next morning the Russinas were in. … You could get whatever you wanted. … they took us right away. … they knew when the first tank moved into the little village where we were. We right away jumped out … we just said, "We Jews," you know. And listen, you had to know one thing that in the Russian Army, you didn't see private soldiers Jews on the front lines. The lowest rank could be a captain. The generals, all the top was all Jews. The hospitals, the doctors, all Jews. The Jews had the biggest position in the Russian Army. And uh, they took care of Jews …
>
> We went already to a village … where his top notch people lived and there … we moved in with

[554] Weigand, *Out of the Fury*, 105–106. Eliezer Urbach obtained new identity papers under a different name from the Jewish Committee in Łódź without any problem, and through connections secured a lucrative position as a newspaper editor in Lublin.

[555] Stanisław Taubenschlag (Stanley Townsend), *To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland* (Oświęcim: Frap-Books, 1998), 57. See also Andrzej Chwalba, *Dzieje Krakowa*, vol. 5: *Kraków w latach 1939–1945* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002), 287.

> the army, with the Russian Army. Whatever nice place it was, that's where they took, you understand. And if they took they give us the nicest place. They give us a nicer place than the officers had because they—and the NKVD, the same thing. What do you think they wanted to know? They wanted to know—first thing, they had lists, who, who cooperated with the Germans and everything else. They wanted to know from us if this is true or not. If there was people, what they—they took away a lot of people. They knew who was who and what is what. They weren't come in dumb, you understand. And the same thing, the KGB. A lot of fine Jewish people, they, they talk Jewish. Nice people. … from there we went into the big city, we went to Lublin.[556]

There was no shortage of Kahns, Yorans, Shainbergs, Grays, Verstandigs, Glembotzky's, Schwarzmanns, and Hollanders during the Stalinist occupation. Hundreds, if not thousands, of Jews gave themselves over wholeheartedly to the tasks assigned to them by the Soviet organs of oppression. In the process, countless members of anti-Communist Polish underground organizations were liquidated. On April 12, 1945, an incident that attracted international attention occurred in Siedlce. Around 20 Poles, for the most part inactive soldiers of the underground, were kidnapped and murdered by the security police which included a number of Jewish members. Their bodies of these Poles were put on display in the town for several days to intimidate the local population.[557] It should not come as a surprise, therefore, that some Poles—both partisans and civilians—struck back at their victimizers, whether the latter acted as state functionaries or as avengers in an individual capacity.

Even ordinary, apolitical Jews contemplated exacting revenge on wrongdoers personally rather than resorting to the state's mechanisms. Feliks Tych, then a teenager, searched unsuccessfully for the person who had denounced his brother with the intention of killing him.[558] Others turned to the state security office or Soviet officials. Eliasz Kalb reported to the security office in Dąbrowa Tarnowska on scores of Poles, accusing them of all sorts of alleged wrongdoings, including suspected membership in the Home Army, which was enough to constitute a capital crime.[559] When a Jewish woman reported on a woman in

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[556] Testimony of Henry Dorfman, August 11 and 25, 1989, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, University of Michigan at Dearborn, Internet: <http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/dorfman/>.

[557] Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust,* 135–36, 150. The death squad was led by Braun (Bronek) Blumsztajn and included Hersz Blumsztajn, Lieutenant Edward Słowik (aka Kwiatek), and Jan Emil Karpiński (Emanuel Alberg), the deputy chief of the county security office. According to one account, about twenty out of fifty persons employed by the secret police in Siedlce were Jews. The Polish underground retaliated by assassinating two security functionaries involved in the crime who were Poles; the Communist authorities transferred the security police implicated in the crime to different locations. See also Jan Żaryn, interview with Zdzisław Szpakowski and Edmund Królik, "Najpierw popili sobie w urzędzie…," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* nos. 12–1 (December–January 2003–2004): 81–90. On the make-up of the security police in Siedlce see Mariusz Bechta, "Wojna rewolucyjna—sowietyzacja Podlasia przez funkcjonariuszy PUBP w Siedlcach po roku 1944 (zarys problematyki)," in Kazimierz Krajewski and Tomasz Łabuszewski, eds., *Mazowsze i Podlasie w ogniu 1944–1956,* vol. 4: *Powiat Siedlce w pierwszej dekadzie rządów komunistycznych* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej and Rytm, 2011), 303–443.

[558] "O ukrywaniu się po 'aryjskiej stronie': Rozmowa Barbary Engelking z Feiksem Tychem (autoryzowany wywiad)," *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały,* vol. 2 (2006): 339–50.

[559] Maria Żychowska, "Glos do artykułu red. Grzegorza Brożka 'Pod jednym dachem' zamieszczonym w 'Gościu Niedzielnym' 15 stycznia 2012 r." Internet: <http://www.tarnowiny.info/glosa.htm>. The document in question is from

Katowice who had denounced her to the Germans, a Soviet officer found the woman and shot her with a pistol.[560] The attitude of many Jews toward the non-Jewish population was—perhaps, in some cases, understandably so—hostile. Nina Morecki, a native of Lwów who survived with the help of Poles, explains:

> I continued on and eventually made my way to my beloved hometown of Lvov [Lwów] only to find it in ruins. Nothing was left of my childhood, not a person, place or thing. I searched for a year. I felt so angry with the Polish people who had survived, when my people hadn't. And I felt angry with myself. Why should I have been the one to survive?[561]

One of the most sordid episodes of revenge killing in the postwar period was the murder of the teenage son of Bolesław Piasecki, the leader of the ONR–Falanga (*Obóz Nardowo-Radykalny*–Falanga), an extremist right wing interwar political organization. Fifteen-year-old Bohdan Piasecki was abducted on January 22, 1957, but his mutilated body was found only two years later, on December 8, 1958. He had been smashed over the head with a blunt object and a knife with a 16 cm blade stabbed into his chest. This macabre killing showed the "traditional" signs of a ritual murder. With the complicity of the Communist authorities, the likely culprits—all of them being of Jewish origin (Mieczysław Katz, Michał Barkowski aka Robert Kalman, Adam Kossowski, Stefan Łazorczyk and others)—left Poland soon after the murder, taking refuge in Israel. Their heinous deeds were of no concern to the Israeli authorities, despite the publicity that was given to the crime in the Israeli media. Writing in the Tel Aviv Polish language newspaper *Nowiny Kurier* in 1961, David Hartem (Fajgenberg) called the murder of Bohdan Piasecki a "revenge" killing for the anti-Semitic activities of his father. On March 13, 1966, the daily *Maariv* ran an article under the heading, "The Murderers of the Son of a Polish Politician Are Living in Israel," which alleged that the two Jews who murdered Bohdan Piasecki wanted to "avenge the Jewish victims" of Bolesław Piasecki's wartime underground faction by killing his son. In response to characteristic charges of "anti-Semitism" from the international Jewish community, Poland's Communist authorities dropped the criminal charges against Ignacy Ekerling, whose taxi was used to abduct Bohdan, and the police investigation into this matter was frozen. Ekerling was also allowed to immigrate to Israel. Some documents pertaining to this murder were released belatedly to the victim's family by Poland's Minister of Justice in April 1991, after the fall of the Communist regime, but much information was withheld. By raising charges of "anti-Semitism" in the context of the prosecution of this crime and offering protection to

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March 7, 1945 and is found in the archives of the Institute of National Remembrance.

[560] Gutenbaum and Latała, eds., *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 2, 291.

[561] Nina Morecki, *Nina's Story: A Holocaust Odyssey from Lvov to the U.S., 1922–1945*, section 8: "Going Home (Return to Lvov, 1945)," UCSB Oral History Project, Internet: <http://www.history.uscb.edu/projects/holocaust/NinasStory/letter02.htm>; published as Nina Morecki, as told to Colette Waddell, *Through the Eyes of a Survivor* (Carpinteria, California: TopCat Press, 2007).

the perpetrators, Israel and the international Jewish community took ownership of this crime, transforming it from a private act of vengeance into a barometer of the state of Polish-Jewish relations.[562]

The war against "White Poles" also spread to Palestine where an unknown number of Poles were murdered by Jewish underground groups in the years 1945–1948, because of their anti-Communism and alleged pro-Arab sentiments. The two most famous victims, Witold Hulanicki, the former Polish Consul General in Palestine in 1936–1939, and the journalist Stefan Arnold were abducted and executed in February 1948 by Lehi ("Freedom Fighters for Israel"). The so-called Stern gang had made overtures to the Nazis in 1940–1941, but later embraced the Soviet Stalinists, who were then staunch supporters of Jewish statehood. Despite his strong record of support for the Jewish cause and personal friendship with Avraham Stern, the group's then-deceased legendary founder, Hulanicki fell victim to Soviet-directed executioners on trumped up charges of collaborating with Arabs and British intelligence. The Stalinists had found a receptive ear for the anti-Polish propaganda they spewed. According to Gideon Remez and Isabella Ginor, researchers at the Hebrew University, "Our conclusion is that what happened here was a classic case in which the Soviets either manipulated Lehi into doing their dirty work, possibly by planting evidence, or Lehi was acting to curry favor with the Soviets." These authors described the background to these events in the following terms:

> The … dwindling, Polish expatriate community in Palestine, most of which arrived after Poland fell to the Germans and Soviets at the outset of World War II, was so frequently targeted that most of the cases in which Poles were killed were never reported and were soon forgotten. …
>
> A few examples from the weeks preceding the Hulanicki-Arnold incident can illustrate how "open season" had begun against suspect Poles. The Haganah claimed that unlike the "dissident" groups, it punished these suspects only after due process. But on January 9, 1948, its men in Jerusalem executed a Polish amputee who later turned out to be merely a thief rather than an instructor of Arab irregulars, as suspected. An internal Haganah report admitted that "clearly the evidence against him was insufficient for a verdict," and he was shot only as a precaution, since he had not been blindfolded under interrogation. On January 14, in Tel Aviv, the Irgun was "credited" for killing "as a spy" a Hebrew-speaking straggler from Anders' Army who had made a living as a shoe-shine boy and dishwasher, then enlisted in the Jewish forces but crossed into Arab Jaffa. On December 19, 1947, six Lehi members including its intelligence chief in Jerusalem were arrested while attempting to abduct the editor of the locally published *Gazeta Polska*, whom "multiple sources" had denounced as a "professional informer." …
>
> As the USSR still had no official representation in Palestine, the new Polish consulates acted as the Soviets' surrogates in intelligence as well as diplomacy. By February 1947, CID reports

[562] On this topic see the following works by Peter Raina, a historian of Hindu origin, who marshals compelling evidence that this murder was an act of vengeance for Piasecki's wartime activities which were allegedly directed against Jews: *Sprawa zabójstwa Bohdana Piaseckiego* (Warsaw: Pax, 1989); *Sprawcy uchodzą bezkarnie: Kulisy zabójstwa Bohadana Piaseckiego w świetle akt MSW* (Warsaw: Książka Polska, 1993); *Mordercy uchodzą bezkarnie: Sprawa Bohdana P.* (Warsaw: von borowiecky, 2000). See also Piotr Zychowicz, "Mordercy Bohdana uchodzą," *Rzeczpospolita,* December 10, 2007; Krzysztof Masłoń, "Tyrmand dla dorosłych," *Rzeczpospolita,* October 2, 2010.

identified an attaché at the consulate, Ephraim Sztych, "the head of Polish Intelligence in Palestine" … Except for [consul-general Olgierd] Górka, all the above were Jewish. …

In any case, beyond mere spying, propaganda, and commercial interests, the frequent violence of the struggle within Poland as the first battleground of the Cold War was mirrored in Palestine well before the Hulanicki/Arnold incident. As early as October 1945, a Jewish Agency official told [Romuald] Gadomski [a prominent prewar Polish Communist who was one of the Comintern agents who had infiltrated Anders' Army and with it, Palestine] that there was "verified evidence whereby Polish reactionary circles in the Middle East were taking part in the organization, training, and political incitement" of Arabs in special camps, and served notice that "it had been decided … they would become targets for physical elimination by the Jewish organizations." In January 1946, Gadomski was reinforced with another veteran Polish-Jewish Communist, NKVD agent and Armia Ludowa partisan hero, Gershon Gutman or Frumkin, aka Col. Gustaw ("Bolek") Alef-Bolkowiak. The British CID, powerless to stop him, reported that Alef exhorted his "local friends" to "fight the London Poles in this country by all possible means." The new Polish consular authorities, he explained, would need the locals' help—and handed them a list of "a number of Poles living in Palestine who are … 'absolutely dangerous.'" In late April 1947, "various agents" reportedly supplied the Polish consulate in Jerusalem "with the names of Poles who are suspected of being British agents." In April 1948, the Soviets still listed "dregs of Anders' [Army]" among the "traitors and quislings from around the world" who "take part in the struggle on the Arab side" by assisting attacks on the Jews.[563]

Nechama Tec made the following observations about the situation of Jews in the postwar period:

How did the Jews fit into this Polish-Russian [i.e., Soviet] confrontation? Unlike the Poles, Jews defined the Soviets as liberators, welcoming them warmly. In turn, at least initially, the Russians also treated the surviving Jews with special consideration.

To consolidate their power the Soviets needed the support of the local population. They knew that for this support they could rely and trust the Jews more than the Poles. Moreover, among Jews who returned from Russia some were seasoned Communists. This last group in particular could be relied on. As a result, many of them were offered high political and police positions.

Not surprisingly, this close Jewish-Russian cooperation did not pass unnoticed. When some high Jewish officials [actually, there were quite a few of them and not only at high levels—*M.P.*] became involved in the persecution of the Polish underground, all Jews [actually, many of them—*M.P.*] were blamed for it. Such persecutions were seen as proof that the Jews were in fact enemies of the Polish people. …

The Russians tried to protect Jewish lives. They also treated the Jews leniently by returning large enterprises to them. This, as it turned out, was only a temporary measure.[564]

[563] Isabella Ginor and Gideon Remez, "A Cold War Casualty in Jerusalem, 1948: The Assassination of Witold Hulanicki," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, vol. 4, no. 3 (September 2010): 135–56, here at 135, 140, 143, 147–48.

[564] Tec, *Dry Tears*, 230–31.

Stanisław Krajewski, a Jewish community leader in Poland,[565] confirms this picture:

> The archetype of the Jews during the first ten years of the Polish People's Republic was generally perceived as an agent of the secret political police. It is true that under [President Bolesław] Bierut and [First Secretary of the United Polish Workers' Party, Władysław] Gomułka (prior to 1948) the key positions in the Ministry of State [Public] Security were held by Jews or persons of Jewish background. It is a fact which cannot be overlooked, little known in the West and seldom mentioned by the Jews in Poland. Both prefer to talk about Stalin's anti-Semitism (the "doctors" plot, etc.). The machine of communist terror functioned in Poland in a manner similar to that used in other communist ruled countries in Europe and elsewhere.[566]

More recently Krajewski has stated:

> I disagree that the Jewish role in the 'communist past' was 'quite marginal'. The number and influence of Jewish communists in post-war Poland … was so important that their role was far more than marginal. … the challenge for Jews is to accept the fact that in the middle of this century Jews in Central and Eastern Europe were not only among the victims but also among the victimizers. In my view, the number and the quasi-religious character of some Jewish communists, for whom Stalin was the messiah, generate a Jewish share of moral responsibility.[567]

> Jews … were numerous and influential in the Communist elite in postwar Poland. In my view, this constitutes a moral challenge for us Jews. … Jews participated actively in the system of oppression. … those in Poland or other East European countries became functionaries of the state terror. I believe that this is a reason for Jews to feel shame. Of course, I am not saying that *only* Jews should feel morally responsible.
>
> My point is simple but rarely accepted. Communism belongs also to the history of the Jews, not only to the history of Russia, Poland, etc. In the middle of our century, in the heart of Europe, Jews were not only victims but also victimizers. To some Jews, communism was a quasi-religion.[568]

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[565] Stanisław Krajewski is president of the Jewish Forum in Poland, co-chairman of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews, and Polish consultant to the American Jewish Committee.

[566] Cited in Korboński, *The Jews and Poles in World War II,* 78–79; and Michael Bernhard and Henryk Szlajfer, eds., *From the Polish Underground: Selections from Krytyka, 1978–1993* (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 381. In the late 1940s, Gomułka, the leader of the Communist party until that time, together with a group of other communist leaders who likewise had spent the war years in Poland, was accused of "right-wing nationalist deviation," removed from power and was subsequently arrested (the conditions of his arrest were rather mild). The group of Communists that consequently emerged triumphant was dominated by those who had spent the war years in the Soviet Union and included prominent Jewish party members.

[567] Stanisław Krajewski, "Reflexions of a Polish Polish Jew," *East European Jewish Affairs,* vol. 27, no. 1 (1997): 64–65.

[568] Stanisław Krajewski, "The Impact of the Shoah on the Thinking of Contemporary Polish Jewry: A Personal Account," in Zimmerman, *Contested Memories,* 300. A more comprehensive presentation of Krajewski's position is found in Stanisław Krajewski, *Żydzi, judaizm, Polska* (Warsaw: Vocatio, 1997); Stanisław Krajewski, "Jews,

Fortunately, there are Jews who take strong exception to the kind of history being written by former members of the Stalinist security forces who have taken refuge in the West and pass off their accomplishments with great pride and personal satisfaction. Among them is Simon Wiesenthal who stated, "I always say that I know what kind of role Jewish communists played in Poland after the war. And just as I, as a Jew, do not want to shoulder responsibility for the Jewish communists, I cannot blame 36 million Poles for those thousands of *szmalcownicy*" (i.e., blackmailers of Jews during the German occupation).[569] Unfortunately, there are not many fair-minded persons like Wiesenthal when it comes to Poles. While disowning Jewish Communists, Jews are quick to assign collective responsibility to the Poles for the actions of Polish blackmailers, denouncers and policemen, even though this tiny, unrepresentative minority also endangered Christian Poles and there were such people among the Jews themselves who endangered both Jews and Poles. Few Jews recall the fate of the Poles in the postwar period. An exception is Dora Kacnelson, who recalled with sadness, "In the years 1947–1949, I lived in Wilno and personally witnessed round-ups of innocent Polish women and men, and saw trucks loaded with AK members captured in the forests by the KGB."[570]

There are many Jewish testimonies that bear witness to the fact that many Jews were welcomed and enjoyed proper relations with their Polish neighbours in the postwar period.[571] These testimonies belie the

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Communists, and Jewish Communists," in András Kovács and Eszter Andor, eds., *Jewish Studies at the Central European University* (Budapest: Central European University, 2000), 119–33. Ruta Pragier also develops this theme in a series of interviews with Polish Jewish in Ruta Pragier, *Żydzi czy Polacy* (Warsaw: Rytm, 1992), passim. See also Stefan Morawski's views in Anna Mieszczanek, ed., *Krajobraz po szoku,* 2nd edition (Warsaw: Przedświt, 1989), 20; Andrzej Wróblewski, *Być Żydem…: Rozmowa z Dagiem Halvorsenem o Żydach i antysemityzmie Polaków* (Warsaw: Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1992), 181. Michael Schudrich, rabbi of Warsaw and Łódź, recently stated: "We Jews have to acknowledge that there were Jews in the service of the Communists, or even the Nazis, who committed crimes against the Poles, and also against other Jews. … the time has come for us Jews to feel and understand the Polish pain in order for the Poles to feel and understand our pain." See "Rabin Schudrich: Nie ma konfliktu ws. ekshumacji," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, May 23, 2001.

[569] Interview with Simon Wiesenthal, Radio Free Europe (Munich), January 7, 1989, as cited in Bartoszewski, *The Convent at Auschwitz*, 30.

[570] Letter to the editor, *Nowy Przegląd Wszechpolski* (Lublin), no. 5–6 (1996): 39.

[571] Henryk Schönker recalls that his parents, industrialists, were well received by their neighbours and the Polish community on their return to Oświęcim. Henryk, the only Jew in his high school, was well liked by his teachers, including the priest who taught religion, and had many friends among his fellow students. See Henryk Schönker, *Dotknięcie anioła* (Warsaw: Ośrodek Karta, 2005), 292–96, 299. Josef Malczyk, a teenager who survived the war working for Poles as a farmhand, was turned away by Jewish acquaintances after the war and welcomed warmly by former Polish neighbours from Warsaw. He returned to the farm where he worked during the German occupation before registering with the Jewish Committee in 1946. See his testimony in Alina Skibińska and Robert Szuchta, eds., *Wybór źródeł do nauczania o zagładzie Żydów na okupowanych ziemiach polskich* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2010), 456–57. See also the following: Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust*, 187–88; Testimony of Benjamin Fisk, Part 30, November 8, 1982, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, University of Michigan at Dearborn, Internet: <http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/fiskb> (Sosnowiec); Samuel Honig, *Reunions: Echoes of the Holocaust, Pre-War and Post-War Stories* (Windsor, Ontario: Benchmark Publishing & Design Inc., 2000), 97, 140 (Kraków); Wolgelernter, *The Unfinished Diary*, 416 (in Działoszyce, "some kindhearted Polish neighbors were genuinely happy to see us"). See also the testimonies of Diana Grünbaum, Dalek Ruder, Helena Drobner, Jochwed Kantorowicz, Menasze Opozdower noted in Alina Skibińska, "Powroty ocalałych i stosunek do nich społeczeństea polskiego," in Feliks Tych and Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska, eds., *Następstwa zagłady Żydów: Polska 1944–2010* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej and Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im.

claim of universal hostility toward Jewish survivors, an unwarranted stereotype pushed to the extreme by authors such as American sociologist Jan Gross. Mila Sandberg, who returned to her native town of Zaleszczyki after passing as Christians with the help of a number of Poles, recalled:

> Our home itself had not been demolished during the fighting, but all the wooden galleries in the back of the house had vanished, burned for fuel. We were happy to find our old tenant and friend, Mrs. Zajaczkowska [Zajączkowska], was still living there. She welcomed us with hugs and tears. We stayed with her for a few days. By some fortunate coincidence, two rooms and a kitchen on the lower floor became vacant. We promptly moved in with our bundles. … When news of our arrival spread … Our Zaleszczyki [Polish] neighbours came by to welcome us. People brought furniture, clothes and other necessities. Before leaving for the ghetto, Ecia had left many of her belongings, such as feather pillows and pots and pans, with Pawlinka. Knowing that Ecia would never return, Pawlinka gave them to us. Dziunka Nedilenko, Lola's best friend, dropped off some cutlery, dishes, glasses, and clothes. Karola gave us some cornmeal and eggs tied in her kerchief. Matykowa, who used to do our laundry, brought a bundle of food. So did Mrs. Terlecka, to whom my mother gave homemade preserves. Mrs. Zajaczkowska, our old tenant who had been living there since before the war, gave us beds and other furniture. Lola's friend Dziunka greeted us with these words: "We knew you were alive; we were expecting you."[572]

Alex (Joshua) Levin recalled his return to his and his brother's hometown Rokitno, in Volhynia:

> When Samuel and I and some other survivors finally gathered in Rokitno, we numbered only thirty people. …
>
> My brother and I heard the truth about our family's tragic fate and then went to visit the only people we knew in town, the Polish Wrublewski [Wróblewski] family. Our families used to be friends and as children we were sometimes invited to celebrate New Year's at their house and pick candy off the Christmas tree. Now, under the circumstances, they were as kind as they could be. They gave us food and some clothing and let us spend the night.[573]

Hinda Sarashka (Seroszko), who was sheltered by several Polish families, recalled:

> After the liberation, when we returned to Drohiczyn, the Christians greeted us very cordially. I went at once to our house. Poles were living there. I told them that they should leave my abode within two hours. At first they didn't want to, but afterwards they freed up one room. … The teacher

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Emanuela Ringelbluma, 2011), 69–70.

[572] Mila Sandberg-Mesner, *Light From the Shadows* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, 2005), 94.

[573] Alex Levin, *Under the Yellow & Red Stars* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2009), 33–34.

> Ruczaj came and was very happy to see me. Another teacher, Borecki also came. They brought me some clothes and something to eat and drink.
>
> I do not have any cause to complain about the Christians from Drohiczyn. They were all good to me.[574]

Hela Listapad-Izakowicz, who survived with the help of Poles among them Celina Kokowska, who had sheltered her for 16 months, recalled her return to her native Sierpc:

> The war had ended. I returned to my hometown of Sierpc. A shudder went through me as I saw the ruins left behind by the Germans/ the town was empty of Jews. I could no longer meet with my relatives, neighbors and acquaintances.
>
> My former Christian neighbor Mrs. Pataszinsko [Ptasińska or Ptaszyńska] took me in and comforted me. However, I did not want to be dependent on anyone, and, wearing my wooden shoes and linen dress, I went out to look for acquaintances.
>
> I met up with the sisters Celia Izakowicz and Eva Dygola, who had been hidden by Christians and survived by a miracle. The three of us began to do business to earn a livelihood. After a short time, we rented a dwelling in partnership and lived together …[575]

Chana Karpman-Rozenberg, who survived the war with the help of many Christians, recalled her return to Garwolin:

> All of the Christians welcomed me warmly and were even happy that I had survived. However, they did not want to return everything we had left in their safekeeping. …
>
> The first to seek me out was Dr. Świerz. As he did for every Jew who had returned, he also provided me with medical attention. He gave me a letter of recommendation to Dr. Orłowski of the Hospital of the Infant Jesus in Warsaw so that he would not take money from me.[576]

Roman Halter returned to his hometown of Chodecz near Włocławek in May 1945, after surviving imprisonment in several German camps. He was warmly received by Polish family friends who were anxious to return the possessions his parents had entrusted to them.

> I decided not to call on anyone until I had first seen the Podlawskis [Podławskis] at their house … Mrs. Podlawska [Podławska] opened the door.
>
> 'Romek! Come in, come in, my boy!' Oh how thin you look!' She turned and shouted [to her husband], 'Stasiek!' …

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[574] Hinda Sarashka (Blumshtein), "Christians Treated Me Well," in Shtokfish, *Sefer Drohiczyn,* 400–4.

[575] Hela Listapad-Izakowicz, "In the Sierpc Ghetto and in the Camps," in Talmi (Wloka), *The Community of Sierpc,* 447.

[576] Chana Karpman-Rozenberg, "On the Aryan Side," in Zaltsman and Shein, *Garwolin yisker-bukh,* 208–15.

Podlawski emerged from the kitchen … He said nothing when he saw me, but only stared at me in disbelief. Then he embraced me and held me like this for a long while. There were tears in his eyes when he let me go. I was in Chodecz again, the war was over.

Mrs. Podlawska embraced me too …

'Come over here, have a plate of *zur [żur]*. This was the sour soup with potatoes they ate for breakfast. …

'You know, I helped your father and Szlamek bury a bog oak chest,' said Podlawski. 'He filled it with things he bought from your Uncle Ignac and Aunt Sabina's shop … The chest is padlocked and I have the key to it.' …

'Did he tell you about the possessions your parents left with us?'

'No, I don't know anything about that.' …

'Neither my father nor my mother mentioned the clothes, so maybe they intended you to keep what they gave you to hide.'

'No!' said Podlawski emphatically. 'These things belong to the Halter family and I shall only keep what they give me.' …

I asked after Mrs. Podlawska's sister, my lovely wet-nurse Mrs Lewandowska. …

My knock on the door and entrance went unnoticed. I stood there looking at Mrs Lewandowska … Mrs Lewandowska peered over her glasses.

'No, I don't believe it … my little hero is back!' she shouted, and rushed towards me still holding her sewing. She pressed me to her bosom. Her glasses fell off. She kissed me on the forehead and on the cheeks and I kissed and hugged her. …

The young woman got up from the table and stood close by, watching and smiling. It was Jadwiga. … She embraced me and I felt like a child beside her. …

Jadwiga went to the kitchen to prepare something to eat. I followed her and we chatted there. …

'Your father and mother left some belongings with me. Your father had a false bottom made in the chest and only I know how to take it out. You will need these things to set yourself up.' …

'You'll never guess what's in these,' said Mrs Lewandowska, pointing to the chest.

'Your family silverware, the Passover silver and the goblets, you father's manuscripts and his collection of gold coins … and other things … they're all in here, this innocent-looking coffer.' …

From there I went off to visit my old school … I asked a youth standing outside whether he knew Mrs Wisniewska [Wiśniewska] who used to teach there before the war. … I knocked on Mrs. Wisniewska's door …

I remembered the way she smiled the day Mother brought me to school for an interview when I was six. …

'Romek, I'm glad you came to see me. You need my help to think out how you're going to survive on your own.' …

I told her [Jadwiga] about my visit to Mrs. Wisniewska.

'She let you in?'

'Yes, why are you surprised?'

'Because ever since the incident, she refuses to see anyone.'

'What incident?' I asked.

> After the Russians liberated Chodecz, she explained, some of the soldiers had been billeted in the teachers' block. Mrs. Wisniewska was climbing the stairs to her flat one night when a group of drunken soldiers pulled her into their room. Mr. Wisniewski heard her screaming. He thre on his Polish officer's jacket and ran to her rescue with their ten-year-old son.
>
> 'All we know about what happened after that was that the soldiers killed Mr. Wisniewski and the boy. Mrs. Wisniewska hasn't recovered yet,' said Jadwiga. …
>
> On my way back to the Podlawskis, I decided to go and see Marysia Giewis, the local butcher's daughter who had been in my class at school. I had promised to call on her and her family. Marysia was not home. Mrs Giewis and Jadzia, the older daughter, received me warmly.[577]

While members of the local *lumpenproletariat* were not anxious to return abandoned property they acquired during and after the German occupation, it was Roman Halter's half-brother's wife and her lover, a Soviet Jewish officer, who used force and threats to rob him of his inheritance.[578] Similarly, when Ewa Treunstein (Turzyńska) returned to reclaim the family pharmacy in Rozwadów, which had been left to her by her father who died before the war broke out, she found it had been taken over by her uncle, who assaulted her and then petitioned the court for the right to inherit the property based on his niece's alleged death. Her uncle's family also attempted to extort money from her, and even threatened to kidnap her 10-year-old son to accomplish this.[579]

Encounters between survivors and Polish acquaintances were often marked by sympathy, as the following testimonies show:

> Sometimes the returnees are recognized first by local non-Jews. For example, in Zamość, Shefner is stopped by an elderly Pole who asks her politely if she is the daughter of a man named Ashkenazi; Avrum Zimler of Żyrardów is greeted by a young man who tells him that his mother-in-law would be very happy to see him. In other cases, the survivors have to explain to local passersby who they are. Positive encounters with non-Jews are sometimes recorded in detail: Opozdover describes three friendly and moving meetings …[580]

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[577] Roman Halter, *Roman's Journey* (London: Portobello Books, 2007), 224–58.

[578] Ibid., 260–61, 270–72.

[579] Ewa Turzyńska, *Sądzonym mi było żyć…* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Rigelbluma, 2009), 187–89. Ewa Treunstein had been assisted and sheltered by a number of Poles during the war, including three Catholic priests, and was greeted warmly by her Polish benefactors when she returned to Rożyszcze, in Volhynia, after liberation.

[580] Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska, *Patterns of Return: Survivors' Postwar Journeys to Poland,* Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2007, 10. The author also mentions how Poles who lived in an apartment building in Żyrardów whose ownership was transferred to the city, hoped that the Jewish survivor who owned the building before the war would take it over again as the building now suffered neglect. Ibid., 11.

> [Wilczyn near Inowrocław:] We … moved on to the home of a Polish family whose son was an old friend of mone from school. He recognized me right away, and his mother, Mrs. Tomazak, was very nice. She fed us and asked us to stay overnight. We accepted.[581]

Artur Ney, a teenager from Warsaw, recalled an encounter with a woman who used to work at his family's business:

> A woman was standing in another part of the courtyard [in the Praga suburb of Warsaw], in front of a neighbouring building, chopping wood. … I turned back toward the woman and asked her awkwardly if by some chance she knew whether anyone from the Holcman family had survived. If so, did she have any idea where they were? To my astonishment, the woman straightened up, let the huge axe slip from her hands and, after calling on every saint in Christendom, cried out, "Turek! Tureczek!"
>
> She put her arms around me and continued to cry out my name. Disoriented, I repeated my question, not recognizing the woman despite her obvious familiarity with me. She realized that I was at a loss and told me her name was Irka, that she had been one of the foreladies at the plant. ..
>
> Irka invited me upstairs to her apartment to eat something and answer the millions of questions she had for me. The visit was wonderful and filled with emotion on both sides.[582]

Since he had no surviving family, Artur Ney decided to return to the Salesian Fathers, who had sheltered him during the German occupation. He stayed at their orphanage in Zielone near Głosków, outside Warsaw, for more than a year after the war. He recalled, "The priests knew that I was Jewish but they didn't treat me any differently." In particular, he had fond memories of Fr. Henryk Ignaczewski, the director of the orphanage.

Shiye Goldberg, who hailed from a suburb of Lublin, had some difficulty with "tenants" who had occupied his abandoned properties, but also encountered much sympathy and helpfulness along the way as he reestablished himself as a successful merchant. Among those he turned to for assistance were Home Army members:

> "Let's go and see Kzhyzhanovsky [Krzyżanowski]," I said to Yanek. Kzhyzhanovsky was the custodian of a new house on Ogrodowa Street. …
>
> Kzhyzhanovsky's wife saw me and burst into tears. She helped me wash myself and gave me a shirt. I mentioned that my wife had left her fur coat. She admitted it readily.
>
> "My daughter had it resown to fit her, but now that you're alive you can have it back." I didn't take it. We had some tea, and each of us received a jacket …
>
> They were at a loss what to do. My ownership was indisputable, but they had nowhere to go. … the housing problem was severe since most of the dwellings had been demolished by the Germans.

[581] Landau, *Branded on My Arm and on My Soul*, 112.

> I was finally able to be rid of the Polish squatters. …
>
> In the municipal offices I picked up the two registration books which every landlord had to keep as well as the stamp. The officials were glad to return the items to me because the mayor at that time was Kadury, one of my Gentile friends …
>
> I knew the Land Registry Office would corroborate my claim. I went to the man who sold me the lot, an upstanding Christian (a sergeant) by the name of Zolman. … He took me to Smerdlowa:
>
> "You ought to be ashamed of yourself," he chided her. "Is this how a Christian woman should act? How dare you claim that you bought the lot?"
>
> … I had the Land Registry abstract with me, and Zolman was also on hand to back up my statement. The judges ordered Smerdlowa to remove herself from the lot. It was my property.
>
> My former tenants were living there and even though they were highly-placed members of the Armya Krayowa [Armia Krajowa] (among them Pawlowsky [Pawłowski], who gave me the job in the factory), I felt that I could trust them. …
>
> My Christian friends in Stettin [Szczecin] welcomed my wife with open arms … My friends decided to send a special manager [to Lublin] to fetch me—the woman chairman of the Armya Krayowa. In her company I wouldn't be harmed.[583]

The so-called "Jewish question" was not an all-pervasive obsession and only a tiny portion of graffiti and the like touched on this issue.[584] It would therefore be erroneous to conclude that, just because someone was part of the 200,000-strong anti-Communist underground or was opposed to the Soviet-imposed regime, such a person was openly hostile toward Jews, let alone wanted to harm them. Jews who left their homes in the province of Volhynia, which was incorporated into the Soviet Union, were taken in by a family who were Home Army supporters when they sought refuge in Chełm, a town on the Polish side of the new Polish-Soviet border. Like most Polish rescuers, this Pole never received formal recognition from Yad Vashem.

> Our first station was Chelm [Chełm]. In Chelm, there was a Pole by the name of Zwolak who was known to be a good man since he had saved 2 Jewish sisters. He and his wife took care of these girls as though they were their own daughters. He also had a son, a young fellow who was involved with the "Armia Krayova," [sic] … but one thing was sure—he had wonderful relations with his father's Jews.
>
> For most of the Jews arriving from Russia to Chelm, the first stop was Zwolak. He had only one room, a kitchen and 3 beds, one for the Zwolak couple, one for the son, and one for the 2 sisters.

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[582] Arthur Ney, *W Hour* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2014), 150.

[583] Goldberg, *The Undefeated*, 201–202, 203–204, 206, 214–15, 229–31. Goldberg fell afoul of the authorities for his involvement in illegal schemes with the military. Imprisoned in the Lublin prison, whose chief was a Jew, he was eventually released.

[584] Łukasz Kamiński, *Polacy wobec nowej rzeczywistości, 1944–1948* (Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 2000), 29, 44, 48. For example, only 2.36 percent of graffiti made mention of Jews.

> Every inch of the floor was taken up by Jewish refugees. Zwolak never refused any Jew and even shared his food with them. He did not ask for any reward.[585]

Izhak Shumowitz, who ran a very profitable bakery in Czerwony Bór near Zambrów before the war, recalled the warm welcome he and other Jews received when they arrived in the village of Skudosze, near his hometown:

> Villagers came running up to us crying, "Scharfman, Nachman Scharfman!"
>
> We found out that these were villagers who knew Nachman well. They approached us in a state of great excitement, grabbing hold of Nachman shaking his hands and slapping him on the back, thrilled to see that he was alive. Immediately they began to question us, where had we been and how had we survived?[586]

Shumowitz traces the fortunes of three brothers from Zambrów through the Soviet and German occupations, and then in Stalinist Poland. Shumowitz also traces the fortunes of some local Jewish Communists, the Stupnik brothers from Zambrów, through the Soviet and German occupations, and then in Stalinist Poland.

> One of fellow citizens who lived nearby was a shoemaker, with many close connections with the villagers in the region. He had three young nephews in Zambrov [Zambrów] who used to visit him from time to time. In the past, these men had been fervent communists, active and gifted. In the days of the Soviet regime, one of them was appointed Commissar of the Zambrov province. When the Germans arrived in Zambrov, these young men fled to their uncle in Chervony Bur [Czerwony Bór], who managed to find shelter for his nephews, each in a different place. …
>
> This was a very moving meeting for me, for we met with no less than the three Stupnick brothers, with whom we had started collecting arms, and dreamt of forming a group that would fight for its existence. …
>
> Each member of the group was armed with a gun supplied by the Stupnick brothers. …
>
> The Stupnicks were in the habit of going to the pigpens of the villagers, and stealing some of the animals. They had worked out their won methods of overcoming the animals and silencing them during this operation. That night, we joined them in their operations, and we returned to the bunker at Gosk's farm with a load of meat and other food supplies. …

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[585] Esther Kramer, "The Story of Manyevitz and Our Family," in Yehuda Merin, ed., *Memorial Book: The Jewish Communities of Manyevitz, Horodok, Lishnivka, Troyanuvka, Povursk and Kolki (Wolyn Region)* (Tel Aviv: Shlomo Levy, 2004), 258.

[586] Teyer, eds., *The Red Forest,* 195. Shumowitz describes how a Pole hiding in bunker during the German retreat turned on him with a knife when he tried remove the Pole's food supplies. A group of Poles came to the assistance of Shumowitz. Ibid., 197–98. Schumowitz also recounts the hostile treatment he and his companion received from the NKVD, who accused the "dirty Jews" of being spies and beat them viciously to get a confession out of them. They managed to escape with the help of friendly Poles. Ibid., 204–10.

> Our stay here [in Zambrów] was naturally of a temporary nature, our sights were set for Israel. Perhaps that is the reason why I was furious when I heard that the Stupnick brothers had returned to their communist activities. We thought of Communism and Nazism as similar evils, and even though the divide between them was great, the Soviets were in no small degree responsible for our sufferings. It was difficult to come to terms with those who try to overlook, or to forget this chapter of history.[587]

Jews frequently came forward on behalf of, and even testified in court for clemency for, members of the Polish underground who had rescued them during the German occupation and now faced punishment because of their pro-independence activities.[588] It was not unusual for Poles to face trumped-up charges of having murdered Soviet partisans and Jews, as such charges were levelled routinely against members of the Home Army and the National Armed Forces. The following example is but one illustration.

> The Red Army arrived, accompanied by the NKVD, and that signalled the beginning of deportations to Russia of resistance fighters from the Polish Home Army and the National Armed Forces. One day, secret policemen from the Security Bureau in Rytwiany came to [local Home Army commander Bronisław] Rzepecki's apartment. Fortunately, he was not at home.
>
> That was when Rzepecki tracked down Józef Mandelman, who was staying in Leżajsk with his family. Mandelman agreed to travel to Lublin to meet with Józef Maślanko, who had become a minister in the provisional government there. Maślanko heard him out, and then called in an NKVD officer and requested that Rzepecki's name be crossed off the list of people accused of having murdered Russian commandos and Jews. Mandelman told the Russian about how Rzepecki had saved his life. Rzepecki's name was removed from the list, and Maślanko wrote a letter to the Security Bureau in Busko, asking them to leave Rzepecki alone. He also wrote to the government of Kielce province and recommended that a job be found for this good citizen of people's Poland.[589]

Not only does this phenomenon undermine the stereotypical view pushed by some historians of Polish partisans as vicious anti-Semites, but also shatters the notion pushed by those same historians that ordinary Jews were downtrodden and scorned by the authorities. Few Poles enjoyed such influence with well-placed henchmen of the Stalinist regime.

On the other hand, apart from some cases of communal social ostracism, Jews have generally overlooked the deeds of those (many) Jews who had collaborated with the Nazis to the detriment of their own people.

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[587] Teyer, eds., *The Red Forest,* 88, 169, 193, 219.

[588] For some examples see Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust,* 187–99; Janusz Wróbel, "W cieniu Holocaustu: Odrodzenie społeczności żydowskiej w Łódzkiem po II wojnie światowej," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 11 (November 2005): 34–35; Elżbieta Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945* (Rzeszów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), 146 (Rev. Henryk Uchman of Michałówka), 252–53 (Rev. Jan Zarzycki, a Home Army chaplain from Rymanów).

[589] Zbigniew Pakula, *The Jews of Poznań* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003), 42.

Nor do they allow the phenomenon Jewish collaboration to affect their assessment of the conduct of the Poles because of the activities of *some* Poles. Only rarely did Jews in Poland strike out at collaborators in their midst. Yankel (Jack) Pomerantz, who fled to the Soviet zone and returned to Poland with the Soviet army, describes coming to Łódz in May 1945 to search for family members.

> As we were arriving in the city, I watched a group of Jews converge on one man. He had been a Jewish 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, 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.[590]

There is no indication that the authorities took any action against the assailants.

Historian Piotr Wróbel has posed the following pointed questions: "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."[591]

On a Collision Course with Poles

The continued presence of the Soviet military was a *sine qua non* for the Soviet-installed Communist regime—which had very little popular support—to retain power in "liberated" Poland. The NKVD was a particularly important instrument in this regard. Created especially for the task of liquidating the Polish underground, its 64th Division arrested some 17,000 people by the end of 1944. In the period from January 1945 to August 1946, more than 3,400 resistance fighters were arrested (most of whom were sent to camps), and an additional 47,000 people were detained for interrogation. Thousands of Poles were deported to the Soviet interior.[592] The bulk of the fighting carried out by pro-independence underground formations during this period was with NKVD units, not with their Polish puppets.

The scale of repressions during the Stalinist era was massive. Between 1944 and 1956, approximately 350,000 Poles passed through the hands of the Communist security forces, 150,000 received harsh prison sentences, and 8,000 death sentences were passed for political reasons. Moreover, at least 20,000 Poles were killed while in detention or during investigations and perhaps as many as 25,000 perished in various

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[590] Pomerantz and Winik, *Run East,* 158.

[591] Piotr Wróbel, "The *Judenräte* Controversy: Some Polish Aspects," *The Polish Review* 42, no. 2 (1997): 225–32. See also Gabriel N. Finder and Alexander V. Prusin, "Jewish Collaborators on Trial in Poland, 1944–1956," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 20 (2008): 123–48; Wroński and Zwolakowa, eds., *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, 304–305; Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1972), 548–69; Idith Zertal, "Izrael wobec ofiar Holocaustu," *Gazeta Wyborcza,* February 16, 2002.

[592] Andrzej Paczkowski, "Poland, the 'Enemy Nation,'" in Courtois, et al., *The Black Book of Communism,* 374.

circumstances during the consolidation of Communist power. It is estimated that about 100,000 Poles, about half of them former Home Army members, were deported to the Gulag in 1944–1945.[593] It is against this backdrop that relations between Polish society and the regime and its supporters must be assessed.

The true face and grim reality of "liberated Poland" was not difficult to discern for those with a modicum of sensitivity. Russell R. Johnston, who came to Warsaw in August 1945, and remained until the following April in the employ of the American Red Cross, recalled what was in plain view to anyone with eyes to see:

> I've been in Warsaw just two weeks, but already I'm convinced it is a captive city—that the Russians have taken over and are here to stay. The evidence is grim and everywhere to see. … [No sooner had the Soviets entered Poland than:] … A reign of terror followed, and opposing patriotic groups and political parties were manhandled, murdered, and deported. … And, most significant and tragic, I've seen the hurried groups of white-faced citizens of the so-called upper class being hustled through the early morning streets by the Russian NKVD.[594]

The systematic sacking of Poland by the Soviet "allies" was blatantly obvious. Every day, Johnston saw truck caravans going eastward, carrying looted Polish goods that included everything from bicycles to heavy machinery to farm animals. When in former East Prussia, he saw that "the Red Army soldiers stationed here have helped themselves to everything that could move." The pervasiveness of lawlessness was directly attributable to Soviet rule which bred crime: "Banditry … is on an increasing scale, and no man's belongings are safe from thieves, or from Russian soldiers."[595] The privations of the people shocked the author:

> The worst in Europe, in fact. The people on the farms especially had little or nothing to carry them through the winter. First the Nazis and then the Russians had taken about anything and everything that could be moved. Besides that, most of the fields were still planted with land mines.[596]

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[593] Leszek Żebrowski, "Partyjne oddziały partyzanckie: Bandy pozorowe 1944–1947," *Gazeta Polska,* November 7, 1996; Leszek Żebrowski, "Działalność tzw. band pozorowanych jako metoda zwalczania podziemia niepodległościowego w latach 1944–1947," in *Skryte oblicze systemu komunistycznego,* 80–81; Kunert and Stolarski, eds., *"Bijące serce partii"*; Mirosław Golon, *Polityka radzieckich władz wojskowych i policyjnych na Pomorzu Nadwiślańskim w latach 1945–1947* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2001); Krzysztof Madej, Jan Żaryn, and Jacek Żurek, eds., *Księga świadectw: Skazani na karę śmierci w czasach stalinowskich i ich losy* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2003); Grzegorz Baziur, *Armia Czerwona na Pomorzu Gdańskim 1945–1947* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2003). Russian historians have arrived at lower estimates. For example, Aleksandr Gurianov believes that, between 1944–1945, the NKVD was responsible for the deportation of 39,000–48,000 Polish citizens from the territory of the truncated Polish state (i.e., without the Eastern Borderlands), of whom 17,000 were members of the anti-Nazi underground. See Aleksander Gurjanow, "Sowieckie represje wobec Polaków i obywateli polskich w latach 1936–1956 w świetle danych sowieckich," in Jasiewicz, *Europa nieprowincjonalna,* 980.

[594] Russell R. Johnston, *Poland 1945: A Red Cross Diary* (Philadelphia: Dorrance and Company, 1973), 118, 159.

[595] Ibid., 118, 136.

[596] Ibid., 111.

According to investigations by the American Red Cross, overall, over two and a half million Polish children were dangerously undernourished, five million children had inadequate food, and the infant mortality rate was a staggering 25%.[597] The situation for Poles expelled by the Soviets from Poland's Eastern Teritories was particularly acute, like those Johnston witnessed arriving in East Prussia:

> Those riding in boxcars will have to pay a fee of two hundred zlotys [złoty], while those who can't pay this fee must ride on open flatcars exposed to thewind and snow. The only belongings they'll be allowed to bring with them willbe what they can carry. … The poor devils on the flatcars will be living like that for days, maybe weeks—who can say? … They'll literally freeze to death … others will contract pneumonia and die later on. Polish winters can be hell."[598]

It is against this bleak background that respect for human rights of all those who found themselves on Polish territories—whether Poles, Jews, Germans, Ukrainians or Belorussians—must be measured.

Unlike ethnic Poles, most of whom were prevented from leaving Polish territory incorporated into the Soviet Republics of Lithuania and Belorussia,[599] Jews who found themselves in the Soviet Union rarely faced such restrictions in moving to Poland, including those who had enthusiastically greeted the Soviets in September 1939 in the Eastern Borderlands. At least 140,000 Jews returned to Poland from the Soviet Union in the first half of 1946,[600] without any apparent obstacles.[601] Of the 198,000 Polish citizens who

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[597] Ibid., 168.

[598] Ibid., 136–37.

[599] Of the approximately 376,000 Poles in the newly constituted Lithuanian SSR who registered for "repatriation" to Poland (whose boundaries had shifted westward), only some 178,000 were permitted to go, whereas the number of Jews who left for Poland (almost 17,000) exceeded many times the number who had registered for "repatriation." Similar restrictions applied to the Polish population of the Belorussian SSR where hundreds of thousands of Poles who had registered were not allowed to leave. See Stanisław Ciesielski, ed., *Przesiedlenie ludności polskiej z Kresów Wschodnich do Polski, 1944–1947* (Warsaw: Neriton and Instytut Historii PAN, 1999), 24, 30–31; Alicja Paczoska, *Dzieci Jałty: Exodus ludności polskiej z Wileńszczyzny w latach 1944–1947* (Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 2002), passim; Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, "Stosunki narodowościowe w latach 1939–1948 na obszarze tzw. Zachodniej Białorusi," and Aleksander Srebrakowski, "Zmiany składu narodowościowego w części Wileńszczyzny wcielonej do Litwy w okresie II wojny światowej," in Ciesielski, *Przemiany narodowościowe na Kresach Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej 1931–1948,* 297–314, 342–47; A. F. [Anatol Fiodaravich] Vialiki, *Na razdarozhzhy: Belarusy i paliaki u chas perasialennia, 1944–1946 hh.: Manahrafiia* (Minsk: BDPU, 2005). Some of the obstacles put in the way of Poles are described in Jerzy Kochanowski, "Gathering Poles into Poland: Forced Migration from Poland's Former Eastern Territories," in Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, eds., *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944–1948* (Lanham, Maryland: Bownman & Littlefield, 2001), 141–42; Krzysztof Jodczyk, "Migracje Polaków z Wileńszczyzny na powojenne terytorium Polski (1944–1955), in Zwolski, *Exodus,* 136–48; Ahonen, et al., *People on the Move,* 102–3. The Soviet authorities continued to prevent the departure of many Poles who wanted to leave Belarus during the subsequent "repatriation" in 1956–1957. See Anatol F. Vialiki, *Belarus—Polshcha u XX stahoddzi: Neviadomaia repatryiatsyia,1955–1959 hh.: Manahrafiia* (Minsk : BDPU, 2007)

[600] Albert Stankowski, "Nowe spojrzenie na statystyki dotyczące emigracji Żydów z Polski po 1944 roku," in Grzegorz Berendt, August Grabski, and Albert Stankowski, *Studia z historii Żydów w Polsce po 1945 r.* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2000), 103–51, especially at 108.

[601] Unlike Poles, Jews were generally free to leave Lithuania for Poland and did so in large numbers, with some 17,000 "repatriating" in 1945–1947. See Aleksander Srebrakowski, "Zmiany składu narodowościowego w części

were allowed to leave the Lithuanian SSR, 8.6 percent were Jews despite their massively depleted numbers, whereas a majority of the ethnic Poles who had opted for "repatriation" were denied permission to leave the Soviet Union.[602] A well-organized and well-financed Jewish underground network arranged, with the help of well-placed Jews in the Soviet and Polish army, for the illegal migration of hundreds of Jews who were citizens of prewar Lithuania. Although they did not speak Polish, they were furnished with bogus documents showing them to be Polish citizens.[603] Other Jews resorted to illegal means to expedite their departure from the Soviet Union:

> The most exciting news was about her encounter with Zionist-oriented people, who told Mother that preparations were being made to transfer illegally the survivors of the Holocaust to Eretz Yisroel as soon as the war was over. In the meantime, it was crucial to remove them from Russian-occupied territory and concentrate them in the west. It was necessary, therefore, for us to be registered as Polish citizens, if we intended to join in this exodus. …
>
> Father had no problem changing the data on our registration form, stating our birthplace as the city of Breslau, Poland. …
>
> Although officially the Russians permitted Poles to return to Poland, in effect they took their time about it. The Jewish leadership was aware of this and organized their own system of expediting this process, because every minute was precious and they knew that they did not have the luxury of waiting for official channels to permit the exodus. It was a credit to the ingenuity that is sometimes attributed to our people. It took about two weeks, until one evening we were told to go to the train station. About ten of us were quickly and quietly pushed into a freight car and told not to worry; we would be taken care of on the way and we must maintain silence whenever the train came to a halt. The instructions were repeated several times and the door of the freight train closed.
>
> As the freight train began to move … I felt a mixture of elation and fear as the train carried us into the uncertainty of the future. … I was heading towards fulfilling my dream of living in Eretz Yisroel. The fear was … of the possibility that we would be prevented from pursuing our goal. …

Wileńszczyzny wcielonej do Litwy w okresie II wojny światowej," in Ciesielski, *Przemiany narodowościowe na Kresach Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej 1931–1948,* 346–47. According to one report, the Communist regime even interceded to facilitate the return of Bundists to Poland. See Blatman, *For Our Freedom and Yours,* 175–76.

[602] Krzysztof Jodczyk, "Migracje Polaków z Wileńszczyzny na powojenne terytorium Polski (1944–1955), in Zwolski, *Exodus*, 143.

[603] Johanan Sztul, a partisan from Rudniki forest who obtained a lucrative position in Soviet Lithuania, collaborated with Nisan Resnik, Abba Kovner, and others, in the transfer of some 500 Lithuanian Jews to Poland. Sztul supplied them with bogus documents identifying them as Christian Poles, even though many of them did not speak Polish. Once inside Poland, when their train stopped in small stations on the way to Lublin, they were able to acquire food and provisions from farmers without any problems. See Miguel Sztul, "*Janek*, el partisano"… Mi padre," *Nuestra Memoria* (Buenos Aires), no. 26 (December 2005): 217–47, here at 242–44. Zelda Nisanilvich Treger worked closely with Abba Kovner, her former partisan leader, to smuggle groups of Lithuanian Jews into Poland with forged documents showing them to be Polish citizens. See Ziva Shalev, "Zelda Nisanilevich Treger," *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*, March 1, 2009, Jewish Women's Archive, Internet: <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/treger-zelda-nisanilevich>. For other examples of Jews from prewar Lithuanian who left for Poland using fraudulent documents, see Rhoda G. Lewin, ed., *Witnesses to the Holocaust: An Oral History* (Boston: Twayne, 1990), 55; Aba Gefen, *Defying the Holocaust: A Diplomat's Report* (San Bernardino, California: Borgo Press, 1993), 88; Nancy Wright Beasley, *Izzy's Fire: Finding Humanity in the Holocaust* (Richmond, Virginia: Palari Publishing, 2008), 185–86, 257.

These freight trains were carrying spoils of war into Russia that significantly bolstered her economy. They traveled empty to the west and returned to Russia with everything people could lay their hands on. … There was a special branch of the armed forces, which was in charge of these activities. From stories I later learned, the technical and administrative requirements of this branch were such that it included the talents of many Jews. These people were in a position to help in this secret exodus, as well as non-Jews who were sympathetic to our cause. There were always those who were in a position to help if the price was right. Bribes were important because it implicated them and thus purchased their silence. …

It was daylight when the train made its first stop. … The door was opened and we were told in Polish, by a man wearing a railway uniform, that we could get off to stretch our legs. … We also discovered that there were more people like us on the train, so there were about fifty of us milling about quietly in the rail yard. Eventually a man appeared with another small group of refugees. This man was evidently in charge. Although previously everybody had kept silent, as soon as there was somebody in authority, the complaints came pouring out. … When he noticed my father, who had managed to organize a minyan, conducting the morning services in the yard, he quickly told him that such a thing was not possible in public, for the safety of the group, and that they should move to the confines of the freight car. …

The food came and was distributed as promised. We were told to get on the train and it began to move. It was evidently not in any particular hurry to reach whatever destination it was heading for. …

Some days later the train came to a halt in a large rail yard, in the city of Lublin. We expected the usual procedure, but this time we were warned to keep quiet and the doors remained closed. Unfortunately, a lady in one of the cars was in the process of giving birth, and her excruciating labor pains resulted in screams which did not escape the ears of a Russian officer, who was not party to the scheme. … Within a short time, all of us were standing under the watchful eyes of his soldiers. While the officer, angry and confused, tried to get to the bottom of this situation that had fallen into his hands.

We were forewarned that in the event of a confrontation such as this we were not to divulge any information beyond the fact that we were going home, and that this was to be done in Polish. The help of an interpreter did not advance the officer's knowledge of how we had got into these sealed freight cars. … The first sign of hope materialized when some civilians in the company of a high-ranking Russian officer and some soldiers approached the arresting officer. One of the civilians produced an official-looking paper stating that a consignment of human cargo was to be placed into his hands. These were Polish citizens who, as a reward for their contributions to Russia, were entitled to early repatriation. The new officer commended his comrade for his vigilance in executing his duty and told him that this incident would be fully noted before his superiors.

At the same time he suggested that the first officer should return to his duties of loading the train, and not waste any more of his valuable time on these civilians. While this exchange was going on, we were quickly broken up into small groups and told to follow one of the civilians, before the arresting officer could regain control and begin asking questions to satisfy his own curiosity. Within a short time we were spread out in various hiding places in the city, especially in the few Jewish homes.

> On the same night, we were gathered together and put on a different train to continue our journey. …
>
> Our trip ended several days later in the city of Katowice. There we were placed in private homes. … We were allotted a certain amount of money, by the people who brought us, for our food, and we had some rubles—which were legal tender even in Poland at the time—that we had saved in Ratno. …
>
> The organization that took care of us obviously had financial resources. Each time it was a different person from the organization who located us and offered us money for subsistence. We had no idea who these people were or where to find them. They continually told us to have patience: they would tell us when to be ready to move at an instant's notice. …
>
> We received new identification papers, and this time not only was our birthplace incorrect, but also our names sounded Greek to me. … Since Greeks who had been interned in concentration camps in eastern Europe would have to take the same route in order to return to their homeland, we were now their imposters. …
>
> As 'genuine' Greeks, we boarded a passenger train heading for the city of Prague. [604]

While Poles continued to be imprisoned and deported to the Gulag by the tens of thousands after the "liberation," Jews were rarely imprisoned for political reasons and few, if any, were deported to the Gulag. Especially after the events in Kielce in July 1946, but even earlier, Jews were allowed to leave Poland in large numbers, albeit semi-legally, in the so-called Bricha.[605] Jewish emigration, which was funded largely

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[604] Laizer Blitt, *No Strength to Forget: Survival in the Ukraine, 1941–1944* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), 157–65.

[605] An estimated 48,000 Jews left Poland between August 1945 and June 1946, with the exodus increasing after that date. British and American reports from that period attest to the extent of the coordination, connections, influence, web of deceit, bribery and resources required for that operation, which undoubtedly also included the collaboration of Jews within the American occupation authorities and military. According to Douglas, *Orderly and Humane*, 158–59:

> Major Frederick Boothby, commander of the British Liaison at Kaławsk (today's Węgliniec), a railhead seven miles east of the new Polish-German frontier, eyed [German] expellee train No. 165, as it pulled up to the platform on the evening of May 18, 1946, with considerable suspicion. The first curious thing he noticed was the unusually large quantity of personal effects, including "everything from commodes to double beds," that the expellees had been permitted to take with them. In contrast to most Germans arriving from Poland, they were without exception well nourished and adequately clothed. Furthermore, practically all of them appeared to be Jewish. Lacking the facilities to examine the documents of all 1,572 people on board, he sent the train onward to its destination with a request that the authorities at the point of arrival check it and its passengers carefully. The British Army contingent at the Marienthal transit camp in Lower Saxony, who did so, found that Major Boothy's reservations were amply justified. By the time it reached Marienthal the train had acquired an additional 456 passengers, presumably placed on board somewhere between Kaławsk and the frontier. The supposed expellees were accompanied by a thirty-four-year-old man named Günther Sternberg from Wrocław [Breslau], who wore a homemade UNRRA armband and whose identity papers, purporting to have been issued by a "Captain Baker, Royal Signals, U.S. Army," gave the camp authorities still more reason to question his bona fides. Field Security officers promptly placed Sternberg under arrest, but persuading the "expellees" to leave the train proved a far more difficult matter. All of them appeared "surprised to learn on arrival that they were going to be treated as refugees" and refused to cooperate. In the end, for the first time in Marienthal's history it was necessary to call out a company of the Yorkshire and Lancashire Regiment to induce them to obey order. The soldiers had a great deal of trouble disinfecting and registering the passengers, a process that took nine hours and revealed that only 56 of the more than 2,000 persons were genuine expellees.

by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, was coordinated with the Security Service[606] and facilitated by Communist officials as well as by Jews serving in the Polish and Soviet armies.[607] Endangered Poles had no such possibilities. (Jews also left Bulgaria in large number, even though that the Jews of that country had been spared during the Holocaust.) Jewish organizations scrupulously complied with the authorities' orders to weed out any Poles who tried to escape by passing as Jews.[608] Naturally, this

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> Sternberg, under interrogation, acknowledged having forged identity papers for 180 of his charges, and having sold them seats on the train in Warsaw at a rate of five to six hundred dollars per head. The final piece of the puzzle fell into place the following morning when a Dr. Stanek of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, a New York-based relief and emigration agency, put in an appearance. He explained that he had made arrangements with the American authorities for the passengers, Polish Jews, to proceed southward to Oberammergau in the U.S. zone and thence to Palestine. A freight ticket was produced showing that the train had been chartered in Poland for a fee of RM 26,152 ($2,600), which also had been paid for its complement of Polish Army guards. Unable or unwilling to pursue the matter further with thousands of additional expellees following hot on train No. 165's heels, the Marienthal officers passed the émigrés along the line and released Sternberg to continue his journey to the U.S. zone. Nine weeks later, the American authorities reported that they knew nothing of the train or its passengers, and had granted them no facilities to travel to the U.S. zone or anywhere else.
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> This intersection of expulsion and entrepreneurialism was in no respect extraordinary. Indeed, just seven weeks later, another "train No. 165"—a number seemingly particularly favored by people-smugglers—arrived at Marienthal. This transport contained seventeen hundred passengers, all of whom carried documents identifying them as expellee German Jews from the Recovered Territories and visas authorizing them to travel onward to Le Havre in France to the United States. Once again, British suspicions were raised. … The camp staff at Marienthal interviewed a cross-section of the passengers and found that "practically everyone had paid the sum of 30 U.S. dollars for the passage on this train." Once again, however, the new arrivals were sent onward for processing "as nothing could be proved that they were not genuine German [expellees] although there is good reason to believe that many of the papers were forged."

[606] Shimon Redlich, *Life in Transit: Jews in Postwar Lodz, 1945–1950* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2010), 156.

[607] Stefan Grajek describes how Abba Kovner, Vitka Kempner, Tsivia Lubetkin, and Eliezer Lidowski were arrested at the border as they tried to leave Poland in March 1945 with forged Greek documents; a Jewish officer released them and allowed them to cross into Czechoslovakia. See Stefan Grajek, *Po wojnie i co dalej: Żydzi w Polsce w latach 1945–1949* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2003), 19. Chaim Zylberklang was part of a group of twenty Jews whose departure to Czechoslovakia was overseen by a Polish army lieutenant. See Zylberklang, *Z Żółkiewki do Erec Israel*, 113. After joining the Soviet army, Shlomo Berger used his uniform and some fellow Soviet soldiers to assist the Bricha movement and Jewish Committee to transport Jews posing as Greek nationals out of Poland. See Ronald J. Berger, *Constructing a Collective Memory of the Holocaust: A Life History of Two Brothers' Survival* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1995), 96–97. A Soviet officer used a Soviet military transport truck to smuggle Jews from Szczecin (Stettin) to Berlin. See Freiberg, *Tor Survive Sobibor*, 490–91. Survivors from Siemiatycze and Drohiczyn were put on Soviet Army trucks and driven across the border into Czechoslovakia. See Zoltak, *My Silent Pledge*, 107. Only in extremely rare cases did Jews in the service of the NKVD turn against those who tried to escape. The brothers Dov and Ze'ev Avrach from Maniewicze, in Volhynia, recall one such incident: "We decided to leave Rovno [Równe]. We met with activists from the group 'Bricha,' who smuggled us to Czernowitz from where we were supposed to go on to Bucharest. To our misfortune, an informer, a Jewish dentist, told the N.K.V.D.—the internal Soviet Secret Police. I was taken prisoner and suffered months of torture and affliction, knowing that what lay in store for me, under the best of circumstances, was long detention." See Tarmon, *Memorial Book*, 52.

[608] Grajek, *Po wojnie i co dalej*, 98. Edwin Langberg, who deserted from the Polish army, was able to leave Poland in September 1945 with assistance from the Jewish Committee in Kraków: "The bulk of the passangers were Jews trying to get out of Poland and the Polish border police did not attempt to interfere. They only looked for and detained Polish escapees, presumably political opponents of the Communist regime." See Edwin Langberg with Julia M. Langberg, *Sara's* Blessing (Lumberton, New Jersey: Emethas Publishers, 2003), 175. Irena Gut Opdyke, a Home Army liaison who was wanted by the NKVD, was one of a handful of Poles who was able to leave Poland disguised as a Jew, with the assistance of some Jews whom she had rescued from the Nazis. See Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust*, 193–94. In other cases, Poles from the underground, who had assisted Jews during the German occupation but were now

led to resentment when Poles were being hunted down with no escape routes open to them.[609] As many Jewish testimonies substantiate, Jews who often lacked appropriate qualifications received preferential treatment in appointments to state positions, employment opportunities and admission to higher education,[610] while many classes of Poles were shut out. While many Poles suffered from deprivations of

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themselves at risk from the Communist authorities, found that assistance from Jewish organizations came at a steep price: Stefan Nowicki, who had obtained false documents for a Jewish woman in German-occupied Warsaw, was put in touch with the secretary of an organization of concentration camp survivors in Katowice. Nowicki had to pay this Jew $100 US for very poor quality documents attesting to his "Czechoslovak" citizenship, which he then used to cross the border into Czechoslovakia. See Stefan Nowicki, *Zapiski i wspomnienia (6),* Internet: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~polclub/nowic7.htm>. When Edyta Klein arrived at a DP camp for Jews in Germany with her mother, the Jewish authorities initially refused to admit the young girl because she did not understand Yiddish and was thought to be a Christian "who wants to eat our Jewish camp food." See Marta Sztokfisz, *Księżniczka deptaku: Opowieść o Edycie Klein* (Warsaw: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie Muza SA, 2007), 99.

[609] Some historians argue such as Jan Gross that greed and resentment on account of the return of Jews and the restoration of Jewish property were pivotal factor in the violence that Jews encountered in Stalinist Poland. However, such sentiments were also prevalent in other countries such as Czechoslovakia, even though Jews barely constituted one percent of the population before the war (in Bohemia and Moravia). The Czech government in exile received alarming reports from the Protectorate that spoke of Jews "with hostility reminiscent of the post-Munich atmosphere." The Czechs were apprehensive about the government bringing back Jewish emigrés and returning their property and positions to them. According to one report, the Czechs "do not wish their return. They feel alienated from them and are pleased not to encounter them any more. … It should be taken into consideration that after the war anti-Semitism will grow substantially, and that all those who will try to ease and assist the return of the Jews will meet with opposition." Another message focused on the economic issue, anticipating the advent of the new socialist era: "Anti-Semitism will probably be the only thing we shall partially adopt from the Nazi ideology. Our people do not agree with the bestial methods of the Germans. Nevertheless they are of the opinion that most of the Jews deserve what is happening to them. After the war, in the New Republic, our people hope that the Jews will not be able to profit from our labor as they did before the war. They think that the property taken from them during the German rule should not be returned." See Livia Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: Facing the Holocaust* (Lincoln: University of Benraska Press, and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2005), 184, 303. As in other countries, the expulsions of the Jews, which were carried out with the help of Czech gendarmes, were accompanied by attacks on Jews and looting of Jewish households. The Nazi hierarchy was mindful that the local rabble would also derive material benefit. Ibid., 100, 102, 124, 127–28, 300, 337 n.24. (A reviewer of this book argues compellingly that Rothkirchen understates the extent of Czech collaboration with the Germans. See Michael L. Miller, "Czech Holocaust or Holocaust in the Czech Lands?," *Yad Vashem Studies,* vol. 35, no. 1 (2007): 205–19.) According to Rothkirchen, hostility towards Jews and the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine did not come to a fore until the fall of 1948, after the Communist coup, when the government adopted abandoned its hitherto friendly attitude. (Previously, they had sold large quantities of arms both to the Jews and to the Arab countries in the Middle East.) Ibid., 288. As in Poland, the Communist authorities embarked on an anti-Jewish protracted campaign on the eve of the Six-Day War. Ibid., 289–92

[610] Obtaining lucrative positions simply because of one's Jewish background and connections was widespread, as Samuel Sendler has candidly admitted. See Samuel Sandler, inteviewed by Teresa Torańska, "Samuel Sandler: Werbowali na ulicy," *Gazeta Wyborcza, Duży Format,* March 6, 2010. The following examples, which can be multiplied, are illustrative. Mark Verstandig, a legal counsellor with the Security Office, boasted that "Jews were offered jobs and careers which surpassed their wildest expectations." Most of his superiors and well-placed colleagues were Jews. After leaving the Security Office he moved to Wrocław where he continued to reap copious benefits from the solidarity of well-placed fellow Jews: "The city administration … was headed by a talented young Jewish lawyer named Roman Wilk, who allocated us an empty, fully furnished, eight-room flat, with pictures still hanging on the walls. My brother got a similar flat across the road, where we also obtained well-situated premises to open a grocery. Ida, Frieda, David Haar, and friends of my brother worked in the grocery, which did very well. Through my connections in Warsaw with friends who handled provisions for government institutions, I helped to stock the grocery. I also did a bit of legal work." See Verstandig, *I Rest My Case,* 207, 218, 224, 228. Another beneficiary, a graduate of the faculty of law at the Stefan Batory University, reported: "I heard that an old classmate of mine from the Vilna [Wilno] gymnasium, a man named Turow, was the head of the Polish government's department of leather industries … I knew nothing about the leather industry … So after some quick basic instructions my friend arranged to have me made director of the department's division of statistics for the district of lower Slonsk [Śląsk—Silesia], where there were 13 leather factories." See Riwash, *Resistance and Revenege,* 83. Another Jew writes that his Jewish high-school friend, Jerzy Sawicki, who became Poland's attorney general, offered him a chair of surgery at the university of his

food and housing, Jews with no professional skills or educational background to speak of experienced no problems in securing spacious apartments and leading very comfortable lifestyles.[611] While Poles who had fought for the freedom of Poland were being rounded up, imprisoned, tortured, executed or deported to the Soviet interior, those who had supported the forces that sought to enslave Poland reaped rewards and benefits. For example, Anatol Krakowski, who had fought with the Soviet partisans in the Wilno area, was flown around Poland in official planes, which assisted him in his black market dealings, and then enrolled in the Poznań medical academy where he drew on his connections in the Soviet and Polish military to continue his illegal pursuits.[612] While Jews often were able to invoke the fact that they were Jews to obtain leniency or favours from Communist officials of Jewish origin, it was unheard of for a Pole to have such leverage by invoking the fact that he was a Pole.[613]

Former Jewish partisans soon got together to form the Union of Jewish Partisans (*Związek Partyzantów Żydów*). Some 250 partisans attended the inaugural meeting in Lublin on November 19, 1944 and passed a resolution that can be regarded as that organization's ideological manifesto. It was unabashedly pro-

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choice. See Isaac J. Vogelfanger, *Red Tempest: The Life of a Surgeon in the Gulag* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 205. A high school graduate from Radom was offered "an excellent job working in the government's Commerce Department" by his Jewish sister-in-law in Łódź. See Jack Werber, with William B. Helmreich, *Saving Children: Diary of a Buchenwald Survivor and Rescuer* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 120. Roman Frister describes how he, a high school student when the war broke out, became the editor of various local editions of a large Wrocław daily: "I was in line for promotion to the post of assistant editor. It was less my talent than my being an ex-concentration camp prisoner and a Jew that had enabled me to advance so quickly. The Communist regime helped people like me to get ahead because it didn't trust the Polish-Catholic intelligentsia." See Roman Frister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 34, 227. Frister, who had a proclivity for short-term relationships, had no problem bedding young Christian women because of his position. Contemplating marriage at one point, he approached a priest to waive the traditional marriage bans: "The problem wasn't so much the town's Catholics as its Jews, who would hasten to tell him I didn't qualify for a Catholic sacrament." Ibid., 53. Halina Robinson admits to having attained various positions for which she had no professional qualifications. See Halina Robinson, *A Cork on the Waves: Reflections of a Turbulent Life* (Sydney: Sydney Jewish Museum, 2005; Sydney: Park Street Press, 2006). Frances Dworecki acknowledges that her admission to medical school was facilitated because she was a Jew. See Frances Dworecki, *The Autobiography of Frances Dworecki*, Internet: <http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/lida-District/fd-toc.htm>, chapter 19. Despite his lowly background, Chiel Rajchman was made director of a large company in Łódź. See the Interview with Chiel Rajchman, December 7, 1988, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C. A Jew by the name of Łupiński got a high position in the Ministry of Labour and Social Service and assisted other Jews to secure lucrative positions. See Cesha Glazer, *Cesha's Story* (Sydney: Sydney Jewish Museum, 2011), 246–47, 251, 255, 260. Jews were also able to assist Christians who had helped them through their connections. Ibid., 280–81.

[611] See, for example, Alejandro Parisi, *El ghetto de las ocho puertas* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2009), 171, 183.

[612] Krakowski, *Le Ghetto dans la forêt*, 102–109. Tellingly, the author's known Jewish origins did not prejudice the outcome of his oral examinations before Catholic and nationalist ("Endek") professors, thus belying the traditional approach to Polish-Jewish postwar relations based on a stereotypical portrayal of Poles and Polish society. Ibid., 111–12.

[613] Betty Lauer (born Berta Weissburger), then Krystyna Broda, was able to exctricate herself from a denunciuation by informing Gelfand, the Jewish security officer officer charged with the investigation, that she was Jewish. See Betty Lauer, *Hiding in Plain Sight: The Incredible True Story of a German-Jewish Teenager's Struggle to Survive in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (Hanover, New Hampshire: Smith and Kraus, 2004), 422–26. Bronisława Szwajca's mother was able to secure the release of their wartime benefactor, a Pole who served in German police in Katowice, by going to the militia and invoking her Jewish origins and her husband's Communist activities. See Gutenbaum and Latała, eds., *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 2, 292.

Communist in its outlook and virulently opposed the independentist Polish underground, whom they accused of collaboration in the "Final Solution."

> Before worldwide opinion we must state that the Polish democracy, formed around the Home National Council (*Krajowa Rada Narodowa*) constituted in the underground, helped the Jews and, in the most tragic moments of our nation, sheltered Jews from the Germans, armed them, and came to their relief.
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> Before worldwide opinion we aver that the Polish reaction under the sign of the National Armed Forces and the Home Army, throughout the entire period of the German occupation, murdered Jews in hiding without any scruples, delivered them into the hands of the Gestapo, and annihilated Jewish partisans …
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> We call on all Jews, citizens of Poland, to come together around the Home National Council and the Polish Committee of National Liberation (*Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego*) as the only guarantors of a democratic Poland.[614]

The organization's membership grew to a total of about 1,000, most of whom had served in various partisan formations (Soviet, Jewish, Polish-Communist, and mixed). It was headed by former partisans who had become officers in the Polish Army and assumed other important offices in the regime: the chairman, Gustaw Alef-Bolkowiak, formerly Alef Gutman, was part of the NKVD; Chil Grynszpan, the deputy chairman, headed the security office in Hrubieszów; and Mieczysław (Samuel) Gruber, the secretary, was the deputy commander of the militia for the province (*województwo*) of Lublin. There were at least 41 officers and 106 non-commissioned officers in the ranks of the Union of Jewish Partisans. The majority of its members, though openly pro-Communist in their sympathies, were not actually members of the Communist Party, although Communist Party members formed the nucleus of that organization. The Union of Jewish Partisans was accepted into the Central Committee of Jews in Poland with whom it shared an identical ideological platform, and was given two seats on that committee, one of which was on the presidium. Former Jewish partisans thus entered into the mainstream of the organized Jewish community in Soviet-dominated Poland.

The Central Committee of Jews in Poland (*Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce*—CKŻP), who spoke on behalf of virtually the entire Jewish community in the country,[615] also emerged as a staunch ideological ally of the Communist regime. It marked a convergence of the worst forms of Communism and Jewish nationalism. The Committee lashed out against the "Fascist" underground, the Polish government in exile,

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[614] August Grabski, *Żydowski ruch kombatancki w Polsce w latach 1944–1949* (Warsaw: Trio, 2002), 43–44, 191–92.

[615] On the ideological platform of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland see Grabski, *Żydowski ruch kombatancki w Polsce w latach 1944–1949*, 21–24. August Grabski, a historian with Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, points out that the committee's platform was not imposed from above, but rather reflected the popular sentiments of the membership of these organizations. It also mirrored the position of the staunchly pro-Soviet (Communist) Polish Workers' Party (*Polska Partia Robotnicza*). The only Jewish parties, all of them tiny, without representation on the Central Committee of Jews in Poland were the Revisionists and the Orthodox. See Blatman, *For Our Freedom and Yours*, 172.

who was accused of directing the killing of Jews, and the Catholic Church. A proclamation issued in February 1945 railed against "the criminals from the NSZ and AK, who, who served the Nazi bandits, who took an active part in murdering the helpless Jewish people, and who killed Jewish partisans. They have the blood of many Jews on their conscience. The Jewish people will never forget that those criminals were in close contact with the London government and acted in compliance with its orders." (Similar pronouncements were made at the annual ceremonies marking the Warsaw ghetto revolt.) The committee called on the Communist authorities to use all their resources against those who attacked Jews (as well as "activists of democratic parties"), including carrying out more well-publicized death sentences and show trials. Their campaign also moved to the international arena where they found Jewish organizations eager to espouse their agenda and an obliging media ready to publicize it. In May 1945 the committee appealed to the Federation of Polish Jews, who were holding their convention in New York, to denounce the "Polish reaction" since its "conscience was stained with the blood of hundreds of thousands [sic] of victims" and it was "carrying out its slogan of the complete extermination [sic] of the Jews in Poland."[616] The fact that these views coincided with, or were sometimes ever harsher than the official ones, does not mean that they were insincere or that they were not representative of the Jewish community at large. The sincerity of these pronouncements is beyond question. Moreover, they were not challenged by any Jewish group either inside or outside Poland. The entire Jewish press in Poland, representing diverse factions, was unanimous in its support of the new Communist regime.[617] The Bundists in the United States and Britain, who had established close relations with the Polish Socialist (PPS) exiles during the war, ultimately sided with Poland's new Soviet-imposed regime.[618] Their colleagues in Poland were all the more vociferous in opposing the Polish government in exile in London.[619] Representatives of the Polish-American Jews who travelled to Poland in 1945–1946, such as Joseph Tenenbaum, president of the American and World Federation of Polish Jews, and S. L. Shneiderman, an influential journalist, wrote enthusiastically about the new Soviet-imposed regime, and disparagingly about the democratic opposition headed by Stanisław Mikołajczyk and the Polish government in exile.[620] The regime also gained the support of rightist factions

[616] Ewa Koźmińska-Frejlak, "Homeland or Roreign Land? The Image of Poland in Polish-Language Jewish Press in the Aftermath of the Holocaust (1945–1949/50)," Conference Paper, "Between Coexistence and Divorce: 25 Years of Research on the History and Culture of Polish Jewry and Polish-Jewish Relations," Hebrew University of Jerusalem, March 17–19, 2009.

[617] Cited in Krystyna Kersten, "Pogrom kielecki—znaki zapytania," in Grześkowiak-Łuczyk, *Polska, Polacy, mniejszości narodowe,* 165–67; August Grabski, "Kształtowanie się pierwotnego programu żydowskich komunistów w Polsce po Holokauście," in Berendt, Grabski, and Stankowski, *Studia z historii Żydów w Polsce po 1945 r.,* 76–77; Grabski, *Żydowski ruch komatancki w Polsce w latach 1944–1949,* 21.

[618] Blatman, *For Our Freedom and Yours,* 166–70. After engaging in cold political calculations (euphemistically labelled as "pragmatism'), the Bund cut off its ties to the "reactionary" pluralistic Polish government in exile, condemned the "fascist" anti-Communist underground in Poland, and rallied wholeheartedly behind the "democratic" and "progressive" Soviet-installed regime in Warsaw.

[619] Blatman, *For Our Freedom and Yours,* 173.

[620] Robert L. Cohn, "Early Postwar Travelers on the Future of Jewish Life in Poland," *The Polish Review,* vol. 53, no. 3 (2008): 328–29.

like the conservative and religious Poale Aguda.[621] A Jew from a non-Communist background makes it obvious that the pro-Soviet orientation of many Polish Jews went far beyond gratitude for the deliverance from the Nazis: "We all had great affinity for the USSR, as epitomized by the father-figure of comrade Stalin, whom we idolised."[622] According to a Jewish source, even Jews serving with the Polish forces in Britain "were generally sympathetic to the Soviet cause."[623]

The relationship of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland with the Communist regime developed symbiotically. For their loyalty and open support of the Communist regime, as manifested in the prominent participation of its constituent members in Communist parades and rallies,[624] the Central Committee of Jews in Poland was given a large degree of autonomy and rewarded with substantial government funding for the community's political, social and even religious activities—privileges that were not accorded to any other minority.[625] Their separateness from the Poles was underscored by their committee's name: they were not Poles who happened to be Jewish, nor Polish Jews for that matter, but "Jews in Poland." Their distinct national status was by and large promoted by Jewish Communists, who are often said by Jewish apologists to have shed all vestiges of their Jewishness.[626] Therefore, the widely held perception that the Jews supported the Communists in their fight against the "reactionary" anti-Communist underground was not baseless. Indeed, a historian associated with Warsaw's Jewish Historical Institute, openly acknowledges the overwhelming support of the Jewish community for a regime that most Poles rightly viewed as illegitimate and oppressive.[627] While not to suggest that there was any universal ideologically based sympathy for

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[621] August Grabski, "Żydzi a polskie życie polityczne (1944–1949), in Tych and Adamczyk-Garbowska, eds., *Następstwa zagłady Żydów,* 165.

[622] Katz, *Gone to Pitchipoï,* 259. Katz then repeats the far-fetched exculpation that they were ignorant of Stalinist tyranny.

[623] Tony Kushner, *The Persistence of Prejudice: Antisemitism in British Society During the Second World War* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), 126, 140–1.

[624] Numerous security office reports mention that Jews participated in such events with enthusiasm and spontaneously chanted slogans in support of the Communist regime. On May Day 1945 in Walbrzych, there was a massive manifestation of Jewish support for Communism. The marchers included members of the Bund, the "Szmorzy" (Hashomer Hatzair) in uniform, and members of the Jewish Committee. They all had banners, in Polish and in Yiddish, saying "Long Live Stalin!" and "Long Live the Polish-Soviet Alliance!" No Poles could be heard chanting pro-Communist slogans. See Kamiński and Żaryn, eds., *Reflections on the Kielce Pogrom,* 25.

[625] Leszek Olejnik, *Polityka narodowościowa Polski w latach 1944–1960* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, 2003), 41, 352–55, 370, 372–81, 390, 397–98.

[626] Ibid., 41–42.

[627] August Grabski, "Żydzi a polskie życie polityczne (1944–1949), in Tych and Adamczyk-Garbowska, eds., *Następstwa zagłady Żydów,* 157, 174. August Grabski, an avowed Trotskyite, views the Soviet-imposed Communist regime as an entirely legitimate expression of Polish national and political life and is a full-blown apologist for its collaborators and supporters. According to Grabski, the new regime was superior, in most respects, to the form of government favoured by the "anti-Semitic" independentists, who supported Poland's legitimate government in exile. Grabski has nothing to say about the Communist regime's policies towards the non-Communist intelligentsia. Julia Brystygier (née Prajs or Preiss), who joined the Fifth Department of the Ministry of Public Security in 1945, and between 1950 and 1954 was its director, stated: "In fact, the Polish intelligentsia as such is against the Communist

Communism on the part of Poland's Jewry, the empirical evidence pointing to the Jewish community's collective support for the Soviet-imposed regime is compelling and undeniable. That same constituency, through its representatives, bombarded high-ranking Catholic clerics with demands—based on a very selective morality (which was unconcerned with repressive measures taken by the regime against its non-Jewish opponents)—to tow their line on Polish-Jewish relations. The Catholic Church, which had condemned anti-Jewish violence such as the Kielce pogrom resoundly without waiting for encouragement from anyone, was put in an impossible situation. Succumbing to political pressures, by giving the appearance of sharing a "common ground" with the regime, would compromise its standing with the populace. Moreover, as the Church's dealings with the Communist authorities made abundantly clear, the Communists could not be trusted. In fact, by 1948, when political opposition was largely suppressed, the Catholic Church became the Stalinist state's principle enemy and target.[628] Presenting themselves as moral arbiters of the state of Polish society, American historians Jan Gross and Joanna Michlic allege "collusion" (sometimes referred to as a "social contract") between the Poles, who superficially despised the Soviet invaders, and the Stalinist regime, with whom they were prepared to collaborate, in "getting rid of the Jews."[629] This position comes uncomfortably close to the one espoused by Moshe Shonfeld, an anti-Zionist Orthodox rabbi, who wrote:

> The Jews in Poland had an expression: if a Pole meets me on the wayside and doesn't kill me, it is only from laziness. … The Poles … were all fanatical Catholics, and all had unsatiable [sic] appetites for Jewish blood. Those cruel pythons, the Polish clergy, instigated—*after* the fall of the Nazis—pogroms of those Jews who'd miraculously survived.[630]

Jews were certainly not powerless in the postwar period and had nothing to fear from the vast majority of Poles. Indeed, as both Marek Jan Chodakiewicz and August Grabski have pointed out, only in rare cases

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system and basically, it is impossible to re-educate it. All that remains is to liquidate it. However, since we must not repeat the mistake of the Russians after the 1917 Revolution, when all intelligentsia members were exterminated, and the country did not develop correctly afterwards, we have to create a system of terror and pressure that the members of the intelligentsia would not dare to be politically active." See Czesław Leopold [Arkadiusz Rybicki] and Krzysztof Lechicki [Antoni Wrega], *Więźniowie polityczni w Polsce 1945–1956* (Gdańsk: Młoda Polska, 1981), 20.

[628] In 1947, Julia Brystygier issued instructions detailing measures, including intelligence operations, which were to be implemented against the Catholic Church and its clergy. Under her tenure as director of the Fifth Department of the Ministry of Public Security, around 900 Catholic priests and several bishops were arrested, and numerous Church organizations were destroyed. See Leszek Żebrowski, "Brystygierowa Julia," in *Encyklopedia "Białych Plam"* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2000), vol. 3, 191–94. No such measures were taken against Jews.

[629] Jan Gross first advanced these unproven claims—a reversal of the *żydokomuna* ("Jewish-communist" conspiracy) theory—in an essay titled "After Auschwitz: The Reality and Meaning of Postwar Antisemitism in Poland," in Jonathan Frankel and Dan Diner, eds., *Dark Times, Dire Decisions: Jews and Communism* (New York: Oxford University Press for the Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, 2004), 203, 222, and built on it in his book *Fear*. Both Gross and Michlic are key representatives of a school of historians who advocate the worst-possible-case scenario and do not take kindly to dissent. People who disagree with them are banned from their conferences, or are labelled as "ethno-nationalists or, worse still, "anti-Semites."

[630] Shonfeld, *The Holocaust Victims Accuse,* 13, 16.

did anti-Jewish sentiments translate into to violence directed against Jews.[631] In their pursuit of alleged German collaborators, the state authoritites focused their energies on Poles—not Jews, whom they treated with leniency. (As noted earlier, crimes committed by Soviet collaborators were ignored and their perpetrators were rewarded with plum positions.) In this regard, they received vigorous assistance from Jewish officials, not to mention aggrieved or vengeful Jewish individuals. A substantial number of these proceedings were patent show trials, designed by the Communist authorities to purge political opponents. The Central Jewish Historical Commission (*Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna*—CŻKH), created under the aegis of the Polish government, actively assisted the state's judicial authorities and the Polish Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes (*Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce*), supervised by the Ministry of Justice, in investigating and prosecuting suspected war criminals. The legal department of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland worked closely with Polish judicial authorities in investigating and prosecuting not only Germans but also Polish collaborators accused of persecuting and killing Jews. The August 1944 decree allowed prosecutors to issue an indictment a mere 48 hours before trial, thus severely limiting a defendant's ability to defend himself, and authorized the special penal courts to base their convictions entirely on eyewitness testimony. According to historian Alina Cała, the Committee's lawyers occasionally intimidated witnesses or manipulated an investigation in their zeal to incriminate Polish defendants. At the request of the Central Special Commission (*Centralna Komisja Specjalna*), which Zionists in the Central Committee of Jews in Poland formed in mid-1946, local Jewish committees also compiled extensive lists of Poles who allegedly collaborated with the Germans in persecuting Jews. Not only prosecutors but also the Public Security Office, the repressive state security apparatus, would have been interested in many of these cases. (Many of those charged were not guilty of crimes and, in some cases, they were acquitted.[632]) Allegations of collaboration by Jews were always initiated by complaints from either Jewish individuals, especially former ghetto inhabitants and camp inmates, or Jewish institutions, most often the Central Committee of Jews in Poland, whereas trials of alleged Polish collaborators could be, and often were, initiated by a complaint from any aggrieved Jew.[633]

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[631] Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust*; August Grabski, "Żydzi a polskie życie polityczne (1944–1949), in Tych and Adamczyk-Garbowska, eds., *Następstwa zagłady Żydów,* 178.

[632] For some examples of Poles who were acquitted of false charges (Szulborska, Jan Wrotnowski) see, *Polacy ratujący Żydów,* 89.

[633] Gabriel N. Finder and Alexander V. Prusin, "Jewish Collaborators on Trial in Poland, 1944–1956," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 20 (2008): 130–32, 134, 146–47. At least 44 persons who stood trial in Polish state courts on charges of collaboration in this period were Jews. They were charged with assisting the Germans in the murder and mistreatment of their fellow Jews in ghettos and camps. Thirty of the Jewish defendants were convicted, with ten sentenced to death (two death sentences were commuted); ten were acquitted. Interestingly, Poles were often called as witnesses by the defence. Unlike in trials of ethnic Poles, the Polish courts were often more lenient in accepting defences put forward by Jewish defendants. Ibid., 128, 135, 140, 148. According to the authors' information, Polish courts sentenced about 20,000 individuals for war crimes between 1944 and 1948. (The number of cases under investigation may have reached 80,000.) The bulk of the trials took place between 1944 and 1950, when special penal courts and then the district courts convicted and sentenced 16,428 defendants. German nationals constituted about one-third of this number, while the rest were either Polish citizens or residents tried for collaboration with the Germans. Close to 1,800 of these defendants were charged with crimes committed in concentration, labour, and death camps as well as in Jewish ghettos. The majority of the convicted were German—887 individuals—followed by 489

The citizens' tribunal created by the Central Committee of Jews in Poland notified Polish judicial authorities of a dozen or so defendants investigated and indicted by the Committee's lawyers but whose offences the lawyers found penal in character and, thus, beyond the tribunal's limited administrative jurisdiction. Several of these suspects eventually stood trial in Polish state courts. In comparison with highly politicized trials of alleged and real anti-communists, pressure from above does not seem to have affected judge's decisions in cases involving Jews. The outcome of one of these trials—that of Szymon Tob, a Jewish ghetto policeman—is particularly noteworthy for showing various levels of extrajudicial influence at play in the broader process:

> In Jan. 1946 he [Szymon Tob] stood trial in the district court for collaborating with the Germans in the ghetto of Międzyrzec Podlaski in the Siedlce district. According to eyewitnesses, he denounced his fellow Jews to the Gestapo and participated in the liquidation of the ghetto, leading [German] gendarmes to Jewish hideouts. The majority of Siedlce's Jews perished in death camps. He vehemently denied all the accusations and accused the witnesses of scheming to eliminate him from competition in local trade. Forty-two Jews signed a petition on Tob's behalf, stating that he was 'decisively against the Germans' and that he enjoyed the trust of his countrymen. The police in Międzyrzec Podlaski, moreover, characterized him as a loyal citizen. Before the court reached its verdict, in Feb. 1946 unknown assailants attacked the police station where Tob was detained and kidnapped him along with three policemen. The trial resumed in July 1946 and Tob was tried in absentia. No verdict was reached at the time, but in Jan. 1949 the same court, disregarding the testimonies of defence witnesses, convicted Tob and sentenced him to death based exclusively on the statements proffered by Tob's [Jewish] accusers. … The CKŻP's lawyers were also interested in Tob, but they had to move the citizens' tribunal to suspend his case when they discovered that he had apparently fled to the United States.[634]

Following the Kielce pogrom a project concerning a decree to "combat anti-Semitism" was considered but shelved by the Presidium of National Council (*Krajowa Rada Narodowa*), after its chief legal expert, Izaak Klajnerman, argued that all the requisite laws were already on the books, and that "it seems unnecessary to issue a new decree specifically devoted to combating anti-Semitism."[635]

Many Jews who had fought with the Soviet and Polish Communist underground entered the security forces and militia in Stalinist Poland. Militia commanders and deputies were drawn from "sure" elements such as prewar Communists, Soviet and Polish Communist partisan formations, and the People's Army, in all of which Jews had been heavily represented.[636] Overnight, leaders of Jewish anti-Nazi resistance were

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Volksdeutsche (of whom 198 came from Poland), 282 Poles, 59 Ukrainians, and 30 representatives of other ethnic groups. Ibid., 128.

[634] Gabriel N. Finder and Alexander V. Prusin, "Jewish Collaborators on Trial in Poland, 1944–1956," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 20 (2008): 139, n56.

[635] Gross, *Fear,* 154–55.

[636] Wnuk, *Lubelski Okręg AK DSZ i WiN, 1944–1947*, 185.

transformed into vicious Stalinist collaborators. Relatively few shunned the opportunity for "advancement," even though the consequences were not at all severe. As Shiye Goldberg recalls,

> Incidentally, after our liberation from the Germans, the commander of the partisans gathered his combatants and said:
>
> "I suggest to each of you to select a military rank commensurate with his education."
>
> The educated among us became officers and the others were given lower ranks. When it was my turn, I said to the commander:
>
> "I was a meat handler and I shall remain one. I won't put on a uniform for a million zlotys [złotys]. …"
>
> My comrades joined the police force …[637]

Goldberg also cautioned his future wife about accepting a tempting offer from the Stalinists.

> She finally said that she would like to have my advice: She could improve her [material] situation by accepting an offer to work in the Polish Intelligence? I stared at her.
>
> "What are you saying, girl?" I cried. "Do you know what the Polish Intelligence is? First, you'll have to become an informant. … I tell you, don't you dare go to Polish Intelligence. That's the same as the NKVD in Russia, the worst in the world.[638]

John Sack attempted to get a handle on the thorny issue of Jewish collaboration with Poland's Communist regime in his penetrating exposé, *An Eye for an Eye*,[639] for which he interviewed scores of Jews associated with the Stalinist security office. The Jewish-American reporter writes:

> In Kattowitz [Katowice], as in Kielce, Breslau [Wrocław], Stettin [Szczecin], and some other cities, the chief of police was a Jew. Many former [Jewish] partisans who, in August, 1944, had been celebrating in Lublin when the police chief of Poland [Franciszek Jóźwiak], a Catholic, went to their rowdy quarters on Ogrodowa Street. … he made a Jew the police chief of Lublin and Jews all the precinct chiefs there. The next year, 1945, these people became the chiefs in some of Poland and Poland-administered Germany.[640]

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[637] Goldberg, *The Undefeated,* 244–45.

[638] Goldberg, *The Undefeated,* 224.

[639] John Sack, *An Eye for an Eye* (New York: Basic Books/HarperCollins, 1993). The fourth edition, published by the author in 2000, is available online at: <http://vho.org/aaargh/fran/livres7/SACKeye.pdf>.

[640] Sack, *An Eye for an Eye,* 138.

> Barek Eisenstein[641] estimated that 90 percent of the Jews in the [State Security] Office in Kattowitz [Katowice] changed their names to Polish ones. … Pinek [Paweł] Mąka,[642] the Secretary of State Security for Silesia in 1945, estimated that 70 or 75 percent of the officers in Silesia were Jews. Barek Eisenstein estimated that 75 or more percent were, Stanisław Gazda that "most" were, Adam "Krawecki" [Kowalski, chief interrogator at the prison in Gliwice] that 70 to 80 percent were, and Moshe Mąka that 70 or 75 percent "maybe" were. Józef Musiał, the Vice Minister of Justice for Poland in 1990, said, "I don't like to talk about it," but most officers in the Office in all of Poland were Jews. … Pinek [Mąka] estimated that two or three hundred officers worked for the Office in Silesia, and three-fourths of that would be 150 to 225.
>
> Stanisław Gazda, who was secretary to Chaim Studniberg [Henryk Studencki], the Director of Prisons and Camps for Silesia, said there were twenty to thirty prisons in Silesia … Among the Jewish [prison] commandants in Silesia were Major Frydman at Beuthen [Bytom], Jacobowitz at an unidentified camp, Shmuel Kleinhaut at Myslowitz [Mysłowice], Efraim Lewin at Neisse [Nysa], Shlomo [Solomon] Morel at Schwientochlowitz [Świętochłowice], Oppeln [Opole] and Kattowitz, and Lola Potok Ackerfeld at Gleiwitz [Gliwice]. Czeslaw Geborski [Czesław Gęborski], the commandant at Lamsdorf [Łambinowice], was probably a Catholic, but I was told of no other gentile commandants.[643]

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[641] At the time, Barek Eisenstein from Miechów used the Polish-sounding name, Bolesław Jurkowski. After his stint as a second lieutenant with the Security Office in Katowice, Eisenstein left for a DP camp in Germany where he engaged "voraciously in black-marketing." He immigrated to Canada in 1948 where he was known as Ben Eisenstein. There is no question that he considered himself a Jew at all times, and his imprisonment in Nazi camps appears to have propelled him to "seek out collaborators and Nazis." See Bernice Eisenstein, *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2006), 39, 111. *M.P.*

[642] Pinek or Paweł Mąka, who later went by the name of Paul Monka, also had no difficulty immigrating to the United States with his family in 1949 despite his service with the Security Office. According to his testimony, Monka had joined the Communist *Armia Ludowa* (People's Army) in the Lublin region. After the area was "liberated," he was appointed to "highly responsible positions" by the Soviets. Monka met a Soviet general named Zavatsky and was given a position in the Security Office. He returned to his home town of Będzin and found his family in Dąbrowa Górnicza, where "they were all doing well." Monka was appointed security chief of Silesia: "He was responsible for bringing conspirators to trial, which he did effectively in accordance with strict Russian orders. … He was then instrumental in General Zavatsky's appointment as governor of Silesia." (General Aleksandr Zavatskii, a Russian from the Soviet Union, used a Polonized version of his name as *wojewoda* of Silesia: Aleksander Zawadzki. He became the plenipotentiary of the temporary government of Opole Silesia in March 1945.) After sustaining an injury in a collision with a truck, Monka decided that he wished to devote more time to his family. He travelled throughout Europe "on special assignments and, although only twenty-four years old, gave serious thought to entering the Polish foreign service." According to the testimony provided to Kean College of New Jersey Holocaust Resource Center in 1989, he was offered a consul-generalship. Clearly, Monka did not have the educational qualifications or credentials for that position so other factors came into play in his advancement. There is no indication that Monka had at any time stopped considering himself to be a Jew first and foremost. He had wanted to go to Palestine already in 1946, but could not get there. See Joseph J. Preil, ed., *Holocaust Testimonies: European Survivors and American Liberators in New Jersey* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 90–91. Some episodes of Paul Monka's life, as penned by John Sack, do not stand up to scrutiny. Sack claims that Monka attended the Warsaw Polytechnic, where he confronted an anti-Semitic professor over a (fictitious) geometry textbook allegedly written by Monka's uncle, and that afterwards Polish students beat him with baseball bats until he passed out. See Sack, *An Eye for an Eye*, Fourth edition, 15. In an oral history interview conducted in May and June 1989, for the Kean College of New Jersey Holocaust Resource Center, Monka states that he studied in Piotrków Trybunalski. *M.P.*

[643] Sack, *An Eye for an Eye*, 183.

> The police chief in Kattowitz was Pinek Pakanowski, and the police chief in Breslau [Wrocław] was Shmuel "Gross," who used the Polish name Mieczysław "Gross." [This was actually Samuel or Mieczysław Gruber, a Jewish partisan leader from the Lublin region mentioned earlier—*M.P.*] Some other Jewish police chiefs in Poland and Poland-administered Germany were Yechiel Grynspan [Chil Grynszpan] in Hrubieszów, Ayzer Mąka in Bielsko-Biała, and an unidentified man in Żabkowice. The partisans in Lublin—two hundred men, all Jews—were in the "Chiel Group" of the Holod [Hołod] Battalion: the group commander was Captain Yechiel "Chiel" Grynspan … The police chief of Poland was Juzwak [Franciszek Jóźwiak], known as General Witold,[644] who spoke in Lublin to Captain Grynspan and Grynspan's executive officer, Captain Shmuel "Gross." "Gross" became the police chief of Lublin (and was transferred to Breslau in May, 1945) and one of his eight precinct chiefs was Sever Rubinstein. According to "Gross," eighty percent of the police officers in Lublin and fifty percent of the policemen in Lublin were Jews. Some more Jewish partisans who got assignments in 1944 and 1945 were Jacob Alfiszer as a policeman in Kattowitz, Chanina and Shimon Barbanel as policemen somewhere in Poland, Efraim [Frank] Blaichman as an Intelligence officer in Lubartów and Kielce, Yurik Chołomski as an officer in Kattowitz, Stefan Finkel as chief of Imprisonment in Cracow, Yechiel Grynspan as the police chief in Hrubieszów, Efraim Lewin as an Imprisonment officer in Lublin and Kattowitz and as the prison commandant in Neisse, Shlomo Morel as an Imprisonment officer in Lublin [where he worked at the infamous prison at the Lublin Castle—*M.P.*] and Kattowitz and as the camp commandant in Schwientochlowitz, Oppeln, Kattowitz and Jaworzno, David Rubinstein as a policeman in Hrubieszów, and Adam Winder as a policeman in Hrubieszów [actually, Abraham Wunderbojm or Wunderboim, who, as mentioned earlier, states he was a policeman in Lublin and Radom—*M.P.*]. In Breslau, the chief of the Office's section for Germans was Kleks, the chief of the Polish army's Corps of Internal Security was Colonel Rubinstein, from Lodz [Łódź], and the mayor was [Bolesław] Drobner, from Cracow, who in mid–1945 became the Minister of Labor for Poland. Some other Jews in Breslau were Nachum "Salowicz," who was known as Tadeusz Zalewski [also given as Tadeusz Zaleski, born Naftali Saleschutz, now living in the United States as Norman Salsitz—*M.P.*] and who was the chief of the Office's section for Germans for Breslau county, and Schumacher, who was the chief of Imprisonment for all of Lower Silesia.[645]

As Sack compellingly documents again and again, the primary business of these people was revenge. Apologists Israel Bartal and Scott Ury, however, insist that, unlike Poles, Jews cannot be endowed with bad qualities, and attempt to dismiss all of this evidence as "the antisemitic trope of the vengeful Jew in the

[644] Franciszek Jóźwiak was the commander in chief of the People's Militia between 1944 and 1949, and as of 1945 he was also Vice-Minister of Public Security. From 1942 to 1956, he was married to Helen Wolińska (later Brus), who headed the department that oversaw prosecutions of persons investigated by the military. Her exploits are described later.

[645] Sack, *An Eye for an Eye*, 215.

security forces."[646] Most of these vengeful Jews, especially those in the lower ranks, gave up their positions in the next few years and left for the West. After settling in places like the United States, Canada, and Australia, they integrated fully with the local Jewish communities and portrayed themselves as victims of Soviet oppression and "Polish anti-Semitism."[647] There is no evidence that any of these former security officers regretted their misdeeds.[648]

The case of Frank (Franek) Blaichman, who describes his career with the security police, is rather typical. He even neglects to mention that from April to July 1945, as Franciszek Blajchman, he served as the acting director of the Department of Prisons and Camps of the Voivodship Public Security Office in Kielce. Tellingly, the Communist security police often took over premises formerly occupied by the Nazis, whose *modus operandi* they shared in carrying out investigations. Like the Communist authorities, Blaichman conflates the anti-Communist underground with "collaborators" and "Nazi sympathizers." He recalled that:

> the AL [*Armia Ludowa* or People's Army] notified us that we—the Jewish partisans and the Polish partisans—were now officially part of the Polish government. Grynszpan-Gruber's group was assigned to Lublin; [Marion] Dworecki and I were transferred to Lubartow [Lubartów] and assigned to the Polish Security Police. …
>
> Our police commander arranged for us to share a pleasant two-bedroom apartment in a two-storey building in the center of Lubartow. … Our commander also provided us with an office in a building just across the street, and two secretaries. …
>
> For the next six month—from July 1944 until January 1945—Dworecki and I were assigned to a unit of the Polish Security Police responsible for hunting down and investigating Nazi

[646] Israel Bartal and Scott Ury, "Between Jews and their Neighbours: Isolation, Confrontation, and Influence in Eastern Europe," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 24 (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), 28.

[647] Sack, *An Eye for an Eye*, 150. Among those who settled in Canada were Barek or Ben Eisenstein, a second lieutenant with the Security Office in Katowice, and Moryc (Morris or Mieczysław) Kwaśniewski, a captain in the Security Office in Kielce. Canada also welcomed Elkana Grad, a Communist and first Soviet mayor of Brzeżany in the fall of 1939, who served as a security officer in Poland after the war. See Shimon Redlich, *Together and Apart in Brzezany: Poles, Jews and Ukrainians, 1919–1945* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 59. The unceasing proliferation of claims of Catholic Church silence and complicity should be viewed in the context of ethno-nationalist revenge and its indulgent by-product.

[648] Ardent champions of Jan Gross's questionable methodology, rather than citing even one example of a repentant security officer, attempt to discredit the charge by claiming, bizarrely, that it is not provable. Monika Rice writes: "Such a per se false statement (a necessary conclusion reached about contingent material) could only be verifiable *case by case*, but that would be impracticable, *ergo* [the] argument is unverifiable." It is apparent, that apart from this pearl of wisdom, Rice has no actual evidence with which to refute the charge that there is no evidence that any such officers regretted their misdeeds. In fact, the charge is based on a thorough study of the available historical sources. These champions do not apply these same standards, however, to the sweeping charges that pepper Gross's writings (e.g., in *Neighbors*, Gross claims that while the Jews did not collaborate with the Soviets, the Poles collaborated with the Germans). While endorsing crude generalizations about the conduct of Poles, Rice takes umbrage at the suggestion that there is some significance in the fact that thousands of Jews collaborated with the postwar Stalinist regime. See Monika Rice, "Resisting a Phantom Book: A Critical Assessment of the Initial Polish Discussion of Jan Gross's *Fear*," in *Polin,* vol. 22 (2010); 447 n59. Ideologically charged writings of this kind, where the author-analyst is clearly a proponent of one view and goes out of her way to discredit other views with scant mention of their *actual* content, are of little value in understanding the true nature of the debate, let alone grasping the underpinning events under discussion and their historical context.

collaborators: Poles, Ukrainians, and Volksdeutsche … Our assignment was not to apprehend collaborators—only to determine their whereabouts, look for witnesses, and report what we had gathered to headquarters. Our superiors the sent out agents who made the arrests. … Each Friday, we prepared reports and sent them to the head of our department. …

In January 1945, I was transferred to Kielce (Dworecki was assigned elsewhere), along with many others, and on the way there I met Sever Rubinstein. We were among the two hundred officers and one hundred security men who rode into Kielce on army trucks. … We got busy taking over and cleaning three large office buildngs thad been abandoned by the Germans.

… It was clear to us that these two upper-class women had survived the war without enduring much hardship, which meant that they must have been Nazi and AK sympathizers. …

My job in Kielce was the same as it had been in Lubartow: to find and report the whereabouts of collaborators. This was new territory, and I had to go from village to village to question farmers and other people I had never met before. What I learned very quickly was that the whole region was infested with fascists and die-hard anti-Semites.

About a month later, I was assigned to Pinczow [Pińczów], where I became the assistant to the director of the Security Police. We took over a villa that had been occupied by the Germans. Two weeks later, the head of the Polish Communist Party called me into his office to ask a favor. Without knowing I was Jewish, he told me that he had a Jewish youth who had survived in hiding. The boy's name was Szymek and he was about twenty years old. … he told me how a friendly farmer had taken him in and used him to help out with farm chores. Szymek was the only member of his family to survive. He came to work at my office. …

Szymek was originally from a village near Pinczow, and he gave me a list of names of the Jew killers in the area. We sent investigators to the villages. Using Szymek's list, they interviewed the people he had named … The collaborators were arrested, brought to Kielce, put on trial, and sentenced to prison. …

In March 1945, I was transferred from Pinczow back to Kielce. I had asked my friend Szymek to accompany me, but he said that he didn't want to. Now that he was armed, he thought he was invincible. Several weeks later, a fascist group rampaged through Pinczow, released prisoners from the local jails, and killed several policemen. One of them was Szymek.

Sever Rubinstein, who had been assigned to the Kielce police department—not the Security Police—was at this time living by himself in an apartment allotted to him by the police department. He would often have his clothes cleaned at a laundry that a Polish woman operated out of her home. One day, wearing civilian clothes, he came to pick up his laundry and found two men he had never seen before waiting for him in her apartment. They started questioning him: "Who are you? Where are you from?" and so on. Thinking that they were from the AK and fearing for his life, Sever drew his revolver. In the ensuing struggle, he hit one of the men with the butt of his gun. The two men grabbed him, arrested him, and took him for questioning to the headquarters of the Security Police, where he was savagely beaten.

Though I was working in the building, I didn't see Sever being brought in and learned only later that an AK man had been arrested. I went to check him out and found that he was not AK but a

> comrade of mine from the partisans and a policeman besides, and they released him. He was in pretty bad shape. …
>
> In June, the head of the Security Police in the state of Kielce summoned me to his office. My mission was an urgent one, he said. I was given two letters to deliver: one to the head of the Security Police in Skarzysk [Skarżysko-Kamienna], a town some one hundred kilometers away [actually about 40 km north of Kielce], the other to the head of the Skarzysk police. The letters instructed them to give me all the assistance I might need to carry out my assignment and informed them that I was in charge of the operation. A group of Polish officers occupying an entire train car—whose number I was given—would be arriving in Skarzysk from Katowice. I was to arrest them all, and I should enlist all the manpower available from the two departments to assist me in this arrest. When the mission was completed, I was to call Kielce immediately.
>
> There was no time to lose. I was ordered to leave, by car, immediately. I was not told the reason for the arrest, and, upon arriving at the station, I refrained from making the arrests myself, instructing the other officers to make them. As an officer myself, I felt uncomfortable being in charge of an operation that called for the arrest of other officers. There were maybe altogether eight or ten of them, ranging in rank from major to sergeant, and including two or three women in uniform. The arrests went off smoothly, and I made the call to Kielce, informing them that the mission had been accomplished. I was told to remain and await the arrival of the Kielce police. … The group was loaded onto a Russian truck and taken away to Kielce.
>
> Later, I learned that the Security Police had received information that the officers were part of the fascist opposition. They had secured forged passes that allowed them to travel to Lublin for vacation, when, in fact, their intention was to organize an insurgency against the government. I suspected that I had been entrusted with this mission because my superiors knew that, as a Jew, I would be unlikely to have any allegiance to or connections with any fascist group. I could be trusted.[649]

Despite leading a life of privilege, Blaichman requested a discharge from the Security Police on medical grounds:

> When I returned to Kielce, I presented the sealed envelope I had picked up in Warsaw and was discharged. For reasons that were never explained to me, I would be allowed to continue to wear my uniform and carry my pistol. The colleagues in my department, 10 to 15 percent of them Jews, thought I was crazy. How could I leave a job like this, with a chauffeured car, a motorcycle, and an apartment, and with no clue as to how I was going to make a living? But my mind was made up. Since I was not asked to return my uniform or pistol, I continued to wear them; they might help open doors that would otherwise be closed. Besides, I was proud of the rank and status that I had achieved.

[649] Blaichman, *Rather Die Fighting,* 157, 159–60, 162–65, 167–68, 171–72. Blaichman does not mention his stint in the Stalinist security forces, which he likely concealed when he applied to immigrate to the United States six years after the war, in an interview recorded for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., on February 10, 1992.

> After my discharge, I went to Kraków with Sever Rubinstein. We met up with [former partisans] [Michael] Loterstein, [Sam] Finkel, and [Shlomo] Eisenberg. I told them about my plans and they said they had the same idea. Sever and I went on to Breslau [Wrocław] to visit Gruber. … There was a police department, and Sam Gruber was the head of it …
>
> We were reunited with Sam and his wife, Krisha, at their home. Sam was a father by this time—a family man. We had a *l'chaim*, reminisced, and told him of our plans to leave Poland. He, too, had been thinking of leaving.[650]

Blaichman did not view himself as being estranged from the Jewish community. Before leaving Poland, he married a Jewish girl in traditional wedding ceremony:

> We had decided to do everything as traditionally as possible. … The chuppah, the marriage canopy, was made out of a *tallis*, a prayer shawl, that belonged to Berek. A Jewish survivor who claimed to be a rabbi was asked to perform the ceremony. … At the end of the ceremony, in Jewish tradition, I stopped on the wineglass and we were married. Klezmer musicians played and the vodka flowed like water.[651]

It was their desire was "to raise our children with Torah, in a traditional Jewish home as part of a community of Jews."[652] Blaichman then moved to Szczecin where he came across Aron Gotz, another of Sam Gruber's partisans, who was working in the police department. He paid a Soviet driver to smuggle him and his wife into Germany. Once in Germany they were directed by the Joint to a DP camp in the American zone. Blaichman was not afraid to return to Poland to try to convince a cousin to leave, taking a supply of leather to trade.[653]

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[650] Blaichman, *Rather Die Fighting*, 176–77. Blaichman met up again with Sam Gruber in a DP camp in Germany and heard the following story: "He had learned that the AK planned to assassinate him because he was a Jew who held an important position, but an informant inside the AK had tipped him off, saying that as a Jew himself, he couldn't allow him to be killed. He also warned Gruber that, if he wanted to live, he should leave Poland at once." Ibid., 183.

[651] Blaichman, *Rather Die Fighting*, 178–79.

[652] Blaichman, *Rather Die Fighting*, 173.

[653] Blaichman, *Rather Die Fighting*, 180–85. In Germany, Blaichman immersed himself in the black market on a grand scale:

> I was soon involved in the black market, like everyone else who wanted to earn a living. American Jewish soldiers and relief workers used to come to the camps to hear the stories of the survivors, and they brought us all sorts of goods you couldn't find in German stores—chocolate, cigarettes, silk and nylon stockings, margarine, coffee, whiskey. Some of us made deals with them to bring larger quantities of goods that we could sell, and so, slowly but surely, each of us began finding customers.
>
> The soldiers also put us in touch with people who could ship in truckloads and railroad carloads of goods. I had struck up an acquaintance with a German Jew named Levy, who had somehow "organized" a Volkswagen. He introduced me to people who ran a Belgian import-export company that the Germans had taken over and that the family had now reclaimed. They had warehouses and trucks and everything we needed to bring in goods. It wasn't long before I became one of their top traders. We sold tons of coffee beans to people who would roast it, and truckloads of margarine, chocolate, and cigarettes.

The victims of Stalinist oppression were overwhelmingly ethnic Poles and Jews figured prominently among the oppressors. According to the most recent and in-depth studies, their share of the top positions in the Ministry of Public Security exceeded 37 percent in the years 1944–1954, and ethnic Poles were in a minority.[654] Thousands of more Jews served in various capacities in the Security Office and militia which

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[654] The number of Jews occupying senior positions in the Soviet-imposed bureaucracy and apparatus of terror is an issue that is far from clear, and one that is hotly contested, but by all credible accounts it was substantial. Jewish historians favour a document from November 1945 (a handwritten note by President Bolesław Bierut) which states that of the top 500 people, sixty-seven were Jews, i.e., 13 percent, and emphasize the fact that Jews constituted only 1.7 percent of the overall personnel in the secret police. According to Polish historian Andrzej Paczkowski, between 1944 and 1956—when Jews constituted less than 1 percent of Poland's population, out of 447 persons occupying positions of leadership in the headquarters of Poland's Ministry of Public Security, 131 (just over 29 percent) were Jews." The proportion of Jews in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was even more pronounced, and it appears that most of the Jews in senior positions regarded themselves as Jews, both ethnically and religiously. See Andrzej Paczkowski, "Żydzi w UB: Próba weryfikacji stereotypu," in Tomasz Szarota, ed., *Komunizm: Ideologia, system, ludzie* (Warsaw: Neriton and Instytut Historii PAN, 2001), 196–97; Andrzej Paczkowski, "Jews in the Polish Security Apparatus: An Attempt to Test the Stereotype," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 16 (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2003), 453–64. A secret NKVD report from October 20, 1945, prepared for Beria by Nikolai Selivanovskii, the chief Soviet adviser in Poland's Ministry of Public Security, provides even higher figures: 18.7 percent of the Security Office and 50 percent of the leadership positions were occupied by Jews. Jews also occupied all the leadership positions in the intelligence department. The report goes on to note that this state of affairs, not surprisingly, "gives rise to a vehement dissatisfaction among Poles." See Tatiana Cariewskaja [Tsarevskaia], Andrzej Chmielarz, Andrzej Paczkowski, Ewa Rosowska, and Szymon Rudnicki. *Teczka specjalna J. W. Stalina: Raporty NKWD z Polski 1944–1946* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Instytut Historyczny Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Oficyna Wydawnicza Rytm, Archiwum Państwowe Federacji Rosyjskiej, 1998), 420–22. More recent investigations of personnel files undertaken by Poland's Institute of National Remembrance revealed that, during the years 1944–1954, 167 of the 450 top positions in the Ministry of Public Security, or 37.1 percent, were occupied by persons of Jewish origin. Ethnic Poles accounted for 49.1 percent, and the balance were filled for the most part by Soviet officers (Russians, Belorussians, and Ukrainians), who accounted for 10.2 percent of the cadre. Of the 107 voivodship Security Office heads and their deputies, 22 were Jews. See Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, "Żydzi w kierownictwie UB: Stereotyp czy rzeczywistość?" *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 11 (November 2005): 37–42; Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, ed., *Aparat bezpieczeństwa w Polsce: Kadra kierownicza,* vol. 1: *1944–1956* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2005). Interestingly, many historians ignore this well-documented research, since it is "problematic" for their *a priori* discounting of the behaviour of a significant number of Jews as a factor in Polish-Jewish relations. See, for example, Michael Fleming, *Communism, Nationalism and Ethnicity in Poland, 1944–50* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 161, n.20, where Fleming claims that in 1945, Jews held just 13 per cent of management positions, and goes on to state that the claim made by the Right that the Security Office was, at the highest levels, dominated by Jews and Soviets "owes more to preconceived notions than to reality." Other branches of the government such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and diplomatic posts, the mass media, the censorship office, the Ministry of Justice, and the political education bureau of the army, were also inundated with Jews. On the number of Jews occupying official positions in the regime, see Korboński, *The Jews and Poles in World War II,* passim; Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 58–65, 72–86; Olejnik, *Polityka narodowościowa Polski w latach 1944–1960,* 395; Mirosław Piotrowski, *Ludzie bezpieki w walce z narodem i Kościołem: Służba Bezpieczeństwa w Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej w latach 1944–1978—Centrala,* 2nd edition (Lublin: Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej, 2000), 313–45; Jerzy Robert Nowak, *Zbrodnie UB* (Warsaw: Maron, 2001); Zofia Krupska, "Mniejszości narodowe i religijne na ziemiach polskich w świetle dokumentacji Centralnego Archiwum MSW (1944–1945)," in Jacek Ziemowit Pietraś and Andrzej Czarnocki, eds., *Polityka nardowościowa państw Europy Środkowowschodniej: Materiały z międzynarodowej konferencji "Mniejszości narodowe i religijne w pokomunistycznej Europie Środkowowschodniej", zorganizowanej w dniach 20–22 października 1992 roku,* Part Two (Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 1993), 106–17; Nawrocki, *Zamiast wolności,* 18, 26–30. The apparatus of oppression in Łódź, for example, was dominated by Jews. Leo Hochberg and Michał Salpeter (aka Morko Meilech) handed down numerous death sentences to members of the Polish underground taken before the regional military tribunal, where Feliks Aspis served as an ardent prosecutor. Leading positions in the regional security office and central training school were occupied by Major Józef Czaplicki, Major Józef Krakowski, Major Bolesław Krzywiński aka Bernard Schildhaus, Mieczysław Baumac, Edward Szejnfeld, Aleksander Rozenblum, Michał Jachimowicz, Aleksander Dyrdak, Tomasz Lempart aka Dawid Fiszer, Helena Rozmaryn, Dawid Międzyrzecki, Leonard Wojciechowski (aka Jakub Szmulowicz), Mieczysław Broniatowski, and Józef Arski. See Janusz Wróbel, "W cieniu Holocaustu: Odrodzenie społeczności żydowskiej w Łódzkiem po II wojnie światowej," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 11 (November 2005): 26–36, here at 31–32. In the Olsztyn region, where no

serious incidents directed at Jews were reported, three of the top seven positions in the voivodship security office were held by Jews, and if we count the next highest level of authority, the percentage drops to about ten, which is still a gross overrepresentation given the area had a Jewish population of between 60 and 300. See Renata Gieszczyńska and Witold Gieszczyński, "Żydzi na Warmii i Mazurach po II wojnie światowej: Zarys problematyki," *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość,* no. 2 (10) (2006): 231–43. Jews were quite visible in top positions in the Pomorze voivodship, with Antoni Alster, Józef Jurkowski (Jungman), and Henryk Malinowski holding offices in Bydgoszcz. The military garrisons in Bydgoszcz and Włocławek were also headed by Jews (Gilerman and Michał Weinstein). See Tomasz Kawski, *Kujawsko-dobrzyńscy Żydzi w latach 1918–1950* (Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 2006), 281. For reports on the activities of Jewish functionaries in the Lublin and Rzeszów regions see, respectively, Leszek Pietrzak, Sławomir Poleszak, Rafał Wnuk, and Mariusz Zajączkowski, eds., *Rok pierwszy: Powstanie i działalność Aparatu Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego na Lubelszczyźnie (lipiec 1944–czerwiec 1945* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2004), 51, 67, 77, 155, 185, 290, 312, 390, 395; Nawrocki, *Zamiast wolności,* 31–34, 39, 42, 90, 101, 113. The composition of the security office fluctuated (and included many Poles, but also Soviets, Ukrainains, and Belorussians), and the proportion of Jews in the lower ranks was undoubtedly higher in the earlier stages and formative period of Soviet rule. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that the *modus operandi* and political agenda of the security forces were set not by the rank and file but at the top levels where the key positions were occupied overwhelmingly by non-Poles, with Jews and Soviet citizens being the dominant groups. This marked overrepresenation of non-Poles in an apparatus that targeted Poles foremost necessarily had to have an impact on relations between Poles and Jews.

In some counties of Lublin province, the majority of militia and security officers were Ukrainians. For example, in Tomaszów, in December 1944, there were 73 Ukrainian militiamen and only 18 Poles. The preponderance of Ukrainians in the militia, security office (its first directors were Włodzimierz Kaliszczuk and Mikołaj Oleksa, both Ukrainians) and Polish People's Party in Włodawa was also striking. Many Ukrainians were employed in the security offices in Biała Podlaska and Parczew, and the militia also contained many Ukrainians. In the small town of Sosnowica both the commander (Łuć) and his deputy (Mikołaj Dmitruk) were Ukrainians, and in the vicinity there were several "Red" Ukrainian villages (Hołowno, Górki, Zienki), where most of the adult men were members of the Polish People's Party. Ukrainians were also employed as functionaries outside areas of Ukrainian settlements, for example in Krasnystaw and Lublin (where the head of the provincial security office was Teodor Duda, a Ukrainian). Ukrainian functionaries were favoured by the Red Army and, significantly, the security office targeted the Polish anti-Communist underground but did not harass the Ukrainian nationalist underground in the early stages. Initially, Polish recruits were difficult to attract and the security offices were understaffed. See See Grzegorz Markus, *Powiatowy Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego we Włodawie w walce z polski podziemiem niepodległościowym w latach 1944–1947* (Włodawa, 2009), 12–13, 15; 28–29; <http://www.wlodawa.pl/cgi-bin/artki/archiwum/a962.cgi>; Robert Ziętek, "Służba Bezpieczeństwa OUN w Nadrejonie 'Łewada' w latach 1945–1947," in *Rocznik Białopodlaski,* vol. 8–9 (Biała Podlaska, 2000–2001): 113–15; Olejnik, *Polityka narodowościowa Polski w latach 1944–1960,* 267–70; Waldemar Wojciech Bednarski, "Rodzina Umerów vel Humerów," *Nasza Polska,* April 13, 2004; Pietrzak, et al., eds. *Rok pierwszy,* 27, 66; Mieczysław Wójtowicz, *ROCH i Bataliony Chłopskie w obwodzie krasnostawskim 1939–1945* (Lublin: n.p., 1997), 230, 290–91; Jan Pisuliński, "Polityka władz wobec społeczności ukraińskiej w latach 1944–1956," *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, no. 2 (2004): 165; Anna Grażyna Kister, *Studium zniewalania: Walka aparatu bezpieczeństwa z polskim zbrojnym podziemiem niepodległościowym na Lubelszczyźnie (1944–1947)* (Kraków: Arcana, 2005), 46, 58, 128; Bechta, *Pogrom czy odwet?,* 174–75, 178–79. For examples of the activities of Ukrainian functionaries in the Lublin and Rzeszów provinces see: Pietrzak, et al., *Rok pierwszy,* 48–49, 57, 59, 128, 147, 195, 241, 253, 261, 268, 272, 295, 312, 333, 355, 358, 370, 371; Nawrocki, *Zamiast wolności,* 101, 106, 110–111. Ukrainians served in the state security office throughout Poland. See, for example, Wiera Gran, *Sztafeta oszczerców: Autobiografia śpiewaczki* (Paris: n.p., 1980), 49, who mentions Jan Kłusek, Ukrainian officer in Warsaw, in addition to many Jewish henchmen. Leon Łapiński, a covert security office agent of Ukrainian origin, who had denounced key players of the People's Guard in Lwów to the Gestapo, played a key role in flushing out the remnants of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in Poland (he served in the security service of that underground group). See Igor Hałagida, *Prowokacja »Zenona«: Geneza, przebieg i skutki operacji MPB o kryptonimie »C–1« przeciwko banderowskiej frakcji OUN i wywiadowi brytyjskiemu (1950–1954)* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2005). Some Ukrainians were also prominent in other state positions, such as the notorious military judge Włodzimierz Ostapowicz, who sentenced more than 200 members of the Polish undetground to death in 1946–1947 alone. See Piotr Szubarczyk, "Sowiecka sprawiedliwość w Polsce 1944–1945," *Nasz Dziennik,* February 17, 2006. Quite a few Ukrainians who had served as guards in German death camps or were members of Ukrainian nationalist underground assumed false identities and posed as Poles after the war. See, for example, Stanisław Sterkowicz, *»Jeśli echo ich głosów unilknie…«: Rzecz o terrorze hitlerowskim* (Włocławek: Włocławskie Towarzystwo Naukowe and Lega, 2002), 360.

The Belorussian minority was also strikingly overrepresented in the local agencies of the Communist proxy regime in the Białystok region, the terror apparatus in particular. At the beginning of 1945 they constituted 10 percent of the militiamen and 50 percent of the security police functionaries. In the county of Bielsk Podlaski the proportion of Belorussians in the Security Office in 1945 stood at 76 percent. Quite a few Belorussian functionaries were employed in purely Polish towns like Łomża, where they constituted about one third of the security officers, as in other regions of

were the state's tools for suppressing the anti-Communist underground forces. Given this state of affairs, it is difficult to concur with those historians who ascribe all the problems that Jews faced in the postwar period to "Polish anti-Semitism." Moreover, there was often an underlying racial factor in the persecution of Poles as Jewish henchmen sought to settle old scores: racist epithets were frequent—Poles were called "you Polish pig" (*"ty polska świnio"*) in the Nazi fashion, and Jewish jailers—such as Shlomo (Solomon) Morel, the commander of the Świętochłowice and Jaworzno camps—spoke openly of revenge.[655] A Polish prisoner recalled the taunt he received from his sadistic torturer, Colonel Mateusz Frydman: "By what right do you Poles want independence for Poland?"[656] Józef Brancewicz, a member of the Home Army arrested in January 1945, recalled how, during his imprisonment in Świr, a former Jewish school mate, now serving in the Soviet militia (Jews constituted about half the militia in that town), approached him, slapped him in the face several times, ripped a chain with a medal of Our Lady of Ostra Brama from his neck, and trampled it with his feet.[657] Anatol Fejgin, head of investigations at the Security Office, talked about the need "to kill Polish pride, to shoot down patriotism."[658] Wiktor Herrer, a director in the Ministry of Public

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Poland not inhabited by Belorussians such as Lublin and Rzeszów. The overrepresentation of Belorussians and their support of the Communist regime fostered animosity between Belorussians and Poles. See Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust,* 154; Eugeniusz Mironowicz, "Białorusini," in Madajczyk, *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce,* 15; Machcewicz and Persak, eds., *Wokół Jedwabnego,* vol. 2, 374; Olejnik, *Polityka narodowościowa Polski w latach 1944–1960,* 504–505; Pietrzak, et al., *Rok pierwszy,* 51, 52, 391; Nawrocki, *Zamiast wolności,* 111, 121, 124–25; Błażejewicz, *W walce z wrogami Rzeczypospolitej,* 151; Tomasz Danilecki, "Kadra Powiatowego Urzędu Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego w Bielsku Podlaskim w 1944 r.", in Jan Jerzy Milewski, ed., *Studia i materiały do dziejów najnowszych ziem północno-wschodnich Polski (1939–1989)* (Białystok: Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne, Oddział w Białymstoku, 2004), 68–73; Tomasz Danilecki, "Funkcjonariusze narodowości białoruskiej w Powiatowym Urzędzie Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego w Bielsku Podlaskim w latach 1944–1956 (zarys problematyki)," Marcin Zwolski, "Rywalizacja zawodowa Polaków i Białorusinów w więziennictwie białostockim po 1944 roku," in Jan Jerzy Milewski and Anna Pyżewska, eds., *Stosunki polsko-białoruskie w województwie białostockim w latach 1939–1956* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Nardowi Polskiemu, 2005), 111–24; Tomasz Danilecki and Marcin Zwolski, *Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego w Bielsku Podlaskim (1944–1956)* (Białystok: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Oddział w Białymstoku, 2008), chapter 2; Krzysztof Sychowicz, *Urząd Bezpieczeństwa w Łomży—powstanie i działalność 1944–1956* (Białysyok: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Oddział w Białymstoku, 2009). For information about Aleksander Omiljanowicz, who headed the third section (which combatted insurgency) of the county Security Office in Suwałki., see Adam Białous, "Zmienić kwalifikację czynu," *Nasz Dziennik,* July 13, 2004); and Adam Białous, "Sąd uznał winę," *Nasz Dziennik*, September 23, 2004; Wojciech Cieśla, "Trzy życiorysy," *Rzeczpospolita,* August 13–14, 2005. A small number of Belorussians were killed by the Polish anti-Communist underground in retaliation during this period; however, this appears to have occurred not primarily because of their ethnicity but because of their active support of the Stalinist regime, since some Belorussians continued to be active in that very underground at the time. See Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust,* 154; Kazimierz and Łabuszewski, *"Łupaszka" "Młot" "Huzar",* 115; Paweł Kalisz and Piotr Łapiński, "Polskie podziemie niepodległościowe wobec ludności białoruskiej na Białostocczyźnie po 1944 roku (zarys problematyki), and Sławomir Iwaniuk, "Represje polskiego podziemia wobec ludności białoruskiej na Białostocczyźnie po lipcu 1944 roku," in Milewski and Pyżewska, eds., *Stosunki polsko-białoruskie w województwie białostockim w latach 1939–1956,* 86–103.

[655] Mateusz Wyrwich, *Łagier Jaworzno: Z dziejów czerwonego terroru* (Warsaw: Editions Spotkania, 1995), 36, 37.

[656] "Trzy dokumenty ujawniające mechanizmy przemocy i gwałtu w latach 1945–1947," *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Paris), no. 47 (1984): 55. For another account about Frydman see Jerzy Poksiński, *"TUN": Tatar–Utnik–Nowicki. Represje wobec oficerów Wojska Polskiego w latach 1949–1956* (Warsaw: Bellona, 1992), 38.

[657] Józef Brancewicz, "Jedenaście lat na nieludzkiej ziemi," in Edward Walewander, ed., *Polacy w Rosji mówią o sobie* (Lublin: Stowarzyszenie "Wspólnota Polska", 1994), vol. 2, 190–91.

[658] Mateusz Wyrwich, "Mord w kościele," *Tygodnik Solidarność,* September 27, 2002.

Security, warned Polish underground members: "Our task is not just to destroy you physically, but we have to destroy you morally."[659] After risking his life to protect Jews, the forester Stanisław Stankiewicz was arrested after the war for his Home Army activities under a warrant issued by prosecutor Kazimierz Graff; he was murdered during interrogation by the Security Bureau.[660] Lieutenant-Colonel Aleksander Warecki (Warenkopf), head of the military tribunal of the Warsaw region, used his position of authority to turn the life sentence meted out (on trumped up charges) to Jan Kaim, an underground leader, into a death sentence because of the latter's activities as a nationalist student activist in Lwów before the war. (Kaim was executed in 1949.)[661] These are just some of the numerous examples of members of the anti-Communist underground who had the misfortune of running into Jewish prosecutors and security officers.[662]

Many, if not most, of these Jews retained a strong sense of their Jewishness. Naftali Saleschutz, who went by the name Tadeusz Zaleski, became the chief of the security office in Kraków and later Wrocław. Like many other Jews in positions of authority in Communist Poland, he was an ardent Jewish nationalist at heart. Saleschutz does not mince words when he describes his feelings toward Poles:

> The average Pole felt it his duty—indeed his joy, to turn in escaped Jews to the Germans.
>
> The AK [Home Army] was violently anti-Semitic. … the commandant of the AK, General Bor Komorowski … called upon the Polish underground to kill the Jews hiding in the countryside …
>
> The anti-Semitism that seemed to come with the mothers' milk flowed among the Poles unabated.
>
> It was not by accident that Hitler built his most infamous death camps on Polish soil. Compliant sympathizers to the Final Solution could be found in the general neighborhood for the asking.[663]

Mistaken for a Pole by some Jewish actors, Saleschutz heard what typically was said about Poles behind their backs:

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[659] Czesław Leopold and Krzysztof Lechicki, *Więźniowie polityczni w Polsce w latach 1945–1956* (Gdańsk: underground publication, 1981), 8; later published as Czesław Leopold and Krzysztof Lechicki, *Więźniowie polityczni w Polsce w latach 1945–1956* (Paris: Editions Spotkania, 1984).

[660] Gutman and Bender, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 4: *Poland,* Part 2, 746; Helena Rembelska, Joanna Sobolewska-Pyz, Halina Szostkiewicz, eds., *Zapukali do drzwi…* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Dzieci Holocaustu w Polsce, 2011), 88–9. Kazimierz Graff, a military prosecutor, oversaw the prosecution of many prominent members of the Polish underground including the famed Witold Pilecki, who allowed himself to be imprisoned in Auschwitz from where he dispatched intelligence reports about the camp, Stanisław Sojczyński ("Warszyc"), and 12 Home Army members who were executed after a three-day trial in Siedlce. See Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, *Prawnicy czasu bezprawia: Sędziowie i prokuratorzy wojskowi w Polsce, 1944–1956* (Kraków and Wrocław: Towarzystwo Naukowe Societas Vistulana and Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2005), 308.

[661] Leszek Żebrowski, "Kaim Jan," in *Encyklopedia "Białych Plam*" (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2002), vol. 9, 107–8.

[662] For some other accounts see Kamiński and Żaryn, eds., *Reflections on the Kielce Pogrom,* 92–93.

[663] Salsitz, *Three Homelands,* 133, 155–58, 224, 231.

> While we were smiling at one another, Diana Blumenfeld turned to her husband and said to him in Yiddish, "Look at that anti-Semitic, Polish face. I wonder how many Jews he has tortured. How can they possibly expect this Pole to protect Jews. I don't put trust putting our welfare into his hands."[664]

Ironically, Saleschutz's victims of choice were Poles (the security office was not known for persecuting Jews), and he expressed no regrets for his actions.

Eta Chajt Wrobel, who was sent to Wrocław to organize a Communist workers' organization, while her husband received permission to open a private enterprise, a restaurant, and found them a large apartment not far from the restaurant, recalled:

> Unless people already knew, no one supposed that Henry and I were Jews. One day, Henry was getting a shave near the restaurant in a barbershop run by a Holocaust survivor. Needing to speak with my husband, I walked into the barbershop. Seeing me, the owner muttered to someone in Yiddish that I should be a *kaporah* (a scapegoat who should die for dead Jews). He wondered, out lout, about how many Jews Henry and I had killed during the war. I gave the barber a dirty look and snapped back in Yiddish, "You are the *kaporah* and, just for the record, my husband and I saved many of our people."
>
> The barber grabbed his hair and said he couldn't believe we were Jews. We became good friends until the day I had to take him to task for his boorish behavior. The barber had taken in a Jewish girl and was taking advantage of her in every way. … I ordered him to make an honest woman of her or I would take her away and put her in a safe place. He decided then and there that he would marry her. He did, and they lived together until their deaths in America 50 years later.[665]

Luckily, they were not Poles—who knows how it would have ended. Wrobel acknowledges that she had no qualifications for the various positions she was assigned to:

> While I was pregnant, the Russians liberated Lodz [Łódź], and I was sent there to help organize the town under the new Polish government. To give me added stature, they gave me a title, Minister of Commercial Development, something I knew nothing about. When I told them so, they said it didn't matter. They ordered me to "just stay there."[666]

Abraham Wunderbojm (Wunderboim) was one of many Jewish partisans from the Parczew forest who were enlisted in the militia in the summer of 1944, after the "liberation" by the Soviets. Initially, as Adam

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[664] Ibid., 229.

[665] Wrobel, *My Life My Way*, 117–18.

[666] Ibid., 115.

Winder, he served in Lublin for six months. At the beginning of 1945, he was transferred to Radom where he served with three other Jews until allo but one of them "deserted" two years later. Their most important task was to search for Germans, German collaborators, and "Polish Fascists who were getting orders from England," that is, members of the Polish underground loyal to the Polish government exiled in London. Indeed, for Wunderboim, and many others like him, all Poles who were not Communists were considered to be "Fascists" and deserved what was coming to them.[667]

Tuviah Friedman (aka Towia or Tobiasz Frydman), then passing as Tadeusz Jasiński, also recalled his service in the militia in his native Radom, which he entered in January 1945, as well as his transfer to the security office in Gdańsk in April of that year. His goal was to exact as much vengeance as he could before leaving Poland. One thing is clear in his memoirs: neither he nor his Jewish colleagues abandoned their sense of Jewishness when they joined the Communist apparatus of repression.

> A group of Polish militia officers under the command of Lieutenant Adamski reached Radom from Lublin to organize a local militia. Some of Adamski's men were Jews who had spent the war years as partisans in the Lublin area. Toiva [Rotstein, passing as Jan Bartodziej] and I joined the militia …
>
> Our militia force had several tough assignments. We had to restore order to Radom … we had to put an end to the anarchistic activities of the A.K. and N.S.Z. partisan groups. And, most important to me, we were to ferret out and arrest Germans, Poles and Ukrainians who had engaged in wartime activity that was "detrimental to the best interests of Poland and the Polish people."
>
> With burning enthusiasm, I embarked on this last chore. Working with several militiamen who had been placed under my command, feeling my gun securely in its holster, I arrested one known war criminal after another. …
>
> Our unit was kept busy for weeks on end, as complaints and reports of Germans, Poles and Ukrainians poured into our headquarters. In the morning my commander would call me and hand me a list of names and addresses. Within the day my men and I would find them, disarm them, bring them in to headquarters, and let the Polish judiciary decide what to do with these people. I did my work efficiently …
>
> Five of my Radom friends, hearing that I was soon to leave for Danzig [Gdańsk], volunteered to join me. Bronek, who used to be known as Benjamin, was motivated like myself, by a desire to strike back at the Nazis, to seek revenge for what had been done to our families; indeed, he and I used to talk of the future, and we both sensed that we would not remain in Poland long, that

[667] Testimony of Adam Winder, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Interview Code 5517. Winder claims that he "deserted" his militia post in 1947 because the Polish government authorities were becoming more "Fascist-mined" and "things got bad for Jewish boys." The fourth Jewish member of the Radom militia who did desert with Winder was later killed by Poles. However, Winder did not leave Poland until 1948. He set up a business in Gliwice and travelled back and forth between Poland and Germany, dealing in the black market. He would depart from Poland via Czechoslovakia, with the assistance of the Bricha movement, and would return to Poland posing as a Pole who had been deported to Germany for forced labour. After being stopped with illegal goods, he decided to leave Poland permanently, arriving in Germany in 1948. There, he registered as five years younger than his actual age so that he could qualify to immigrate to the United States as a minor. He arrived in the United States in July 1945, as Adam Winder.

somehow, someday, we would settle in Palestine, in Eretz Israel, the Land of Israel. But now there was some unfinished business to be taken care of.

Yankel Boiman joined our group, too. Tall, blond, a husky fellow of my age, he too had escaped from a prison camp and hidden out in the forests. Cesiek Tzeslow, and his business-minded brother-in-law, Wolf Helcman, and a young friend of Boiman's whom I knew only as Stefan made up the rest of our group. Helcman was direct with me; he said he was going to Danzig primarily to make money, explaining that since the Germans had ruined his family's fortunes, he felt justified in taking advantage of chaotic conditions in Danzig to try to rebuild some of what he had lost. Nevertheless, he promised to do his full share as a member of our special group. My forest companion, Rotstein, stayed on in Radom. …

Next day we reported for duty to Colonel Korczynski, of the Minister of Public Security. The Colonel had been a partisan leader throughout the war. [As mentioned earlier, Grzegorz Korczyński People's Guard partisan unit was responsible for the murder of a number of Jews.] He had brought with him from Warsaw a staff of military officers, public prosecutors and others, all of whom were to help restore law and order to Danzig …

When I presented my papers to Colonel Korczynski, indicating that my group had been sent to Danzing for the special purpose of apprehending pro-Nazi elements, including saboteurs left behind by the fleeing Germans, he greeted me warmly, saying that he had been informed of our mission and pledging us his full support. …

I was but a lieutenant in the security service. … I was assigned to Danzig's fourth precinct. The police were to arrest the Germans in our area and bring them to me for questioning. Captain Forst, an attorney from Lwow [Lwów], was named head of our intelligence section, and I was to report to him. …

I began to develop a special sense about my prisoners, and most of the time it was possible for me to determine who had been an active Nazi and who had not. … I escorted my daily batch of scores of prisoners to the huge prison building and turned them over to the prison authorities. … Sometimes my superiors had to war me about losing my temper and striking a prisoner. Gradually I learned to restrain my actions. …

As reports of Nazi atrocities in the concentration camps began to multiply, and as I continued to wait in vain for some word of my family, I became vengeful. The German prisoners soon learned that they were lucky not to be assigned to me, because I was likely to display some of the venom I felt for the Nazis. …

I readily admit now that I probably was quite merciless with my prisoners, beating them, trying to extract the truth from them. I took a savage delight in entering a prison cell full of Germans and waiting for them to respond to my entrance. …

My heart was filled with hate. I hated them in defeat as I had hated them in their moments of victory.

Although I was happy in my work, and felt now for the first time that I was making an important contribution, I was not happy with myself. The more brutal I acted, the less I knew myself. I began to fear that my actions would change me, and that I would become one with those I sought to punish. … I was beginning to be known as the unmerciful one, who beat and who harangued his prisoners, and as one who showed little humanity to others. …

> One day a group of Jews from Radom arrived in Danzig and we greeted each other joyously. … They said they had come to Danzig because I and my friends were there, and that we would surely look the other way if they engaged in possibly shady business deals. …
>
> Captain Forst instructed me one day to arrest Cardinal Splet [Bishop Carl Maria Splett was arrested in August 1945], who was the head of the diocese of Dienst [Gdańsk] …
>
> There was a group of Jewish young men and women who had organized themselves into a Kibbutz near Danzig and who planned to emigrate and settle in Palestine. … From time to time I would visit them and bring with me some food and clothes … I liked these people very much, and was attracted to their ideas. When they sang nostalgically of the Valley of Jezreel, I felt a responsive chord in my heart. … The leaders of the Kibbutz had asked me to provide them with some arms … I managed to secure some guns and ammunition for the group. Little by little, I found myself drawn more and more to these youngsters …
>
> Poland had too many bitter memories for me. I despised the resentment of the people toward the pitiful handful of Jews who had survived the Hitler period, and I was sickened by the attitude of the Polish Government officials, who pretended that anti-Jewish sentiments did not exist. For me, a homeland for the Jews seemed the only possible answer. …
>
> At the Security Service offices, my request for an honorable severance from my government job was met with raised eyebrows. Some people thought I had abandoned my reason; others were more suspicious of my motives. My friends and immediate superiors tried to dissuade from my decision, but I was steadfast and determined in my desire to leave Poland, to reach Palestine, and to join with Jews from all over the world in working—and fighting—for a homeland for my people.
>
> Colonel Korczynski greeted my decision calmly, and with understanding. … He expedited my application for a voluntary resignation, which had to be approved in Warsaw.
>
> I toured the Danzig prison one evening before my final departure for Lodz [Łódź], where I was to meet with the Kibbutz leaders and await instructions for my departure for Palestine. The emigration of Jews from Poland was discouraged [at that time] by the government, and would-be Palestinians were compelled to leave the country via illegal routes.[668]

According to archival sources, Friedman was dismissed from his position in December 1945 for various trangressions.[669] In 1946, the notorious Józef Bik aka Bukar aka Gawerski became the head of invesitgations in the Gdańsk security office. Bukar was responsible for the interrogation of Danuta Siedzik ("Inka"), a member of the Wilno Brigade of the Home Army who was sentenced to death in a Communist

[668] Friedman, *Nazi Hunter*, 76–77, 81, 84–85, 88–91, 93, 100, 102, 104–5. Yehuda (Leon) Lerner, an escapee from Sobibór who joined a partisan unit led by Chil Grynszpan, became the deputy commander of security police in Radom in January 1945, at the age of 18 (sic), and remained in that position until the summer of 1945. See Jules Schelvis, *Sobibor: A History of a Death Camp* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 232, 236. Another Jewish functionary in Radom was Oswald Sznept. See Józef Łyżwa "Łowicz", "Pomagałem, a potem siedziałem," *Gazeta Polska*, February 10, 1994.

[669] Raina, *Mordercy uchodzą bezkarnie,* 81, 116.

show trial.[670] Markus Kac became the deputy head of the investigation department in the Gdańsk security office in 1947, where he was known for his brutality toward Polish political prisoners.[671]

The ubiquitous presence of Jews in the Stalinist apparatus is confirmed by another highly placed Polish Jew:

> In practically every little town and village the political police was Jewish. It might have been a diabolic Russian plan originating in Stalin's days to give this ungrateful task to Jews. It might also have been motivated by Stalin's basic suspicion of Poles. In any case, this could not have happened had there not been countless Jewish candidates for this type of post.[672]

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[670] Bukar's next post was deputy head of the investigation section of the security office in Katowice. See "Odnalazł się w Szwecji," *Rzeczpospolita,* March, 19, 2004; Tomasz Szymborski, "Do procesów raczej nie dojdzie," *Rzeczpospolita,* January 2, 2006; Zenon Baranowski, "Bił więźniów i chce za to wyższej emerytury: Oprawca domaga się rewaloryzacji," *Nasz Dziennik,* January 27–28, 2007; Piotr Szubarczyk, "Nieznane oblicza Józefa Gawerskiego," *Nasz Dziennik,* January 27–28, 2007; Zenon Baranowski, "Bukar uniknął sprawiedliwości," *Nasz Dziennik,* March 10, 2009.

[671] Kac's next post was chief of the investigation section of the Security Office in Katowice. See Tadeusz M. Płużański, "Mordy katowickiej bezpieki," *Najwyższy Czas!,* October 31, 2009.

[672] Edwin Eytan, "Poland Without Jews," *Bulletin of the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles,* June 15, 1978. Some examples, of many, where Jewish security officers (many of them assumed Polish-sounding names) oversaw and carried out interrogations and sadistic tortures of Polish political prisoners can be found in the following sources: Józef Łyżwa "Łowicz", "Pomagałem, a potem siedziałem," *Gazeta Polska* (Warsaw), February 10, 1994 (Hodyrko and Hazelmajer in Radom); Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 62 (Hrubieszów); Kazimierz Moczarski, *Zapiski* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1990), 302–308 (Colonel Józef Różański aka Goldberg, Anatol Fejgin); Zbigniew Kusiak, "Różański Jozef", in *Encyklopedia "Białych Plam"* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2005), vol. 16, 17–23; Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory,* 477 (Aharon Carmi, a former partisan); Piotr Kosobudzki, *Przez druty, kraty i kajadany: Wspomnienia partyzanta NSZ* (Wrocław: Nortom, 1997), 248–50 (Cebo, Frenkel, Zajdel); Krzysztof Pilecki, *Był sens walki i sens śmierci* (Bydgoszcz: Towarzystwo Miłośników Wilna i Ziemi Wileńskiej, 1998), 100 (Colonel Józef Goldberg aka Różański, Colonel Roman Romkowski); Grażyna Dziedzińska, "W trosce o zdrowie … oprawców," *Nasza Polska* (Warsaw), August 5, 1998 (Bronisław Szczerbakowski, Jerzy Łobanowski, Tadeusz Poddębski—Szczerbakowski's prosecution is on hold because of his alleged health problems); Grażyna Dziedzińska, "Rodowity chłop z Kurpiów," *Nasza Polska,* August 12, 1998 (Lieutenant Franciszek Łaszczewski, Sergeant Franciszek Kamiński—Łaszczewski repeatedly kicked and struck Józef Więcek with a wooden truncheon until he was bloodied, and for good measure smashed in his temple with a pistol); Wilhelm Tasecki, "Jabłko blisko jabłoni," *Nasza Polska,* August 5, 1998 (Leszek Krzemień); Grażyna Dziedzińska, "Zakratowane niebo," *Nasza Polska,* October 21, 1998 (Kobylec, Leon Midro); Tomasz Grotowicz, "Kaci Polaków: Menio (Mieczysław) Waksman," *Nasza Polska,* April 7, 1999 (Waksman was an investigating officer at the state security prison on Podwale Street in Wrocław, where political prisoners were forced to sit on the leg of a chair, their ears were burned with cigarettes, and sharp needles were poked into their chests); Grażyna Dziedzińska, "Jerzy Biesiadowski—wytrwały," *Nasza Polska,* June 9, 1999 (the chief of the first division of the security prison in Piotrków Trybunalski was a sadistic Jew by the name of Goldberg); Tomasz Grotowicz, "Kaci Polaków: Julia Brystygier," *Nasza Polska,* August 4, 1999 (Julia Brystygier); Tomasz Grotowicz, "Kaci Polaków: Filip Barski (Badner)", *Nasza Polska,* November 3, 1999 (Filip Badner, later Barski, oversaw the torture of Home Army KEDYW head for the Busko district)—see also Jerzy Bednarek, "Stacja Czastary," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 5 (May 2004): 58, who mentions Badner in the role of a prosecutor in Wrocław, as well as another prosecutor, Eugeniusz Landsberg; Tomasz Grotowicz, "Kaci Polaków: Zygmunt Bukowiński," *Nasza Polska,* April 19, 2000 (Major Feliks Rosenbaum); Jan Ordyński, "Sto godzin przesłuchania bez przerwy," *Rzeczpospolita,* February 5, 2002 (Lieutenant Colonel Józef Światło); "Michał Bierzyński 'Sęp'–sfingowany wyrok," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 11 (November 2002): 65–72 (Efraim-Edward Kisler, the chief executioner at the security office in Białystok, who was responsible for the deaths of many members of the anti-Communist underground); Tomasz Grotowicz, "Kaci Polaków: Franciszek-Efroim Klitenik," *Nasza Polska,* July 15, 2003 (Franciszek-Efroim Klitenik was a prison commander in Wrocław, Dzierżoń, and Łódź); Adam Kruczek, "Utrwalacze sowieckiego terroru," *Nasz Dziennik,* May 31, 2004 (Michał aka Mendel Dyma, a former partisan who became a lieutenant in the security office in Zamość); Tadeusz M. Płużański, "Ryszard Nazarewicz—partyzant, ubek, 'profesor'," *Gazeta Polska,* February 7, 2007 (Ryszard Nazarewicz, who rose to the rank of major in Łódź). A Jew from Eastern Poland by the name Żółtogorski became the commander of the security office in Siepc which became notorious for its repression. See the letter of Jerzy K. Malewicz, *Nowy Dziennik*

(New York), January 2001. For information about the exploits of Lieutenant Colonel Józef Światło (Izak Fleischfarb), who became deputy director of the Tenth Department of the Ministry of Public Security, see Artur Górski, "Światłowstręt," *Polityka,* no. 48 (2003), and Andrzej Paczkowski, "Tak było: Trzy twarze Józefa Światły," *Rzeczpospolita,* December 20, 2003, and December 27, 2003. Chaim Lipster, who joined the Red militia in Żółkiewka in September 1939 and then left for the Soviet Union with the retreating Soviet army, entered the security office in Wrocław where he hunted down members of the Home Army. See Chaim Zylberklang, *Z Żółkiewki do Erec Israel: Przez Kotłas, Buzułuk, Ural, Polskę, Niemcy i Francję,* Second revised and expanded edition (Lublin: Akko, 2004), 112. Alfred Zimmerman supervised the interrogation of Albert Bil, a former Home Army member, who was tortured repeatedly; Piotr Kossobudzki was tortured by Jewish security officers named Frenkel and Zajdel; Lieutenant Eliasz Trokenheim oversaw the torture of Halina Sawicka, a member of the underground, in the Security Ofice prison in Łomża; Lieutenant Colonel Jan Amons presided over the interrogation of a group of boy scouts arrested in Gdańsk who were tortured in the process. See Marek J. Chodakiewicz, "The Dialectics of Pain: The Interrogation Methods of the Communist Secret Police in Poland, 1944–1955," *Glaukopis,* no. 2–3 (2005): 99–144, here at 115–16, 128. (This latter source also refers to the activities of Colonel Różański and Lieutenant Colonel Światło.) The head of the security office in Lubartów was a Jew who had assumed the name of Dworecki. See Kister, *Studium zniewalania,* 84–85. A Jew by the name of Polak was the infamous and sadistic head of the security office in Jelenia Góra; he even employed mentally ill patients who were intoxicated for this purpose. See Kaja Bogomilska, "Fabryczki śmierci," *Nasza Polska,* November 15, 2000. Dr. Taub, who ran a private Jewish school in Tarnów before the war, became the "chief of the political police division of all Lower Silesia, the real power behind the secret police, and he was headquartered in Wroclaw [Wrocław]." See 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), 155–56. Sonya Rozavsky, who hailed from Łachwa, became a police commander in Białystok. See Kolpanitzky, *Sentenced To Life,* 202. For unverified accounts regarding the father of Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski, said to be Zdzisław Stolzman, see Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust,* 107–108; Jan Krawiec and Dominik Dzimirowicz's accounts posted at: <http://www.capolonia.com/izaak_stolzman.html> and <http://www.polonica.net/Kwas-Stoltzman.htm> (Dzimirowicz also mentions the exploits of Stolzman's associate Lejbe Bartkowski); and Jerzy Rostkowski, *Znikające miasta: Gross Born—Borne Sulinowo, Westfalenhof—Kłomino* (Warsaw: CB Andrzej Zasieczny, 2004), 82–83; Piotr Gontarczyk, "Aleksander Kwaśniewski w dokumentach SB: Fakty i interpretacje," *Aparat Represji w Polsce Ludowej 1944–1989,* no. 1(7) (2009), which cites confirmation allegedly provided by Kwaśniewski's father to the security police. For additional examples see: Józef Łyżwa "Łowicz", "Pomagałem, a potem siedziałem," *Gazeta Polska*, February 10, 1994 (Oswald Sznept in Radom); Waldemar Monkiewicz, "Za cenę życia: O ratowaniu Żydów w Białostockiem o okresie okupacji niemieckiej," in Dobroński and Monkiewicz, *Białostoccy Żydzi*, vol. 2, 223 (Mojżesz Szuster); "Kaci Polaków," *Nasza Polska,* February 16, 2000 (Aleksander Warecki a.k.a. Warenhaupt and Feliks Aspis); Piotr Kardela, "Kranostawscy Żydzi," *Przegląd Polski* (New York), June 16, 2000 (Nehrinberg, who became a major in the Citizens' Militia in Wrocław under an assumed name; Mandeltort, who joined the security office in Poznań); Grażyna Dziedzińska, "Inwazja ubeckich potworów," *Nasza Polska,* November 1, 2000; Janina Kiełboń and Zofia Leszczyńska, *Kobiety Lubelszczyzny represjonowane w latach 1944–1956* (Lublin: Test, 2002), 204 (Józef Feldman) (the latter source also mentions, at p. 195, a militia commander named Ignacy Grinberg); Musiał, *Lata w ukryciu*, vol. 1, 60 (Mojsie Wurtzel, commander of the Security Office in Tarnów); Diatłowicki, *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945*, vol. 1, 65 (Dawid Taśma, a security officer in Rawa Mazowiecka); Sulej, *Zdrada i zbrodnia,* 87, 103 (Majer Szulim Lewinsohn, a security officer in Lublin). The activities of the security office in Przemyśl, which was headed by Bolesław Krzywiński aka Bernard Borys Schildhaus, is described in Dariusz Iwaneczko, *Urząd Bezpieczeństwa w Przemyślu 1944–1956* (Rzeszów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2004); Anna Pyżewska, "Losy ludności żydowskiej w województwie białostockim w latach 1944–1949—wybrane problemy," in Wijaczka and Miernik, *Z przeszłości Żydów polskich,* 292–93 (key positions in the Security Office in Białystok were filled by Eliasz Koton, Perła Gołdys-Ismach, Samuel Faber, Mojżesz Turek, Eliasz Baumac, Sonia Różawska-Rogowska). Jan Gorliński (Cezary Monderer-Lamensdorf) was deputy head of the Security Office in Mielec, Kraków, Koszalin, Szczecin and Lublin. Bolesław Krzywiński (Bernard Borys Schildhaus) was a senior security officer in Rzeszów, Przemyśl, Olsztyn and Łódź. See *Twarze lubelskiej bezpieki* (Lublin: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2007), which also lists many other Jewish functionaries. Ignacy Cedrowski (Isidor Cederbaum), who was the chief doctor at the Potulice labour camp from 1945 to 1948, was known for his sadistic treatment of the inmates. See Helga Hirsch, *Zemsta Ofiar: Niemcy w obozach w Polsce 1944–1950* (Warsaw: Volumen, 1999), 83ff. For examples of Jewish functionaries who headed a prison in Wrocław, see Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, "Naczelnicy więzienia przy ul. Kleczkowskiej we Wrocławiu 1945–1955," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 6 (June 2002): 55–58 (Henryk Markowicz and Franciszek (Efroim) Klitenik). Few of these officials ever faced trials and punishment for their criminal activities. Only three members of the notorious Tenth Department of the Ministry of Public Security were tied—Fejgin, Romkowski, and Różański, but their prison sentences were commuted to seven years.

Jews also figured prominently in the Ministry of Justice, and served as judges and prosecutors in military tribunals which often passed death sentences on members of the anti-Communist underground. Almost all of the top positions in the military tribunals were held by some 70 Jews and 50 Soviet officers. Colonel Henryk aka Hersz Podlaski, formerly deputy head of the military prosecutor's office, became deputy Attorney General from 1950 to 1955. See Tadeusz M.

Some, like Michael (Moishe) Checinski, embraced the new regime with the fervour typical of his milieu: former pro-Communist underground members from the Łódź ghetto. They soon made their presence felt:

> Several weeks after the end of the war, more than a dozen former members of the left-wing ghetto resistance movement had returned to Lodz [Łódź]. Most of them were young men and women aged 19 to 23. Imbued with Communist fanaticism, they returned to help rebuild the country and create a new, beautiful social order, or so they believed.

Płużański, "Podlaski Hersz, syn Mojżesza i Szpryncy," *Antysocjalistyczne Mazowsze,* April 15, 2005. Colonel Oskar aka Schie Karliner was the administrative head of the military tribunals from 1950 to 1956. Major Filip Feld presided over a military court that sentenced scores of Home Army members prosecuted by Lieutenant Karol Kern. One of the sentenced AK members, Albert Bil, was brutally tortured by Alfred Zimmerman, a security officer in Szczecin, and mocked for his Polish patriotism. See Michał Stankiewicz, "Poszukiwani oprawcy i ofiary: IPN wszczął śledztwo w sprawie tortur w szczecińskim UB," *Rzeczpospolita,* March 25, 2004. See also the report on Major Bolesław Kontrym ("Żmundzin"), who was executed on January 2, 1953: Zygmunt Opońca, "Musiał umrzeć…", *Nasza Polska,* February 25, 2003. Numerous Jewish judges, state and military prosecutors, and security functionaries are mentioned in Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, *Golgota wrocławska 1945–1956,* Second revised and expanded edition (Wrocław: Klio, 1996) and Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, *Prawnicy czasu bezprawia: Sędziowie i prokuratorzy wojskowi w Polsce, 1944–1956* (Kraków and Wrocław: Towarzystwo Naukowe Societas Vistulana and Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2005): Filip Badner, Marian Doerffer, Izydor Ber, Maks Bornstein, Leon Diamand, Marian Eksztajn, Marian Gajger, Stefania Garlińska, Kazimierz Graff, Ajtel Kalman, Franciszek Klitenik, Eliasz Koton, Henryk Kraft, Leon Michałowicz, Michał Rozenman, Feliks Rosenbaum, Izaak Schindler, Mieczysław Waksman, Józef Wekselberg, Iser Wilf, Henryk Zandberg, Maks Zytman Adam Hulberg, L. Fajgenbaum, Edward Baumgarten, Karol Borenstein, Leon Brandel, Jakub Cymerman, Mieczysław Huberman, Władysław Sztajnberg, Władysław Werfel, Szmul Buślik, Lewi Lejzer, I. Wajnsztajn, Abraham Daerman, Michał Kronfeld, Herman Stein, Schmul Sztajn, Stanisław Hollitecher, Henryk Kubler, Jan Orliński aka Unterweiser, Henryk Winograd, Ludwik Mezbaum, Maksymilian Aszkenazy, B. Gerszon, Henryk Holder (the chief military prosecutor), Oskar Karliner (the head of the Office of the Military Judiciary), Fajga Mindla Danielak aka Wolińska (department head in the Chief Military Prosecutor's Office), Iwan aka Jan Amons, Abraham Klein aka Roman Bojko, Lucjan Czubiński, Adam Grajewski, Abram Wolf aka Władysław Litmanowicz, Stefan Szechter aka Michnik, Hilary Minc, among others. (Szwagrzyk identified 75 military judges and prosecutors of Jewish origin, amny of whom occupied leading positions.) Aleksander Filiks, a judge of the Lublin Regional Military Court, imposed an indefinite prison sentence on Adam Jóźwik, an alleged "bandit" and "spy" who had spent almost five years in Auschwitz and Buchenwald. See Adam Jóźwik, *Wspomnienia z pobytu w niemieckich więzieniach i obozach koncentracyjnych podczas II wojny światowej w okresie od 9 października 1940 do 9 maja 1945 roku, to jest do końca wojny; i z więzień w powojennej Polsce do czerwca 1947 roku* (Siedlce: Unitas, 2010), 124. 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 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. Despite losing his position as a prosecutor, Lewiński never faced criminal charges and became the director of the state movie production enterprise, "Film Polski." See Reicher, *Country of Ash,* 246. The cases of 515 members of the Polish underground from the Lublin region sentenced to death by Stalinist military tribunals are profiled in Zofia Leszczyńska, *Ginę za to co najgłębiej człowiek ukochać może: Skazani na karę śmierci przez sądy wojskowe na Zamku lubelskim (1944–1945)* (Lublin: Czas, 1998), and Zofia Leszczyńska, *Ginę za to co najgłębiej człowiek ukochać może: Członkowie organizacji niepodległościowych na Lubelszczyźnie skazani na karę śmierci przez sądy wojskowe (1944–1955)* (Lublin: Test, 2003). For a popular overview that cites numerous examples, see Jerzy Robert Nowak, "Nowe fałsze Grossa (10): Zbrodnie bezpieki i sądownictwa," *Nasz Dziennik,* August 18, 2006, reproduced in his book *Nowe kłamstwa Grossa* (Warsaw: Maron, 2006). According to recent research, the military tribunals punished more than 80,000 people for crimes against the state in 1944–1945 and sentenced some 5,000 of them to death. See Joanna Żelazko, "Wojskowy Sąd Rejonowy w Łodzi," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 5 (May 2003): 76. It appears that Jews who incarcerated during this period were not arrested for political reasons, but rather for black market transactions. See August Grabski, "Kształtowanie się pierwotnego programu żydowskich komunistów w Polsce po Holokauście," in Berendt, et al., *Studia z historii Żydów w Polsce po 1945 r.,* 96 n.72.

> Our motivations did not stem from formal discipline, but from blind faith in the higher values of revolutionary principles, in placing the Party's interests over and above everything else, including personal ones.
>
> In the end we were all fanatical Communists and I was in no way an exception, maybe even a greater fanatic than most. Yet I was never ready to camouflage my Jewishness.[673]

Checinski, a former military intelligence officer, readily admits that NKVD officers charged with schooling and indoctrinating the new cadres favoured Jews as being far less susceptible to Polish nationalist deviations.[674] Other former security officers have gone to great lengths to downplay their activities, such as Marcel Reich-Ranicki, the celebrated German literary critic, who claims ignorance about how they joined, what they did and its harmfulness, and even suggests, without a shred of evidence, that antisemitism played a part in his dismissal and that he barely escaped severe punishment.[675]

It was inevitable that such a state of affairs would place Poles and Jews on another collision course, a reality that was recognized by honest observers. A Jewish woman who worked for the Central Committee of Jews in Poland after the war confided with dismay:

> Please do not forget what the role of Jews was in Poland in the postwar period. [Especially] today when one is keeping count of Stalinist crimes … And I'm unable to say that Jews weren't present there. You shouldn't think that there wasn't any revenge involved. The Jews aren't angels.[676]

While interned in the security prison in Wrocław, Jerzy Lech Rolski, a Home Army member, encountered a Jew who, before leaving for Palestine, told him that he did not want to be responsible for the crimes the Jews in the Security Office were perpetrating on Home Army members.[677] Zygmunt (Srul) Warszawer, a

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[673] Checinski, *Running the Gauntlet of Anti-Semitism,* 21, 27, 29. Checinski also contends, incredibly, that he knew nothing of Stalinist atrocities at the time. In the military counterintelligence in which he served during that darkest of eras, officers "were taught to abide by the code of officer's honor and the army ethic. No one was taught methods of torturing detainees or to engage in practices outside the legal system of the country. … the unveiling of the crimes of Beria and Stalin became a personal tragedy for many employees of the counterintelligence bodies and the security apparatus in general; they felt deceived and humiliated." Ibid., 54–55. When he joined the Łódź garrison he met Lieutenant Colonel Stanisława (Barbara) Sowińska, the sister of a famous Israeli artist, and was urged to change his father's name and his nationality to "Polish." Ibid., 51–52. Many stalwart Communists later became "fanatical Israeli patriots" when they left Poland. Ibid., 50.

[674] Checinski, *Poland,* 11.

[675] These as well as other fabrications in Reich-Ranicki's autobiography, *The Author of Himself: The Life of Marcel Reich-Ranicki* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), were exposed by Polish historian Piotr Gontarczyk, based on Reich-Ranicki's security file. See Piotr Gontarczyk, "Reich-Ranicki i fałszywy życiorys," *Życie Warszawy,* October 13, 2006.

[676] Interview with Adina Blady Szwajgier in Anka Grupińska, *Po kole: Rozmowy z żydowskimi żołnierzami* (Warsaw: Alfa, 1991), 180; Anka Grupińska, *Ciągle po kole: Rozmowy z żydowskimi żołnierzami getta warszawskiego* (Warsaw: Twój Styl, 2000), 184.

[677] Maciej Andrzej Zarębski, ed., *Tropem zbrodni stalinowskich: Materiały ogólnopolskiego sympozjum "Zbrodnie*

Jew who emerged from hiding among Polish peasants near his home town of Łaskarzew, was alarmed by what he saw around him and the inevitable harmful consequences that he could plainly foresee:

> But after the war it was handled wrong. So many Jews signed up for the police and for the secret police. I would shout at them: Why are you doing this? What do you need it for? You want to beat people up and shoot people? So go to Israel. You want to be a colonel or something in the government? Do it in your own country with your own people, but not here. There's a handful of us left and still you're pushing.[678]

The same was true of the membership of the (Communist) Polish Workers' Party [*Polska Partia Robotnicza*]. In Łuków, north of Lublin, by October 1944 they managed to enlist 18 Jews and only 13 Poles.[679]

Margot S., born in 1925, was appointed political commissar of Legnica, "a high position she was reluctant to accept." When she asked her acquaintance Aron, who had also been promised a political position, whether he wanted to be smuggled out of Poland with her to go to Palestine, he said: "You must be crazy, when could I have such a career going for me?" Margot told him that it was he who was crazy was, "you don't know the Russians, you have no business to tell the Poles how they should run their country." Aron did not listen to her, and when she ran into him later on in Munich, he was running for his life.[680]

Of this phenomenon John Sack writes:

> … the Office's institutions were full of Poles, 150,000 Poles from the antecedents to Solidarity. In places like Gleiwitz [Gliwice], the Poles stood against the prison wall as Implementation tied them to big iron rings, said, "Ready!" "Aim!" "Fire!" shot them, and told the Polish guards, "Don't talk about this." The guards, being Poles, weren't pleased, but the Jacobs, Josefs and Pineks, the Office's brass, stayed loyal to Stalin, for they thought of themselves as Jews, not as Polish patriots. And *that's* why the Good Fairy Stalin, the man who didn't hate the Germans but who abhorred the Enemies of the People, the Agents of Reactionary Elements, the Oppressors, Imperialists and Counterrevolutionaries, be they the Germans, Russians or Poles, had hired all the Jews on Christmas Eve, 1943, and had packed them into his Office of State Security, his instrument in the People's Republic of Poland.
>
> And now, 1945, the Poles went to war with the Office, shooting at Jews in Intelligence, Interrogation and Imprisonment, the Jews concluding that the Poles were antisemitic, the Poles

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stalinowskie wobec Polski", Chańcza, 5–7 października 1990 (Staszów: Staszowskie Towarzystwo Kulturalne, 1992), 160. During his internment, Rolski encountered many Jewish interrogators and prosecutors.

[678] Małgorzata Niezabitowska, *Remnants: The Last Jews of Poland* (New York: Friendly Press, 1986), 125.

[679] Anna Grażyna Kister, "Członkowie nieobecni z przyczyn nie ustalonych," *Gazeta Polska* (Warsaw), February 6, 2002.

[680] Lindeman, *Shards of Memory*, 155.

> contending that no, they were only anti the Office. One night in October in Kattowitz [Katowice], the Poles tossed a couple of hand grenades into Barek's, the middleweight's, apartment, the grenades going off in his kitchen, the air filling up with smoke and the walls with shrapnel. At the time, Barek [Eisenstein] and Regina, his bride, and Regina's mother were out at a Russian movie, but on their return they saw the black smoke, a shroud over all the tables and chairs, and Regina cried, "We must leave Poland!"
>
> "No, we must take revenge!" Barek said.[681]

Arguably the lowest point was reached in 1952 when, after a farcical one-day secret show trial, Judge Maria Gurowska (or Górowska, née Zand) passed a death sentence on August Emil Fieldorf (*nom de guerre* "Nil"), a legendary Home Army leader. He was falsely accused by prosecutor Beniamin Wajsblech of issuing orders to murder Communists, Soviet partisans and Jews (the Stalinist regime frequently lumped these three groups together[682]) during the war and collaborating with the Nazis. General Fieldorf headed the "Kedyw" (*Kierownictwo Dywersji*—Directorate of Diversion), which—as we have seen (in Part One)—accepted Jews into its ranks openly, and organized the assassination of General Franz Kutschera, the SS chief of Nazi-occupied Warsaw, in February 1944. Like many other Polish anti-Communist patriots, Fieldorf was now prosecuted by the Stalinist apparatus under the decree of August 31, 1944 "concerning the punishment of Hitlerite-Fascist criminals," which targeted "Fascist organizations" that "collaboarated with the Gestaspo" such as the Home Army (AK), Union of Armed Struggle (ZWZ) and National Armed Forces (NSZ).[683] On the motion of Władysław Dymant, vice-director of the Special Department of the Prosecutor General's office, his trial was held behind closed doors. The appeal was heard by three judges, Emil Samuel Merz (or Mertz), Gustaw Auscaler, and Igor Andrejew, who upheld the death sentence. They were assisted by Paulina Kern and Leon Penner, prosecutors with the Chief Prosecutor's Office. The order to carry out the death sentence was signed by Alicja Graff, the vice-director of the third department of the Chief Prosecutor's Office. Fieldorf's execution by hanging on February 24, 1954, was overseen by Witold Gatner, another prosecutor. The warrant for General Fieldorf's arrest, issued in 1950, was signed by Colonel Helena Wolińska-Brus (née Fajga Mindla Danielak), who headed the department that oversaw prosecutions of persons investigated by the military. Colonel Józef Różański (Goldberg), head of the investigations department at the Ministry of Public Security, had ordered his detention in the Mokotów

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[681] Sack, *An Eye for an Eye,* 139.

[682] See, for example, the "START" trial which began in October 1948. According to Norman Davies, "In effect, it represented an act of collective repression directed against the Home Army's former internal police unit. The prosecutors argued that the unit had been used for purely political purposes and, in particular, for killing Communists, Soviet partisans, and Jews." See Davies, *Rising '44,* 564.

[683] Between 1944 and 1949, 16,622 were convicted people under this decree. In addition to members of the anti-Communist underground, among those punished were German war criminals, Gestapo agents and confidantes, blue policemen, persons who committed crimes against fellow prisoners in concentration camps, and persons who denounced or took part in round-ups of Jews and members of the underground. See Tomasz Szarota, *Karuzela na Placu Krasińskich: Studia i szkice z lat wojny i okupacji* (Warsaw: Rytm and "Historia i Kultura," 2007), 100–1.

prison. Tellingly, virtually all the key roles in the demise of this national hero were played by Communists of Jewish origin, many of whom later emigrated to Israel. This was not mere coincidence, but symptomatic of the Soviet-imposed Stalinist regime. One of the henchmen, Helena Wolińska-Brus, took "refuge" in Britain and that country repeatedly refused requests for her extradition to Poland to face justice right up until her death in November 2008. It seems that Western democracies have a dishonourable record in dealing not just with Nazi war criminals but also Stalinist ones. Fieldorf was eventually "rehabilitated" posthumously in 1989 and exonerated of all these trumped-up charges.[684] The same players, and many others like them, played a prominent role in the show trials of many other Home Army and underground members.[685]

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[684] The topic of General Fieldorf has received extensive coverage since the 1990s: Maria Fieldorf and Leszek Zachuta, *Generał "Nil": August Fieldorf* (Warsaw: Pax, 1993); Henryk Pająk and Stanisław Żochowski, *Rządy zbirów 1940–1990* (Lublin: Retro, 1996), 212–15; Andrzej Przewoźnik and Adam Strzembosz, *Generał "Nil"—General "Nil"* (Warsaw: Światowy Związek Żołnierzy Armii Krajowej and Rytm, 1999); Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, *Zbrodnie w majestacie prawa, 1944–1955* (Warsaw: ABC Future, 2000), 181–84; Davies, *Rising '44,* 571–74, 582, 585–86, 604; Tadeusz A. Płużański, "Rodzina bała się 'Leny': Ciągle chodziła w mundurze," *Życie Warszawy,* October 31, 1998; Tadeusz A. Płużański, "Mordercy generała 'Nila,'" *Tygodnik Solidarność,* no. 13 (1999); Tadeusz A. Płużański, "Drwi gabinetów," *Tygodnik Solidarność,* 11 May 2001 (which details other show trials of Home Army members involving Wolińska-Brus, such as Lt. Col. Franciszek Herman, Jerzy Kirchmayer, Stefan Mossoro, General Stanisław Tatar); Małgorzata Rutkowska, "Zbrodnia," *Nasz Dziennik,* February 23–24, 2002; Jerzy Robert Nowak, "Przemilczane zbrodnie na Polakach (4)," *Nasz Dziennik,* December 2, 2002; Jerzy Robert Nowak, "Przemilczane zbrodnie (5)," *Nasz Dziennik,* December 16, 2002; Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, "Twarze bezpieki: Maria Gurowska vel Górowska vel Genowefa Danielak z domu Zand (1915–1998)," *Nasz Dziennik,* April 25, 2008; Marek Klecel, "Zbrodnia w majestacie prawa: Generał Fieldorf "Nil" przed sądami sowieckiego państwa polskiego," *Nasz Dziennik,* April 25, 2008; Agnieszka Rybak, "Za późno na sprawiedliwość," *Rzeczpospolita,* May 9, 2009. The Polish authorities charged Maria Gurowska with murder for her part in the show trial of General Fieldorf, but her death in January 1998 cut short the proceedings against her. In December 1998, the Polish courts issued a warrant for the arrest of Helena Wolińska-Brus, (she was accused of fabricating evidence that led to the execution of General Fieldorf and the wrongful arrest of 24 others), thereby paving the way for two extradition requests, in 1999 and 2001. The British authorities stonewalled Poland's request for her extradition for seven years before rejecting it on "humanitarian grounds" in the summer of 2006. In November 2007, a Polish military court issued a European arrest warrant against Wolińska-Brus, but that too has been repeatedly stonewalled by the British authorities. See Institute of National Memory, "Investigation against Ms. Helena Wolińska-Brus," posted at <http://www.ipn.gov.pl/index_eng.html>; Tadeusz A. Płużański, "Prześladowczyni 'Nila' żyje w Anglii," *Życie Warszawy,* 8 October 1998; Tadeusz A. Płużański, "Czy dojdzie do ekstradycji Heleny Wolińskiej?" *Tygodnik Solidarność,* 15 June 2001; "Brytyjczycy nie chcą deportować stalinowskiej prokurator," *Nasz Dziennik,* February 22–23, 2003; Roman Motoła, "Nie spieszą się z wydaniem stalinowskiej prokurator," *Nasz Dziennik,* January 21, 2004; "Informacja o działalności Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu w okresie 1 lipca 2003 r.–30 czerwca 2004 r.," Warsaw, January 2005 (Warszawa sygnatura akt S 25/01/Zk); Zenon Baranowski, "Nie chcą ścigać zbrodniarzy," *Nasz Dziennik,* June 6, 2005; Tomasz Szymborski, "Wolińska nie stanie przed sądem" and "Helena Wolińska bez sądu," *Rzeczpospolita,* December 3–4, 2005; Zenon Baranowski, "Nie będzie ekstradycji?" *Nasz Dziennik,* December 5, 2005; Zenon Baranowski, "Brytyjczycy nie wydadzą Wolińskiej," *Nasz Dziennik,* August 1, 2006; "Anglia nie wyda Wolińskiej," *Rzeczpospolita,* August 2, 2006; Zenon Baranowski, "Wolińska i Michnik do ekstradycji," *Nasz Dziennik,* February 10–11, 2007; Robert Booth, "Widow, 88, Faces Arrest Warrant Over Death of Polish Hero," *The Guardian,* November 21, 2007; Zenon Baranowski, "Zastój w sprawie Wolińskiej," *Nasz Dziennik,* April 22, 2008; Zenon Baranowski, "Trzecie ponaglenie w sprawie Wolińskiej," *Nasz Dziennik,* August 14–15, 2008. Helena Wolińska-Brus responded that she was being made a "scapegoat" and that she did not believe that Polish courts would be objective. Obviously, she is under the impression that nothing has changed since her stint in the Stalinist "justice" system. An influential part of the British media took up Wolińska-Brus's cause with a vengeance. Writing in the *Sunday Times* (January 3, 1999), Melanie Phillips asked rhetorically "Can a Jew get justice in the country of Auschwitz, Majdanek and Treblinka?", oblivious to the fact that these were *German*-built and run enterprises in which tens of thousands of Christian Poles also perished. See, however, the balanced assessment of Anne Applebaum, "The Three Lives of Helena Brus," *The Sunday Telegraph,* December 6, 1998. The reality proved to be just the opposite of the concern expressed by Melanie Phillips: it is the British authorities who have demonstrated that Poles cannot count on getting justice from the British authorities. Helena Wolińska-Brus died in Britain in November 2008 without ever being brought to justice. See "Zmarła stalinowska prokurator Helena Wolińska," *Rzeczpospolita,* November 29, 2008. Similarly, Sweden has refused to extradite or surrender on a warrant Stefan Michnik who, as a judge with the military tribunal, passed death sentences in show trials brought against many members of the anti-Communist underground. See Zenon Baranowski, "Wolińska i Michnik do

It is certainty that proportionately, if not in absolute numbers, Jews have more to answer for than Poles in relation to the excesses committed during the Stalinist era. In a thought-provoking passage, Władysław T. Bartoszewski addressed some of the arguments advanced by apologists for Jews who once curried favour with Poland's postwar Communist rulers:

> Most Poles particularly resent the application of this double standard to those Jewish individuals who were active in, and high ranking members of, the Communist Party, and especially of the security police. These are sometimes excused on the grounds that Communist ideology offered them hope of achieving equal status with the Gentile population and of living in a country free of anti-semitism where social justice and liberal ideals would prevail. It is also often suggested that the Jews, being more vulnerable because of their ethnic background, had no choice but to participate in the construction of the new order. This view is offensive both to the majority of the Jews who did not want to live under Communism and left Poland, and because it implies that different moral standards can be applied to judge Jewish and Gentile moral behaviour. It is also

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ekstradycji," *Nasz Dziennik,* February 10–11, 2007; Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, "Sędzia Stefan Michnik: Klasowo i politycznie czujny…," *Nasz Dziennik,* February 26, 2007; Zenon Baranowski, "Wydajcie nakaz za Michnikiem," *Nasz Dziennik,* February 27–28, 2010; Krzysztof Szwagrzyk, "Czułem zadowolenie, wydając wyroki na wrogów… (Stefan Michnik, 1999)," *Nasz Dziennik,* March 6–7, 2010; Zenon Baranowski, "Szwedzi nie chcą wydać Michnika," *Nasz Dziennik,* November 19, 2010. The Main Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation has also been rather lax in pursuing charges in other well-documented cases, such as that of Shlomo (Solomon) Morel, who operated Stalinist concentration camps in Upper Silesia in which thousands of Home Army members, Polish civilians and others were tortured and perished; and that of Zbigniew Safjan, an officer of the People's Army whose denunciation of Home Army member Jan Nessler resulted in the latter's execution following a death sentence imposed by the notorious military judge Marcin Dancyg. When Poland finally did proceed with an extradition request for Morel, charging him with the murder of 1,538 inmates of the Świętochłowice camp in 1945, Israel refused this request in December 1998 because, allegedly, it was barred by a statute of limitations, even though crimes against humanity are not subject to such restrictions. Poland renewed the request for Morel's extradition in April 2004, but this too was firmly rejected in June 2005. Israeli authorities made it clear that they would never surrender Morel to face charges for crimes committed against non-Jews and chastised Polish authorities for suggesting that a Jew could be anything other than a victim. Morel died in Tel Aviv in Febraury 2007 without being brought to justice. See Oddziałowa Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu w Katowicach, "Postanowienie o tymczasowym aresztowaniu na okres 7 dni od daty zatrzymania Salomona Morela," December 19, 2003; Roman Motoła, "Drugi nakaz aresztowania Solomona Morela przebywającego w Izraelu—Zarzut: ludobójstwo," *Nasz Dziennik,* December 20–21, 2003; Adam Dziurok, "23 lata, 6 miesięcy i 22 dni Salomona Morela, *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* nos. 6-7 (2004): 42; Tomasz Szymborski, "Izrael milczy w sprawie Morela," *Rzeczpospolita,* March 30, 2005; "Morel nie stanie przed sądem," *Rzeczpospolita,* July 6, 2005; Jan Ordyński, "Nie będzie ekstradycji Morela," *Rzeczpospolita,* July 6, 2005; Tomasz Szymborski, "Do procesów raczej nie dojdzie," *Rzeczpospolita,* January 2, 2006; "Salomon Morel," *Wikipedia,* Internet: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salomon_Morel>. The response to Poland's extradition requests in these cases has become a litmus test for the very democracies that have shown, in recent years, their readiness to try Nazi war criminals on their own territory.

[685] The same prosecutors and judges who were responsible for Fieldorf's fate (namely, Benjamin Wajsblech, Gustaw Auscaler, Emil Samuel Merz or Mertz), and many others such as Ignacy Iserles (a judge of the Supreme Court, who emigrated to Israel in 1968) and Bendeykt Jodelis (a prosecutor), orchestrated the show trials of scores of prominent members of the "Fascist" Home Army who took part in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, among them: Bronisław Chajęcki, Władysław Cisowski, Stanisław Cybulski, Julian Czerwiakowski, Adam Dobrowolski, Kazimierz Gąsiorowski, Stanisław Getter, Halina Górecka (who had sheltered Jews), Eugeniusz Grzybowski, Leon Iwicki, Czesław Jacyna, Bolesław Kontrym, Eustachy Krak, Alfred Kurczewski, Regina Mikulska, Tadeusz Pawłowski, Wacław Pluciński, Henryk Pogorzelski, Jerzy Rosicki, Jan Rycelski, Romuald Stępowski, Stanisław Szopiński, Stanisław Warnocki, Janina Zintel, and Leonard Żaczkowski. Most of these underground fighters were tortured and many were put to death. See Marszalec, *Ochrona porządku i bezpieczeństwa publicznego w Powstaniu Warszawskim,* 325–30, 332–39, 341–42, 344–46, 354, 362–68, 372–73, 377, 381–83.

> important to make a distinction here between those who supported and joined the Communist Party and even became its propagandists and activists for whatever misguided reason, and those who were directly involved in the security apparatus. The latter involved active participation in arrests and interrogations, and thus torture, deportations, and, in some instances, killing of the civilian population. One can treat the former cases with some sympathy and understanding, but it is not possible to excuse the latter. Whatever the conditions existing in Poland between 1945 and 1956, no one—Gentile or Jewish—can claim that he or (very often) she *had* to be a member of the Stalinist political police or the judiciary and, for one reason or another, had no choice but to torture and kill their innocent political opponents. After all, no one looks for extenuating circumstances for ex-members of the Gestapo.[686]

Some Jews attempt to disown their Jewish brethren arguing that they were not Jews at all but Communists, who just happened to be of Jewish origin.[687] (Yet if a Jew happened to have been killed during this period for whatever reason, these same persons argue, inconsistently, that he or she should be counted among the Jewish victims.) The notion that Jewish nationalism and Jewish religion was incompatible with espousing communism is simply not borne out by numerous Jewish testimonies.[688] John Sack makes short shrift of this spurious reasoning based on the behaviour of Jewish Communists from that period:

> They were "more communist than Jewish," a University of California professor wrote—they were "communists of Jewish origin." Now, I'd known these people seven years, and I'd never thought I

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[686] Bartoszewski, *The Convent at Auschwitz,* 29. As acknowledged in secret reports from that era, the Communist apparatus fully appreciated the support of a broad cross-section of the Jewish population and showered them with rewards: "With regard to the Jewish issue we must take a very favourable position because the Jews are wholeheartedly devoted to us. From the funds we receive from General Staff 'S' we must assign adequate sums for the Jews who work for us and their families." This 1945 document (Instruction no. 1/26/45-Z) of the Organizational Department of Struggle (Wydział Organizacyjny Walki) of the Central Committee of the Polish Workers' Party is found in the collection of the Sikorski Institute in London (sygnatura A.48, 4/A5, part III), and was reproduced by historian Andrzej Chmielarz in *Przegląd Tygodniowy.* The Jewish community responded in kind: "All of the Jewish [political] parties individually appealed at their conferences to the Jewish population to unite around the Polish Provisional Government." See the report on Poland in *The American Jewish Year Book, 5706 (1945–46),* vol. 47 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1945), 402. More rewards followed. Up to the end of January 1946, the government had already given 92 million złoty to Jewish relief institutions: "this amount represents ten per cent of the budget for such purposes, whereas the Jews constitute only one-third of one per cent of the population." See the report on Poland in *The American Jewish Year Book, 5707 (1946–47),* vol. 48 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1946), 344. While orphanages for Jewish children received preferential treatment, Polish children were often left begging on the streets. See *Biuletyny Informacyjne Ministerstwa Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego 1947* (Warsaw: Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, 1993), vol. 1, 92. See also Meyer, *The Jews in the Soviet Satellites,* 259–60.

[687] The following prominent cases refute the notion that Jewish Communists were not Jews. Having decisively rejected conventional religious Jewishness and having ardently embraced Communism, Isaac Deutscher came to identify his Jewishness as follows: "I am a Jew because I feel the Jewish tragedy as my own tragedy; because I feel the pulse of Jewish history; because I should like to do all I can do to assure the real, not spurious, security and self-respect of the Jews." Isaac Babel, an active Bolshevik in Russia, had an "intense consciousness" of his Jewishness. See Isaac Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays* (New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), 51, 54.

[688] For example, Tadeusz Iger recalls: "My father, a Communist by conviction even before the war (already then he belonged to the KPP, the Communist Party of Poland), used to tell me, 'Son, you can be proud that you belong to the chosen people, chosen by God.'" See Gutenbaum and Latała, *The Last Eyewitnesses,* 89.

would read that. I'd interviewed twenty-three Jews who'd been in the Office, and one, just one, had considered himself a communist in 1945. He and the others had gone to Jewish schools, studied the Torah, had been bar-mitzvahed, sometimes worn payes. In German camps, at the risk of their lives, some had made matzo on Pesach, and in 1945 they had lighted candles on Shabbas, held seders on Pesach, stood under huppas at weddings, sounded shofars on Rosh Hashanah, and fasted on Yom Kippur. By whose definition weren't they Jewish? Not by the Talmud's, certainly not by the government of Israel's or the government of Nazi Germany's. Had they died in the Holocaust, I'd have guessed that the world would count them among the six million.[689]

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[689] Preface to the 1995 paperback edition of *An Eye for an Eye,* ix. Indeed, one could cite many cases that belie the oft-repeated but unsubstantiated claim that Jewish Communists, especially high-ranking ones, forsook their Jewishness. In response to an appeal by a group of Jewish activists in the Czechoslovakian Politburo for help in backing the nascent Jewish state, Stalin reportedly replied: "Yes. I will help you build your new nation. Russia will be the first to recognize Israel as the new Jewish State. In exchange, please remember that we are interested in building up a big arsenal in the Middle East and in dividing the capitalistic countries. The Mediterranean must be ours. Israel can have the Suez Canal and they can use it; that will be preferable. But we will control it." See Shainberg, *Breaking From the KGB,* 216. General Wacław Komar (aka Mendel Kossoj), who was head of intelligence in the Ministry of Public Security, oversaw the military training of Hagana members in Poland and organized arms shipments to Palestine. See Leszek Żebrowski, "Komar Wacław," in *Encyklopedia "Białych Plam"* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2005), vol. 19, 178–80. Maurice Shainberg, who (at the age of 23) rose meteorically to the rank of major in Poland's Soviet-dominated security office under the assumed name of Mieczysław Prużański, also admits to having used his office to carry out a number of fraudulent schemes designed to further Israeli statehood: he recruited Jews serving as officers and soldiers in the Polish Army for the Haganah Army; he misappropriated goods confiscated by the Polish authorities from Polish marines and valued at over one million dollars to finance the smuggling of these Jewish recruits, fully armed, to Sweden and, from there, on to Israel, with the assistance of the Israeli Ambassador Barzilay; and at the instigation of the Israeli ambassador, and with the assistance of the latter's assistant Moshe Dagan, he smuggled out of Poland fourteen railway cars loaded with German ammunition. See Shainberg, *Breaking from the KGB,* 209–14. Another Jew who boasted of using his high rank in military intelligence (a captain in the Polish Army, the commandant of police in the Kraków region) and connections with other high-ranking Jews to divert food and other scarce supplies to Jewish institutions in Poland, to obtain privileged treatment for Jews, and to smuggle Jews and arms out of Poland, via Czechoslovakia, to Palestine, was Naftali Saleschutz, who at that time used the name of Tadeusz Zaleski. Two of his trusted officers were Henryk Konikowski (Heniek Reichwald from Rzeszów) and Karol Król (Karol Kruger from Zakopane). See Salsitz, *Against All Odds,* 391–92; Salsitz, *Three Homelands,* 194–95, 200, 215–16, 308, 317, 225. The fact that arms destined for Jewish partisans were being smuggled out of Poland is confirmed by Hersh Smolar, who mentions that he and another influential Jew intervened with Stanisław Radkiewicz to stay the charges against the smugglers who were apprehended by border guards. See August Grabski, "Kształtowanie się pierwotnego programu żydowskich komunistów w Polsce po Holokauście," in Berendt, et al., *Studia z historii Żydów w Polsce po 1945 r.,* 96 n.72. A member of a financially prominent Jewish family from Kraków, fled to the Soviet Union where he joined the Communist Polish Army and rose to a high-ranking position, "Adjutant to the Marshall." He settled in Warsaw and became a staunch supporter of the Soviet-imposed Communist regime, yet he used his position to help fellow Jews and took them to see the former Jewish ghetto. Suddenly, one day he disappeared without a trace, after "Agents from the right wing Jewish underground in Palestine succeeded in persuading Olek to join them in Palestine. They needed a man of his calibre. … In the Polish Army he was a leftist, but when the opportunity arose to fight for a Jewish State, everything was forgotten. He found his loyalty." Olek (or Lolek) Buchaister rose to the rank of an Israeli General and became a hero of the 1956 Suez Campaign. See Samuel Honig, *From Poland to Russia and Back, 1939–1946: Surviving the Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (Windsor, Ontario: Black Moss Press, 1996), 255–56; Honig, *Reunions,* 113–18. Mark Verstandig, a legal counsellor with the Security Office—in which capacity he "got to know investigative officers (quite a few of whom were Jews) who had the power to carry out arrests and interrogations"—boasted that "Jews were offered jobs and careers which surpassed their wildest expectations." (Indeed, most of his superiors and well-placed colleagues were Jews.) He too promoted a Jewish agenda in his position. After leaving the Security Office he moved to Wrocław where he continued to reap copious benefits from the solidarity of well-placed fellow Jews: "The city administration … was headed by a talented young Jewish lawyer named Roman Wilk, who allocated us an empty, fully furnished, eight-room flat, with pictures still hanging on the walls. My brother got a similar flat across the road, where we also obtained well-situated premises to open a grocery. Ida, Frieda, David Haar, and friends of my brother worked in the grocery, which did very well. Through my connections in Warsaw with friends who handled provisions for government institutions, I helped to stock the grocery. I also did a bit of legal work." See Verstandig, *I Rest My Case,* 207, 218, 224, 228. In some cases, the close organizational ties with the Jewish

Jews serving in the lower and middle ranks of the army and police force, on the whole, retained a strong, and often open, Jewish identification.[690] A similar attitude prevailed among most Jewish officials in the middle and upper echelons of the security and political structures of the new regime. Stanisława Ałapin and her husband Mieczysław Rubiłowicz were senior officers in the medical corps of the Ministry of Internal Security in Warsaw, where they lived a live of affluence. They did not polonize their Jewish-sounding surnames until the 1950s, were keenly aware of their Jewishness (even though they were not religious Jews), and their attitude toward Poles was markedly hostile.[691] (Although they are extremely vague about their duties as medical officers, Rubiłowicz's friend Max, who was also posted to Warsaw, became the medical director of a prison hospital where political prisoners were "interrogated."[692]) Shortly after the

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community of high ranking Communists were very pronounced. For example, Marek (Mordko) Goryń, a prewar Communist from Ostróg in Volhynia and a municipal functionary in that city under Soviet rule in 1939–1941, became the chairman of the Jewish Committee in Strzegom after the war and then the county (powiat) Jewish Committee chairman in Legnica in 1948–1951, as he continued his meteoric rise in the ranks of the Communist regime. After ten months of training in the law school for officers in Jelenia Góra (where he attained the rank of second lieutenant), he became a judge in the regional military court in Wrocław where he passed numerous sentences (including death sentences) against anti-Communist Poles in the politically motivated show trials that abounded in the Stalinist era. In 1957, he immigrated to Israel with his family. Jews in the very highest government offices identified with their Jewishness and demonstrated solidarity with fellow Jews. Jakub Berman, a member of the Presidium of Poland's Council of Ministers since 1945 and head of the Ministry of Public Security, when Zofia Kossak was unceremoniously expelled from Poland (in lieu of having her thrown into prison), summoned her to his office and said: "I owe your family a debt which I want to repay. You rescued my brother's children from the ghetto … I can assure your departure from the country." Kossak hesitated. She had sacrificed the war years risking her life for the liberation of her country, and speaking out for Jews persecuted by the Nazis. It was not an easy decision. Berman continued, "I am in a hurry, I have much to do. I recommend that you go." Within two days' time, she left for England via Sweden. Kossak lived in exile until her death in 1968. See Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Zegota*, 104, and *Żegota,* 2nd edition, 98; and also Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 132, 342 n.326. Berman was known to assist Jews in obtaining well-paid positions for which they did not have the necessary qualifications. See Robinson, *A Cork on the Waves*. Upon leaving Poland, most of these Jews immediately embraced their "suppressed" Jewishness and were often transformed into Jewish nationalists. See, for example, the memoir of Michael Moishe Checinski, a military counterintelligence officer who reached the rank of major, *Running the Gauntlet of Anti-Semitism: From Polish Counterintelligence to the German/American Marshall Center* (Jerusalem and New York: Devora, 2004), 30, 50 ("Fela the Communist became a fanatical Israeli patriot"), 172–73. In fact, Jewish Communists had always been recognized by the Jewish community as Jews. Jonathan Webber inadvertently clarifies this matter: "The tombstones still standing in Galia are evidence of a rich and an elaborate civilization. Here one cane find the graves of great rabbis, outstanding Talmudic scholars, mystics, painters, Zionist leaders, university professors, Jewish socialists and communists. The graves of a number of the fiunders of Hasidism are to be found here today as well, alongside the simple memorials of poor village Jews." See Jonathan Webber, *Rediscovering Traces of Memory: The Jewish Heritage of Polish Galicia* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), 44–45.

[690] For example, Dov Cohen (Berl Kagan), a police superintendent in Nowogródek, took part in Jewish religious services. See Kagan and Cohen, *Surviving the Holocaust with the Russian Jewish Partisans,* 96–97. The Yom Kipur services in Chełm in 1944 were attended by "throngs of soldiers and officers of all ranks" from the Polish and Soviet armies. In particular, "A group of high-ranking Soviet officers stood out among the rest." See Freiberg, *To Survive Sobibor,* 421–22.

[691] Laskey, *Night Voices,* 146, 152, 219, 233 (although a non-believer, Rubiłowicz had "a strong feeling of being part of the Jewish people"). Stanisława Ałapin's attitude toward Poles did not prevent her from temporarily entrusting her young son into the care of Polish nuns near Łódź during a period when her life was unsettled after the war. During the war this child had been sheltered by Ursuline Sisters in Milanówek outside of Warsaw. Ibid., 66, 89–90, 95. Her first husband, Bolesław Ałapin, a Jew, had joined the Home Army in Eastern Poland as a doctor and came to identify very closely with the Polish people to the point of converting to Christianity after the war. Ibid., 147.

[692] Ibid., 169–70.

arrival of the Soviets, Stanisława Ałapin joined the Polish People's Army as a first lieutenant. She was sent to a special unit for training political officers, the Polish Army School for Political Education Officers near Lublin where her Jewishness was not a secret:

> I think the months I spent with that unit were really the only time in my life when I have had no sense of alienation, of otherness. I felt completely at ease with the people I was with there and with the ideology. A communist army had been my liberator and had ended my ordeal; communist theory was opposed to racism, bigotry, and injustice. And now, here at the camp, I felt as though I were at last among my own. … They were mostly young men. Some of them had been with the communist partisans or the underground fighters; others had escaped to the Soviet Union. And one of the professors was a veteran of the Spanish Civil War. … There was no sense of oppression, secretiveness, or fear. … I shared the ideas and the ideology, and I was enthusiastic.[693]

Mieczysław (Mietek) Rubiłowicz, an officer with the Kościuszko Division who pacified the countryside in the vicinity of Białystok after the "liberation," rose to the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the medical administration of the security office. He offered the following explanation for the disproportionately high percentage of Jews among the supporters of Communism after the war:

> "First of all, at the beginning the Polish intelligentsia did not want to participate in the building of socialism [sic]. Secondly, the new Polish state had to carry out a struggle against fascism [sic], and fascists were our [i.e., the Jews'] particular enemy. And thirdly, the truly capitalistic part of the Jewish population had either been annihilated along with most of Poland's Jews or they had left with the majority of survivors when the borders were still open [for Jews] between '45 and '48. The few who remained were mostly middle class. We were not gentry, and we were not officers from the pre-war army. Nor had we been in the police or in the government. [Nor had most ethnic Poles. *M.P.*] Because of this we could accept the new order with less difficulty [sic] than the Poles themselves, and we were more easily trusted. Also, of course, we weren't under the influence of the Catholic Church. The Polish peasants and workers themselves had no alternative but to accept the new order, and few of them were sufficiently educated to see the positive aspects of socialism."
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> Mietek said that he knew the regime was harsh, "but at first I accepted this because the iron fist was being used against those we believed were the enemies of the Polish people [sic, in fact most Poles supported them—*M.P.*], and if we saw excesses, these were the excesses of individuals or bureaucrats. No, I wasn't surprised when Jacek [sic—Józef] Różański was accused of maltreating prisoners. …"[694]

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[693] Ibid., 88.

[694] Ibid., 158–59.

Even many high-ranking Communist officials retained a strong attachment to their Jewishness and manifested a virulent anti-Polish animus, as in the case of Józef Różański (Goldberg),[695] the director of the dreaded Tenth Department of the Ministry of Public Security, and his deputy, Lieutenant Colonel Józef Światło (Izak Fleischfarb),[696] who persecuted Polish patriots with a passion.

In her study *Neutralizing Memory,* Iwona Irwin-Zarecka comments on the make-up of the 150 people who attended the small, newly restored synagogue at the site of the former Warsaw Ghetto on Simhat Torah, September 29, 1983, as follows: "There are here a few Orthodox Jews. But, for the most part, people here belong to a sizeable group of old-Communists-now-disillusioned-returnees-to-Judaism …" In another context, the author adds that, "Who *are* these new-old Jews? For the most part, they are disillusioned ex-Communists and ex-fellow travelers, longing for the lost warmth of their childhood after their whole world collapsed in 1968."[697] As one commentator observed, "a nonobservant Jew is still a Jew. In addition, being Jewish is not something that can be turned on, off, and on again like water from a tap. These 'new-old' Communist Jews had been Jews all along!"

The growing chasm between the sensibilities of Poles and assimilated Jews was more subtle but still very real. By and large Poles viewed the Soviet-imposed Communist regime as illegitimate. The perception was

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[695] Józef Różański's secretary reported that he detested Poles with a passion. See the testimony of Teofila Weintraub in Ruta Pragier, *Żydzi czy Polacy* (Warsaw: Rytm, 1992), 91. In a rare display of compassion, Różański is believed to have commuted the death sentence of Home Army leader Colonel Franciszek Niepokólczycki to a long term of imprisonment because of the latter's assistance for the Jewish insurgents during the Warsaw ghetto revolt of April 1943. See Tomasz Balbus, "Pułkownik 'Halny': Przywódca Polski Podziemnej," *Nasz Dziennik,* June 10–11, 2009. In 1981, Różański requested that he be buried in the Jewish cemetery in Warsaw, asserting that he had considered himself a Jew in 1945 as well as 1953. See Andrzej Paczkowski, "Jews in the Polish Security Apparatus: An Attempt to Test the Stereotype," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 16 (2003): 460. Obviously, in his case, the operative animus was not just Communism but Berman's Jewish background. Another credible witness, the renowned immunologist Ludwik Hirszfeld, wrote privately to Różański's brother Jerzy Borejsza (Goldberg), another high-placed Stalinist functionary, in 1947 that "Jewish nationalists loathe Poles more than Germans … The only reason I do not underscore these matters publicly is because I do not want to cause problems for the Jews and not to deepen the chasm that is being dug between Jews and Poles by Jewish nationalism." See Barbara Fijałkowska, *Borejsza i Różański: Przyczynek do dziejów stalinizmu w Polsce* (Olsztyn: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna, 1995), 139. Another Jewish observer who wrote about the negative impact on Polish-Jewish relations of the Jewish Communists, especially those who worked in the security office and considered themselves to be Jews foremost, is Feliks Mantel. See his *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie: Próba analizy* (Paris: Księgarnia Pollska w Paryżu, 1986), 11. General Zygmunt Berling, himself of Jewish origin, had already noted the hostility that Jewish Communists (from Poland) in Moscow displayed, as early as 1943, toward anyone they regarded as a Polish patriot. See Zygmunt Berling, *Wspomnienia: Przeciw 17 Republice* (Warsaw: Polski Dom Wydawniczy, 1991), 283–84. Knowledgeable foreign observers such as Viktor Lebedev, the Soviet ambassador in Warsaw, also remarked on the (pro-Jewish) nationalistic leanings of such leading Jewish Communist leaders as Jakub Berman, Hilary Minc, and Roman Zambrowski. See Aleksander Kochański, Galina P. Muraszko, Albina F. Noskowa, Andrzej Paczkowski, and Krzysztof Persak, eds. and comp., *Polska w dokumentach z archiwów rosyjskich 1949–1953* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Institut slavianovedeniia RAN, Federalna Służba Archiwalna Rosji, Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii, and Rosyjskie Archiwum Państwowe Historii Społeczno-Politycznej, 2000), 41–47.

[696] Światło's second (Jewish) wife, whose surname he assumed, stated that her husband had a strong attachment to his Jewish nationality. Although already a Communist Party member in prewar Poland, he married his first wife in a Jewish religious ceremony. See Andrzej Paczkowski, "Tak było: Trzy twarze Józefa Światły," *Rzeczpospolita,* December 20, 2003, and December 27, 2003. For a detailed biographical sketch see Leszek Żebrowski, "Światło Józef," in *Encyklopedia "Białych Plam"* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2006), vol. 17, 92–94.

[697] Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Neutralizing Memory: The Jew in Contemporary Poland* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction, 1989), 2, 77.

that it persecuted Poles, but not Jews, for political reasons. On the other hand, most Jews appeared to view the regime as the country's legitimate government or at least one they had no interest in actively opposing. Their communal organizations openly curried its favour if only to be able to function. So when Irena Bakowska, a young Jewish woman from an assimilated family, was asked by fellow university students to join an anti-Communist underground organization she was aghast at what she heard:

> The next day when I went to the University I had a pleasant surprise. Two of my colleagues, a young, good-looking man and a pleasant woman I had noticed before, approached me and invited me for a walk between classes. …
>
> We sat on a bench and the man spoke. "We have watched you for some time and we have gotten to like you. You seem to be a serious, intelligent and responsible young woman. We would be very happy if you agreed to join our group."
>
> "Your group? You mean a students' fraternity?" I asked in joyful anticipation.
>
> "No, not exactly. We have in mind other, more serious activities. Poland needs our help. We want to chase the Russians away from our land. We want to get rid of them. We will not hesitate to plant bombs and derail the Russian trains passing through Poland," he said.
>
> The woman added a few words describing the future plans of their terrorist group. I could not believe what I had heard. I was speechless for a moment. Then I responded, "Are you out of your mind? Did we not bleed enough? Must we continue to fight endless battles we cannot win? I believe that we should heal our wounds first, get stronger, and wait for a proper opportunity to reclaim our country. I don't understand you, I don't agree with you."
>
> They looked at me calmly, said nothing, and we parted.
>
> As soon as I got home I asked my father to join my mother, Karolina and me in a serious discussion of our future.
>
> "Father," I said, "Mother's foresight when she sent me to the Pawlos to get the paper saved our lives. You did not want to leave the Ghetto, and now you don't want to leave Poland. There is a time to stay, and there is a time to move. We simply cannot live in this country."
>
> The four of us talked for a long time. My father finally agreed, albeit reluctantly, that we should all move soon.[698]

Jan Gross, in his increasingly more strident writing on Polish-Jewish relations, insists that that Jews were *not* favoured in any way by the Stalinist authorities in either Poland or any other country:

> Given this evolution of the political climate in the Soviet Union throughout the 1940s, and the very close scrutiny, monitoring, and consultation that went on between East European Communists and their Moscow-based "elder brothers," the thought of Jews, or Jewish Communists, receiving preferential treatment anywhere in the region must be classified as political science fiction.[699]

[698] Bakowska, *Not All Was Lost*, 309–10.

[699] Gross, *Fear*, 212. Another trite observation, parroted by Jan Gross as a seemingly profound and meaningful insight, is that Jews from Poland had to seek "safety among the Germans" after the war. Ibid., 67. At the time, the Germans

Notwithstanding such bald claims, the situation on the ground looked quite different, especially in the case of Poland. In 1948, Stalin threw his support behind the pro-Moscow Jewish faction of the Polish Workers' Party (Jakub Berman, Hilary Minc and Roman Zambrowski), despite reports from Viktor Lebedev, the Soviet ambassador in Warsaw, about their Jewish nationalist leanings, over the Polish "nationalists" headed by Władysław Gomułka. The leaders of latter group (Gomułka, Marian Spychalski, Zenon Kliszko) landed in prison while the former wielded power—until after Stalin's death—in what was the most repressive era of modern Polish history. Jewish Communist "nationalists" were—because of their servility—more palatable to Stalin than Polish Communist "nationalists."[700] The findings of two regional historians, who meticulously researched the local power structure in Kielce—where some 250 Jews, most of them refugees from the Soviet Union who hailed from other towns, settled temporarily after the war—are significant in this regard.

> According to Krzysztof Urbański and Danuta Blus-Węgrowska, until 1946 the commander of the provincial UB [Security Office] in Kielce was Major Dawid Kornhendler, aka Adam Kornecki, a trusted NKVD operative. The deputy head of the County Office of the UB in Kielce was Albert Grynbaum. Captain Moryc Kwaśniewski, Eta Lewkowicz-Ajzenman, and Natan Bałanowski, a physician, were also high-ranking Jewish employees of the secret police. Wolf Zalcberg held the crucial post of interpreter with the Soviet military command in Kielce. Among the civilian bureaucrats in Kielce, the following were only the most prominent Communist activists of Jewish origin: the first secretary of the Province Committee of the PPR [Polish Workers' Party], Jan Kalinowski, the town mayor Tadeusz Zarecki, and the chief of the Organization Department of the

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were the most occupied and controlled people on the face of the earth, and possibly in all of history. They were taught by the Allies that Jews could exact revenge on them with impunity (liberated inmates of Nazi camps were given weapons and allowed to kill their former oppressors). Several million German women got first-hand lessons from Allied soldiers, especially Soviet ones, that they had to "put out" on demand to appease their conquerors' sexual desires. Thus the subjugation and servility of the Germans were absolute. The Germans had to refrain from displaying their deep-seated animosity toward the Jews, whom they had stopped murdering only because the Allies had subdued their country. Moreover, the Jews who fled to Germany lived in camps segregated from the German population, and no German dared to approach them there. The situation of the powerless Roma, however, was dramatically different. Open displays of continued hatred of the Roma, who were also persecuted and murdered by the Germans in large numbers during the Holocaust, were quite evident in the postwar period. As David M. Crowe records in *The Holocaust: Roots, History, and Aftermath* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2008), at pp. 394–95:

> It did not take long after the war for the prejudices and hatred that had haunted the Roma before and during the Nazi era to reappear. As the Roma returned to various towns and villages in Germany, the old stereotypical accusations against them resurfaced. Otto Pankok [a prominent German printmaker and sculptor who befriended the Roma] observed: "Hitler had sunk, but the racial hatred has remained unchanged; to those do not believe this, I recommend a walk, accompanied by a Gypsy, in the streets of a city."
>
> Police throughout Germany began to revive prewar German offices, renaming them the *Landfahrerpolizistellen* Vagrancy Police Offices). They used the vast collection of information on Roma and Sinti gathered before and during the Nazi era to harass Roma. According to Wolfgang Wippermann, the police also used this Nazi-era network, which assumed "Mafia-like" proportions, to deny small business licenses to Roma and Sinti, and to refuse their requests for "repatriation and the restoration of their German citizenship."

[700] Bogdan Musiał, "Moskwa wybiera Bermana," *Rzeczpospolita,* April 18–19, 2009.

> PPR, Julian Lewin. In addition, a number of Jewish Communists worked very closely with the provincial governor, who was an ethnic Polish Communist.[701]

Examples are also plentiful on a less structured level. A former Jewish charge of the Sisters of the Family of Mary, who became the director of the Jewish Children's Home in Otwock after the war, used her connections in the government to obtain a supply of clothing, blankets and shoes for the nuns' home for children in Międzylesie, which was destroyed during the Warsaw Uprising, because the Communist authorities simply would not provide any such assistance to Catholic institutions.[702] The same occurred outside Poland. A Polish Jew, who bribed some Russians to smuggle him on a truck full of other Jews destined for East Berlin, was subsequently apprehended by German police when he crossed into the western zone of Germany with his family. The Germans accused them of being Russian spies, handed them over to the Americans, and the Americans sent them back across the border to the Russians. The Russians jailed them as runaway Polish spies. David G. recalls the help they received from a Soviet judge and their continued persecution by ordinary Germans refugees:

> the Russian judge presiding over the trial was a Jew and therefore sympathized with them. During the interrogation, he uttered the secret phrase *"amchu"* which literally means, "your people," with the implication, "are you one of us?" David replied that he was, and the judge put David and his sisters on a train headed for Dresden … Subsequently, they traveled to the British zone posing as German refugees. While in transit, some Germans realized that David, Esther, and Shoshana were Polish Jews and they informed the Russian soldiers escorting the train. The Russians ordered David and his sisters off the train …[703]

In another case, a Jewish woman was arrested while attempting to sneak over the border into Germany and was sent back to Poland and jailed. Two Jewish "partisans" who were involved in smuggling Jews across the border tried to trick a Polish guard into releasing her.

> [They] called the Polish guard and asked him to trade some vodka for an expensive watch they had. When the guard returned with the alcohol, the partisans asked him if he would like to have a drink with them. They killed the guard when he opened the gate, and escaped to Warsaw. The Jewish Committee in Warsaw paid 100,000 Zloty [złoty] per head to get the others out of jail.[704]

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[701] Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust,* 74. Zarecki, the mayor of Kielce, was able to get away with many corrupt practices because he enjoyed the favour of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. See Joanna Michlic-Coren, "Polish Jews during and after the Kielce Pogrom: Reports from the Communist Archives," *Polin,* vol. 13 (2000): 265.

[702] Teresa Antonietta Frącek, "Ratowały, choć za to groziła śmierć," Part 6, *Nasz Dziennik,* April 4, 2008.

[703] Lindeman, *Shards of Memory,* 135.

[704] Lindeman, *Shards of Memory,* 155.

As a rule, while ignoring the murders of Poles by Jews, like those described above, Holocaust historians portray all of the Jews who were killed in the immediate postwar period as innocent victims of attacks by anti-Semitic Poles. These attacks are said to have been directed indiscriminately against all Jews and are attributed to racial hatred and/or greed.[705] Conversely, the Poles killed by Jewish henchmen in the security

[705] A recent extensive treatment of this topic can be found in David Engel, "Patterns of Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1944–1946," *Yad Vashem Studies,* vol. 26 (1998): 43–85. Engel departs somewhat from the usual approach found in the literature on postwar Polish-Jewish relations, offering a far more nuanced and multifaceted interpretation of events and lowering the estimated toll of Jewish victims from all causes to under 1,000. In his conclusion, he writes (at p. 85): "By the same token, it will not do to represent anti-Jewish violence simply as a continuation of ancient hatreds that the Nazi Holocaust either intensified or, at the very least, failed to uproot, without reference to the political context in which it occurred. The bands that were most heavily responsible for killing Jews would not have existed except for the circumstances of the Communist takeover; otherwise, those who carried out the attacks would not have been in a position to do so. Moreover, the civil war enabled people who simply coveted Jewish property, without any attached political motives, to justify aggression against Jews in the guise of resistance to a new foreign occupation. The postwar context thus constitutes a necessary part of the explanation of why attacks upon Jews assumed the proportions that they did … By itself, however, the context does not provide a sufficient explanation for the phenomenon." See also David Engel's forthcoming book *Między wyzwoleniem i ucieczką: Żydzi w Polsce po Holokauście, 1944–1946* (Sejny: Pogranicze), translated from the Hebrew *Ben shihrur li-verihah: Nitsole ha-shoah be-Polen veha-ma'avak 'al hanhagatam, 1944–1946* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1996). Engel's study, however, far from exhausts the topic and a great deal more research of individual incidents is required before adequate conclusions can be drawn about their cause, perpetrators and significance. In response to this challenge, U.S.-based historian Marek Jan Chodakiewicz published a compelling and ground-breaking study titled, *After the Holocaust: Polish-Jewish Conflict in the Wake of World War II* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 2003), in which he documented some 600 Jewish victims. Chodakiewicz's study shows that there was a multiplicity of reasons for conflict between Poles and Jews and that anti-Semitism *per se* was only sometimes the driving factor, especially in the case of legitimate partisan formations. The vast majority of victims of partisan assaults were not Jews, and a large portion of the Jews affected by partisan operations were actually state functionaries who were not targeted specifically because of their Jewish origin. Polish historian Rafał Wnuk arrived at similar conclusions in his book, *Lubelski Okręg AK DSZ i WiN, 1944–1947* (Warsaw: Volumen, 2000), 218. An examination of 1,361 partisan operations in the Lublin region in 1944–1947 indicates that anti-Jewish rhetoric found in the low echelons did not appear to have any significant impact on the activities of the armed partisan units. No more than one percent of their operations victimized Jews (in total about a dozen Jews were killed), and in several cases where state functionaries were targeted, even Jewish functionaries were released unharmed. During the period July 1944 to April 1947, Jews were killed in Lublin province, of whom 20 were employed by or informants for the Security Office. Ibid., 362, 372, 384. Wnuk also points to the existence of robber bands, some of whom passed as partisans, who continued to operate in the forests, as well as some criminals in Polish underground units who took matters into their own hands. Ibid., 76, 218. For a penetrating overview of conditions in the Kielce province which employs the empirical methodology advocated by Chodakiewicz, see Ryszard Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Podziemie antykomunistyczne wobec Żydów po 1945 roku—wstęp do problematyki (na przykładzie województwa kieleckiego)," in Wijaczka and Miernik, *Z przeszłości Żydów polskich,* 249–77. Even Andrzej Żbikowski, a historian from the Jewish Hoistorical Institute, has accepted a lower minimum count of between 650 and 750 Jewish deaths, many of which were not anti-Semitic in nature. See Andrzej Żbikowski, "The Postwar Wave of Pogroms and Killings," Conference Paper, The Aftermath of the Holocaust: Poland 1944–2010, Jerusalem, October 3–6, 2010; Żbikowski, "Morderstwa popełniane na Żydach w pierwszych latach po wojnie," in Tych and Adamczyk-Garbowska, *Następstwa zagłady Żydów,* 93; Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga*, 584.

More recently, Jan Tomasz Gross has published an exceptionally strident, polemical study—Jan T. Gross, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz: An Essay in Historical Interpretation* (New York: Random House, 2006), in which he charged Polish society as a whole, and the Catholic Church the anti-Communist underground in particular, with waging an all-out war against Jewish survivors in the post-Holocaust period. The book, which was lauded by like-minded authors, actually adds nothing new to the scholarship on the topic. Gross relies on a limited empirical base, often impressionistic, which he uses in a highly selective manner to conduct a psychosocial analysis of an entire nation based on the actions of a few individuals. While whitewashing Jewish conduct, Gross resorts to negative stereotyping of Poles, virtually to the point of demonizing them by suggesting that killing Jews became a national pastime in postwar Poland. As historian August Grabski points out, the killings were the work of a tiny number of criminals and members of the anti-Communist underground, in which more than 99 percent of the population did not take part. Gross recycles discredited postwar Communist theories, manipulates and even invents facts, and does not recognize that there was very little room for genuine Polish-Jewish dialogue at the time because of the ever-increasing Communist censorship. The pro-regime leftist intellectuals he cites for their "openness" later discredited themselves by supporting Stalinist show trials brought against the Catholic clergy. For devastating criticism of Gross's book *Fear,* his

methodology and his thesis see the reviews by the following historians: John Radziłowski, "Sąsiadów ciąg dalszy," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 7 (July 2006): 98–102; Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, "Wypaczenia: Historia jako wycinanka," *Rzeczpospolita,* November 18, 2006; "O Polakach i Żydach bez retuszu: Wywiad z prof. Markiem Janem Chodakiewiczem," *Glaukopis,* no. 7–8 (2007): 289–312; Jerzy Robert Nowak, *Nowe kłamstwa Grossa* (Warsaw: Maron, 2006); August Grabski, "'Krew brata twego głośno woła ku mnie z ziemi!'," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów,* no. 3 (2006): 407–14; Bożena Szaynok, Review of Gross's *Fear,* in *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały,* vol. 2 (2006): 486–94; Jacek Walicki, "Bezdroża nauki i publicystyki—o nowej książce Jana T. Grossa," *Dzieje Najnowsze,* vol. 39, no. 1 (2007): 158–67; John Connelly, "Ordinary People," *Commonweal,* February 23, 2007; Dermot Quinn, "In Search of Polish-Antisemitism," and James R. Thompson, "Book Reviews: *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz* by Jan Tomasz Gross," *The Chesterton Review,* vol. 33, nos. 1 & 2 (Spring/Summer 2007): 65–84, and 205–12, respectively; Piotr Gontarczyk, "Daleko od prawdy," *Rzeczpospolita,* January 12, 2008; Paweł Machcewicz, "Odcienie czerni: Antysemityzm po wojnie," *Tygodnik Powszechny,* January 13, 2008; Paweł Machcewicz and Konstanty Gebert, "Kto się boi 'Strachu'," *Gazeta Wyborcza,* January 18, 2008; Bogdan Musiał, "Kto się wzbogacił na majątku Żydów," *Rzeczpospolita,* January 19, 2008; Jan Żaryn, "Pogarda dla kontekstu," *Rzeczpospolita,* January 19, 2008; Dariusz Sola, "Nieudana próba Grossa," *Gazeta Wyborcza,* January 19, 2008; Paweł Machcewicz, "Zbyt proste wyjaśnienia: O 'Strachu' Jana Tomasza Grossa," *Więź,* no. 2–3 (February–March) 2008: 73–84. See also the compilation by Robert Jankowski, ed., *Cena "Strachu": Gross w oczach historyków* (Warsaw: Fronda, 2008). For more moderate critiques of Gross's methodology see David Engel, "On Continuity and Discontinuity in Polish-Jewish Relations: Observations on *Fear*," *East European Politics and Societies,* vol. 21, no. 5 (2007): 534–48, who acknowledges that Gross simply did not prove his thesis that Poles turned on Jews after the war because of the Poles' wartime behaviour towards Jews; and Feliks Tych, "Wokół książki Jana Tomasza Grossa 'Strach'," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów,* no. 1 (2008): 89–93. These reviews differ markedly from the "endorsements" of historians with no particular expertise in the field and the accolades showered on the book by American publicists who simply parrot its content uncritically and inflame the debate by adding crude comments about Poles of their own. Somewhat less strident than Gross is Daniel Blatman's skewed article, "The Encounter between Jews and Poles in Lublin District after Liberation, 1944–1945," *East European Politics and Societies,* vol. 20, no. 4 (2006): 598–621, which also pushes a favourable stereotype of Jews in contradistinction to the blanket condemnation of Polish society and its "ethnocentric-national aspirations", against the backdrop of a supposed "civil war" between supporters and opponents of the Soviet-imposed puppet regime ("the war of the Right against the new government"). In fact, the Soviet-imposed regime had no legitimacy, its ability to maintain any semblance of control was, in the early years, entirely dependant on the presence of the Red Army and NKVD, and it was detested by the vast majority of the population. As historian Łukasz Kamiński has compellingly documented, "From the first moments of the Communist assumption of power, we are dealing with universal, spontaneous societal resistance," and this despite an organized underground that was overall weak. See Kamiński, *Polacy wobec nowej rzeczywistości, 1944–1948,* especially at 283. The anti-Communist underground counted some 200,000 members in 1944 and later years and was concentrated mostly in the countryside, where the reach of the security forces was the most tenuous. See Rafał Wnuk, Sławomir Poleszak, Agnieszka Jaczyńska, and Magdalena Śladecka, eds., *Atlas polskiego podziemia niepodległościowego 1944–1956* (Warsaw and Lublin: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2007). In the dace of such indisputable evidence, and the open and brutal repressions undertaken by the NKVD and security forces against the national underground, historians such as David Engel claim that until 1948, "relatively few Poles anticipated the Stalinist dictatorship … and fewer still … regarded the [sham] government of post-war Poland as so lacking in legitimacy as to make any accommodation with it a crime." His sympathies clearly lie with the Stalinist camp and not the "small, extreme political minority" of independentists actively opposed to it. Engel underscores "the struggle of the relatively small number of insurrectionists," as if insurrectionists ever formed a large segment of any struggle or population (on the eve of the revolt in the Warsaw ghetto in April 1943, the Jewish underground had about 500 members, which was no more that one percent of the population, yet is is considered by Jewish historians to be representative of the Jews), against "a government whose legitimacy was not widely questioned." Engel then goes on to claim that "the large majority of the Polish population rejected the 'independentist' red herring." Engel utterly fails to distinguish between the "sham" government-coalition in place and the reality on the ground, and to come to terms with pivotal events such as of the kidnapping of sixteen leading Polish democrats who were taken to Moscow and put on trial already in June 1945, to the dismay of most Poles. See David Engel's review article of Chodakiewicz's *After the Holocaust, Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 18 (2005): 424–29, which has been endorsed by historians like Michael Fleming, *Communism, Nationalism and Ethnicity in Poland, 1944–50,* 161, n.21. Some of these themes are also found in David Engel, "On the Continuity and Discontinuity in Polish-Jewish Relations: Observations on *Fear*," *East European Politics and Societies,* vol. 21, no. 5 (2007): 534–48. Marcin Zaremba authored yet another kindred interpretation of the postwar period which the author himself acknowledges is replete with speculation. See Marcin Zaremba, "The Myth of Ritual Murder in Post-War Poland: Pathology and Hypotheses," in Michał Galas and Antony Polonsky, eds., *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 23: *Jews in Kraków* (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: THe Littma Library of Jewish Civilization, 2011): 465–506. The theses of these kindred historians and sociologists (Gross, Blatman, Engel, Zaremba) are built on selective and often scant evidence, and push negative stereotypes and crude notions of collective responsibility. For example, blame for isolated cases of killings of Jews that occurred in very

services are portrayed as "anti-Semites," who "had it coming" to them. To be sure, some Jews may have been victims of anti-Semitic attacks, but that was not the norm. Jews who held positions of authority were victims of politically motivated retaliations that targeted collaborators in the service of the Stalinist regime.[706] If Communist officials, who happened to be Jews, were executed in the course of their duty, it

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specific circumstances, and in which more than 99 percent of the population played no part, is ascribed (by Engel and others) to Polish society as a whole, which was allegedly marked by "traditional motifs in the history of Christian anti-Semitism alongside economically and politically motivated acts of violence." This artificial and profoundly stereotypical approach is simply invalidated by the testimony of a direct witness to a June 1946 assault on a train carrying Polish "repatriates" from Eastern Galicia. A "gang of maurauders" with possible links to an underground organization boarded the train looking for Jews. According to Joachim Schoenfeld, "Everyone in the car knew that we were Jews, but these common people were decent enough not to give us away." See 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), 166. Such events should not have occurred in a country populated by virulent anti-Semites prone to violence. Similarly, references to anti-Ukrainian sentiments in the postwar period are divorced entirely from the ethnic cleansing campaign initiated by Ukrainian nationalists during the war, which claimed the lives of at least 120,000 Poles, and are simply ascribed (by Engel and others) to "Polish hostility to the presence of national minorities." Unfortunately, in his recent study *Remembering Survival,* Christopher Browning, who has done no independent research on this topic, simply adopts the views of historians and sociologists like Jan Gross, David Engel, Daniel Blatman, Joanna Michlic, and Agnieszka Pufelska, and makes bizarre claims like the following: that the driving force in postwar Poland was the "mythical concept of 'Judaeo-Communism'" which was the principle cause of violence directed against Jews, who were viewed "as the killers of Poland as the Christ among nations" and had to be killed or driven out as reminders of the Poles' collective guilt for having collaborated in the Nazi persecution of the Jews (even though Poles were not collectively responsible for the persecution of the Jews and no amount of "imagined wrongs" or psychological factors are sufficient to explain the conduct of those individuals who committed concrete misdeeds—they required a concrete catalyst and their deeds were not attributable to Polish society); that any Jews who may have served in the Stalinist security apparatus were merely "some totally secularized Jews who had long abandoned any Jewish identity" (Browning thus ignores actual cases of lethal collaboration by Jews); and that there was no rebirth of Jewish life and no restitution of Jewish property because of the "complementary goals of the Polish underground on the one hand and local Poles on the other" (even though neither the Polish underground nor the Catholic Church nor Polish society advocated the ethnic cleansing of Jews and restitution of property was the norm). See Browning, *Remembering Survival,* 260–62, 264–65. American historian Timothy Snyder took aim at some of these crude stereotypes—the flipside of the "Judaeo-Communism" myth—in a review of Browning's book published in *The New York Review of Books* ("Jews, Poles & Nazis: The Terrible History," June 24, 2010): "Browning concludes from this horrible finale that the goal of the Polish underground was the end of Jewish life in Poland. He adds that the Polish nation was defined in opposition to an enemy image of the Jew. … it is misleading to discuss Polish political aims only in the light of these events. If Polish patriotism was simply a matter of hating Jews, why did the Home Army fight the Nazis with such determination?" Browning ignores the fact that in the spring of 1945, the Security prison in Starachowice, the town featured in his study, held some 40 former Home Army members. See Ryszard Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, *Podziemie poakowskie na Kielecczyźnie w latach 1945–1948* (Kraków: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Nardowi Polskiemu, 2002), 80.

[706] Secret Soviet reports from that era also make that point. For example, Serov's report to Beria about the activities of the NKVD, dispatched from Warsaw on April 16, 1945, complains of murders of "local residents, especially Jews suspected of cooperation with our NKVD operational group," as well as attacks on "the local commune militia workers, organs of the public security and members of the PPR [Communist party]." See Cariewskaja, *Teczka specjalna J. W. Stalina,* 248. The number of Jews employed in the police and other government organs of repression was especially high in the Lublin and Białystok regions, and so was the number of attacks. A study dealing with the Lublin region shows that around twenty percent of the 118 Jews murdered during the period from mid-1944 until the end of 1946 where state functionaries and their deaths were attributable to political, rather than racial reasons. Most of the remaining cases involved robberies and property disputes and are unconnected to the pro-independence underground. See Adam Kopciowski, "Anti-Jewish Incidents in the Lublin Region in the Early Years after World War II," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials,* vol. 1 (2008): 177–205. For a brief report about Białystok see *Archiwum Polski Podziemnej 1939–1956: Dokumenty i materiały,* no. 2 (April 1994), 61. Some Jewish memoirs also acknowledge that their postwar problems were attributable not to the fact that they were Jews, but because they were suspected of being Communists. One survivor from the Lublin area recalls: "No sooner had the Nazi occupation finished, than the Communist occupation began. The people of Poland had had enough occupation of any sort, and many of them had regrouped to fight the Communists. … one day … I was ironically brought again to the point of death, this time not for being Jewish, but for being a suspected Communist. … We were detained by nationalist troops

was not because they were Jews but of their role in the Stalinist apparatus of terror. They were just as likely to be executed as non-Jews filling similar positions, though the latter (non-Jews) were killed in much larger numbers. When, for example, the state security office in Nowy Targ was attacked in the early morning hours of April 18, 1945 to free political detainees, the Polish partisans killed all four security agents they encountered: Jan Gadowski, the head security officer and an ethnic Pole; Władysław Kosztyło, a Ukrainian; and Jan Reichel and Julian Burzyński, both Jews.[707] In Kielce,[708] Kraków, and Kalisz, functionaries of the state's own militia and military led the attack against Jews.[709]

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who demanded to know if we were Jewish Communists. We denied it, of course, but I had Jewish Bibles with me … The soldiers were going to kill us, but they decided at length that they would simply hold us until they inquired about our political leanings. They confiscated our documents and all our possessions and went to their headquarters to check on us. … After midnight the others returned and all was well. They accompanied us to the next village and told us never to come back or tell anyone about their outpost." See Rachmiel Frydland, *When Being Jewish Was a Crime* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1978), 145–46.

[707] Korkuć, *Zostańcie wierni tylko Polsce…,* 240–41, 440. Józef Kuraś ("Ogień")'s independent partisan group was also responsible for the murder of Dawid Grassgrün, a Communist activist and Jewish community leader in Nowy Targ. Ibid., 440. This book provides abundant proof, however, that it was primarily non-Jewish functionaries, agents and ordinary citizens who were killed in the Kraków region for their collaboration with the Stalinist regime. Ibid., 252–62, 387–419. Relying on discredited Communist sources, Tomasz Gross claims that Kuraś "battled the regime by killing Jews who were fleeing Poland by one of the Brikha exit routes." See *Fear*, 234. The charge has been authoritatively refuted by historian Maciej Koukuć. In fact, Kuraś passed a death sentence against insubordinates who robbed and killed two Jewish merchants near the village of Zabrzeż in February 1946. See Maciej Korkuć, "Horror podmalowany," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, March 2, 2008.

[708] The massacre of 41 Jews as well as four Poles in the town of Kielce on July 4, 1946, is widely believed to have been provoked, if not orchestrated, by the Communist security forces. It started after a young boy spread a story that he had been held by Jews in a building that housed Jews, for the most part returnees from the Soviet Union. The story in itself was odd, in that such charges were never a motive for violence against Jews made during the interwar period. The building also housed housing the Jewish committee and Jews who worked for the security police, but the latter were untouched. Contrary to a widely held misconception, the pogrom was not initiated by a frenzied mob, but rather by members of the militia and military, who, after being fired on (a few policemen were shot), stormed the building housing the Jews and did most of the killing. Of the several hundred people (at most 500) who gathered in the small area in front of the building (out of a population of 50,000), most were curious onlookers and not pogromists. The Soviet and Polish forces stationed in Kielce, who numbered in the thousands, were located as close 150 metres from the scene and could have easily dispersed the crowd and put a stop to the pogrom had they wanted to. The evidence of complicity of the Communist regime, especially the security police, militia, and military, in this tragedy is thus beyond question. The Communist authorities took full advantage of the incident for propaganda purposes, in particular to cover up evidence of fraud in a recent referendum and to blame the democratic opposition (the so-called "reactionaries") and the Catholic Church for the events. For more on this topic see: the collective work, *Kielce—July 4, 1946: Background, Context and Events* (Toronto and Chicago: The Polish Educational Foundation in North America, 1996); Michael Checinski, *Poland: Communism, Nationalism, Anti-Semitism* (New York: Karz-Cohl, 1982), 17–18, 21–34; Richard C. Lukas, *Bitter Legacy: Polish-American Relations in the Wake of World War II* (Lexington, Ketucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1982), 57–59; Stanisław Meducki, "The Pogrom in Kielce on 4 July 1946," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 9 (London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1996), 158–69; Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust,* 129–42; Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski, *Jews in Poland: A Documentary History*, Revised paperback edition (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1998), 403–420; Bożena Szaynok, "The Jewish Pogrom in Kielce, July 1946: New Evidence," *Intermarium* (Online Journal, Institute on East Central Europe, Columbia University in the City of New York), vol. 1, no. 3; Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust*, 74, 172ff; Stanisław Meducki and Zenon Wrona, eds., *Antyżydowskie wydarzenia kieleckie 4 lipca 1946 roku: Dokumenty i materiały,* 2 volumes (Kielce: Kieleckie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1992, 1994); Bożena Szaynok, *Pogrom Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946* (Wrocław: Bellona, 1992); Tadeusz Wiącek, ed., *Zabić Żyda!: Kulisy i tajemnice pogromu kieleckiego 1946* (Kraków: Temax, 1993); Krzysztof Urbański, *Kieleccy Żydzi* (Kraków: Pracownia Konserwacji Zabytków w Kielcach and Małopolska Oficyna Wydawnicza, n.d. [1993]), 190–228; Krystyna Kersten, *Pogrom Żydów w Kielcach 4 lipca 1946 r.* (Warsaw: PISM, 1996); Jerzy Daniel, *Żyd w zielonym kapeluszu: Rzecz o kieleckim pogromie 4 lipca 1946* (Kielce: Scriptum, 1996); Krzysztof Kąkolewski, *Umarły cmentarz: Wstęp do studiów nad wyjaśnienieniem przyczyn i przebiegu morderstwa na Żydach w Kielcach dnia 4 lipca 1946 roku* (Warsaw: von Borowiecky, 1996), Jan Śledzianowski, *Pytania nad pogromem kieleckim* (Kielce: Jedność, 1998);

Leszek Żebrowski, "Kielecka prowokacja," in *Encyklopedia "Białych Plam"* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2002), vol. 9, 200–206; Łukasz Kamiński and Jan Żaryn, eds., *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego,* vol. 1 (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2006), and the abridged English version: Łukasz Kamiński and Jan Żaryn, eds., *Reflections on the Kielce Pogrom* (Warsaw: Institute of National Remembrance, 2006); Leszek Bukowski, Andrzej Jankowski, and Jan Żaryn, eds., *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego,* vol. 2 (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008).

In the aftermath of the pogrom, religious leaders in Poland issued a number of public statements about the tragic events. Their message was unequivocal and left no room for misinterpretation: no explanation could justify the vile deed, regardless of who the perpetrators were or why they had carried it out. Poland's Primate, August Cardinal Hlond, categoricaly condemned cases of attacks on Jews when he met with Professor Michał Zylberg, a representative of the Jewish Religious Alliance, in January 1946. Cardinal Hlond repeated that same message in a statement made on July 11, 1946, in which he unequivocally condemned the killings in Kielce as "deplorable" and "a hideous calamity which fills me with sadness and sorrow." In view of the relentless attacks on the Church by the authorities and its supporters, including the Central Committee of Jews in Poland, who blamed the Church for the pogrom, Cardinal Hlond went on to provide background information and necessary context regarding the political situation in the country, realizing full well that what he said would be quoted outside Poland and likely manipulated by the Communist authorities and their supporters. As *L'Osservatore Romano* quite astutely pointed out, the Polish bishops could not but condemn the excesses directed at Jews (which they did), however they could not be expected to get embroiled in the political struggle by favouring one group of victims of the civil strife over another, which would in turn be used by the regime to redouble their strike at the latter. See Krystyna Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland, 1943–1948* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), 215–16; Krystyna Kersten, "Pogrom kielecki—znaki zapytania," in Grześkowiak-Łuczyk, *Polska, Polacy, mniejszości narodowe*, 164. Priests from the cathedral parish had attempted to reach the site of the pogrom, only to be turned back by the army. In the absence of Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek (for health reasons, he was resting in a sanatorium in Polanica-Zdrój, in the Sudetes, for two months), the diocesan curia issued two clear and forceful statements on July 6 and July 11, 1946, read in all of the churches in the diocese, which condemned what had transpired in no uncertain terms. The second statement, which was also published in the Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* on August 4, 1946, stated: "This deliberate massacre is a crime that cries out for Divine retribution, and as such is deserving of total and categorical condemnation." The official media refused to publish the Kielce curia statements and manipulated the statement made by Cardinal Hlond, while continuing to lambaste the Church for remaining silent. On his return to Kielce on July 24, 1946, Bishop Kaczmarek immediately set up a special commission to examine the events surrounding the pogrom. However, the authorities did not allow the commission's report to be made public, though a copy was provided to the U.S. ambassador in Warsaw. See Mark Paul, "The Catholic Church and the Kielce Tragedy," *Kielce–July 4, 1946,* 105–15. As in Communist Poland, Cardinal Hlond's condemnation has been continuously manipulated in Western publications and the Kielce curia's statements have been systematically ignored. The London *Jewish Chronicle,* as well many other Jewish publications, reported on September 22, 1953, that "neither Bishop Kaczmarek nor the other leaders of the Catholic Church in Poland condemned" the pogrom. According to another version, current in some Jewish circles, the Kielce pogrom was allegedly "incited by a local priest." See Joe Bobker, "Two Poles Who Are Poles Apart", *B'nai B'rith Messanger* (Los Angeles), April 26, 1991. Even scholarly sources have done their best to attribute to the Catholic Church some sinister role in the whole affair. Israeli historian Yehuda Bauer claimed that "members of the clergy … took part" in the pogrom. See Yehuda Bauer, *The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 65. Characteristically, Michael Berenbaum, then director of the Research Institute at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., claimed contrary to all evidence: "The church was silent … The only priest in the town who protested the pogrom was removed from his pulpit within the week." See Michael Berenbaum, *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), 207. Writing of this ilk has entered mainstream "scholarship," where one encounters outrageous claims such as the following: "Throughout Poland the pogrom met with mass approval, with the exception of a few intellectuals courageous enough to denounce it. Nearly every Polish clergyman, along with Pius XII and the Vatican, refused to condemn the pogrom." See Donald M. McKale, *Nazis After Hitler: How Perpetrators of the Holocaust Cheated Justice and Truth* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 200. Citing Jan Gross but no authoritative source, Michael Fleming writes: "The Catholic Church … did not speak out clearly aganst … anti-Semitic violence and the pogroms in Kraków in 1945 and Kielce in 1946." Indeed, "the Catholic hierarchy attempted to justify and blame the victims for the violence inflicted on them." See Fleming, *Communism, Nationalism and Ethnicity in Poland, 1944–50,* 80, 107. (Fleming is part of a growing breed of Western historians who have fixated on interpreting Polish history through the narrow and distorting prism of "Polish ethno-nationalism." For example, the Catholic Church's natural response of administering to the faithful transposed against their will to the so-called Recovered Territories and the imperative to deal with the authorities on the ground to carry out its spritual mission, when faced with the irreversible reality of the Allied-decreed shifting of Poland's borders and population westward, is characterized by Fleming as a "policy" of "ethno-nationalism" on the part of the Church which allegedly "align[ed] itself with PPR [Communist] nationality policy" and "fostere[ed] an illiberality in the political culture" of

Stalinist Poland, thus becoming a "useful ally" of the Soviet-imposed regime. The Church's alleged "failure to speak clearly" and "its own ethno-centricism," according to Fleming, "provided the discursive legitimization of crimes against members of minority communities." However, even the ruling Communists were prepared to offer a more charitable interpretation of the Church's motives and *modus operandi* when they conceded, in their 1947 state policy toward the Church, that the Church constituted a bastion of Polish tradition and culture and that traditional ideas of patriotism were understood to be linked to Roman Catholicism, which was the religion professed by approximately 98 percent of ethnic Poles. Moreover, the regime regarded the Church as a serious obstacle to the PPR programme as a source of ideological opposition. Ibid., 107–9, 111.) In a similar vein, citing Yehuda Bauer and Jan Gross, Keith Lowe claims that "the Catholic Church did nothing … to denounce pogroms," and that "the entire community [sic] had taken part" in the Kielce pogrom. See Keith Lowe, *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II* (London: Viking/Penguin, 2012), 206.

The stance of Bishop Teodor Kubina of Częstochowa, who co-signing a statement with local authorities, proved to be the most problematic, for a number of reasons. The primary focus of the published statement was not the pogrom as such, but the repeated condemnation of the political enemies of the regime who were allegedly responsible for the pogrom (there were at least six such references in the fairly brief statement). The thrust of the condemnation thus deliberately furthered the Communist authorities' political agenda. Since it was apparent that state officials had taken part in the assault on the Jews, whereas members of the anti-Communist underground had not, that the regime itself was the main human rights abuser and murderer of innocent people in Poland, this statement not only displayed a highly selective morality but was also based on a misrepresentation of the true state of affairs. The moral weight of the statement was further compromised when it became apparent that the authorities had re-edited it before publication and manipulated its contents, without advising Bishop Kubina and the other church signatories. Understandably, the Polish episcopate was not pleased with this display of political naïveté on the part of Bishop Kubina and directed individual bishops to refrain from making statements on events that could have political implications for the Church hierarchy. See *Kielce—July 4, 1946,* 110–13; Jan Żaryn, "The Catholic Church Hierarchy vis-à-vis Polish-Jewish Relations Between 1945 and 1947," in Kamiński and Żaryn, *Reflections on the Kielce Pogrom,* 100–14. Characteristically, none of this important background is mentioned by historians such as Jan Gross and Michael Fleming. See Gross, *Fear,* 149–51; Fleming, *Communism, Nationalism and Ethnicity in Poland, 1944–50,* 108. Bishop Kubina's condemnation of anti-Jewish violence and charges of blood libel did not ingratiate him with the regime, however, as the press controlled by the Communist and pro-Communist parties (the Polish Workers' Party and Polish Socialist Party) attacked Bisop Kubina in the same breath as Cardinal Hlond and the Kielce diocesan clergy, for years to come. The July 8, 1962 issue of *Gazeta Ludowa* wrote: "…those responsible for the pogrom were Cardinal Hlond, the episcopal curia in Kielce, and Bishop Kubina of Częstochowa." See *Kielce—July 4, 1946,* 114; Dariusz Libionka, "Antysemityzm i zagłada na łamach prasy w Polsce w latach 1945–1946," in *Polska 1944/45–1989: Studia i materiały,* vol. 2 (Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN, Pracownia Dziejów Polski po 1945 roku, 1997), 153–65. There is no evidence that any Jews came to Bishop Kubina's defence when these calumnies were spread. Historian Jan Gross attempts to juxtapose "reactionary" clerics such as Bishop Kaczmarek with "enlightened" Catholics such as Bishop Kubina, who tried to reach an accommodation with the Stalinist regime. However, the reality of those times does not support Gross's strained thesis. The milieu of "progressive" Catholics from the Kraków *Tygodnik Powszechny* and the Warsaw *Tygodnik Warszawski* met in Kaczyn, in 1948, in the summer cottage of none other than Bishop Kaczmarek. See Małgorzata Nocuń and Andrzej Brzeziecki, "Prorok: Ks. Jan Zieja, (1897–1991): Świadek wieku XX," *Tygodnik Powszechny,* January 22, 2007.

At the time, the Central Committee of Jews in Poland, who was convinced that the pogrom was carefully staged, claimed (as did the Communist authorities) that the culprits were the "reactionary" forces represented by General Władysław Anders, General Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski, and August Cardinal Hlond, the Primate of Poland, and resolved to undertake a concerted international campaign to discredit those forces and to show their support for Poland's "democratic" government. The radicalized World Federation of Polish Jews followed suit at their congress in Paris in 1946, demanding that General Anders be declared a war criminal and tried by the International Tribunal at Nuremberg. See Marian Turski, "Pogrom kielecki w protokołach Centralnego Komitetu Żydów Polskich," *Almanach żydowski 1996–1997* (Warsaw: Związek Gmin Wyznaniowych Żydowskich w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 1996), 48–62. The military prosecutors, overseen by Lieutenant-Colonel Mieczysław Halski (Halpern), who was Jewish, also stressed the alleged culpability of the Catholic Church at the show trials of the alleged civilian pogromists, and in fact the court ruled, without a shred of evidence, that pogrom was perpatrated by agents of General Anders. See Śledzianowski, *Pytania nad pogromem kieleckim,* 121–26. Not surprisingly, the commemoration of the Warsaw ghetto uprising became an opportune moment to attack "Polish hooligans under the sign of the AK and NSZ," who allegedly "assisted the German tanks and airplanes" during the uprising, and to proclaim that "Polish Fascists from Anders" carried out the murder of the Jews in Kielce. See Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów,* 96. On the other hand, eschewing such fanaticism, a small group of pro-Polish Jews associated with the anti-Communist Polish emigré community laid the blame squarely on the Communist regime. See the declaration issued by the Society for the Promotion of Poland's Independence in New York on July 7, 1946. (The signatories included Henryk Aschkenazy, Henryk Landau and Rudolf Rathaus. A copy of this declaration is in the author's possession.) See Śledzianowski, *Pytania nad pogromem kieleckim,* 146–48. Some Jewish historians to this day continue believe in a right-wing conspiracy behind the Kielce

pogrom, although no one has ever uncovered a shred of evidence to support this theory. For example, Sara Bender, Professor of Jewish History at the University of Haifa, writes: "The Polish extreme right … during and after the war, seized on the opportunity to exploit the atmosphere of hatred of Jews and Communists, prevalent in post-war Poland, therefore selected Kielce to ruthlessly spearhead Polish anti-Semitic ideology, stemming from the Polish Right vision of an ethnocentric state—a new Poland, free of Jews." See Sara Bender, "From Jedwabne to Kielce—Violence and Antisemitism toward Jews, 1918–1946," Conference Paper, "Between Coexistence and Divorce: 25 Years of Research on the History and Culture of Polish Jewry and Polish-Jewish Relations," Hebrew University of Jerusalem, March 17–19, 2009.

The later fate of Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek of Kielce is worth noting, because it is undoubtedly tied to revenge for his alleged role in the Kielce pogrom. Bishop Kaczmarek was interrogated repeatedly by the security forces about the pogrom. He was arrested on January 20, 1951 by Lieutenant Colonel Józef Światło (Izak Fleischfarb), a prominent Jewish member of the security office, and charged with collaborating with the Nazi authorities and for his activities against the postwar Communist regime. He was again interrogated about his alleged role in the pogrom (even though, as noted above, he was absent from Kielce at the time), kept in a dark cell, deprived of food, and tortured, losing 19 of his teeth. His interrogation was personally overseen by Józef Różański (Beniamin Goldberg), the director of the investigation department at the Ministry of Public Security, who had previously led the investigation of the Kielce pogrom. Bishop Kaczmarek was threatened repeatedly by Różański during interrogations that lasted sometimes up to 30–40 hours. On October 20, 1951, Różański reported to his superior Stanisław Radkiewicz, the Minister of Public Security, that his department's investigation had revealed that priests of the Kielce diocese had "prepared and directed the pogrom," and that "in order to divert suspicion from the person of Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek, they arranged for his departure for treatment during this time." In September 1953, along with several other churchmen from Kielce, Bishop Kaczmarek was brought to a Stalinist show trial and sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment for, among other things, "betraying industrial secrets and agents' movements on behalf of an American spy ring controlled by Cardinal Spellman." Bishop Kaczmarek's "confession" (to having steered the Kielce pogrom) was not raised at the trial, even though that crime alone would have doubtless sealed his fate. However, the zeal that Różański and demonstrated in pursuing that line of investigation and his securing a confession from Bishop Kaczmarek, demonstrates that, contrary to the oft-repeated claim that Jewish Communists were just "Polish Communists" and acted no differently than Polish ones, Różański and others like him had a distinct, private Jewish agenda which they were prepared to advance with determination. The prosecutor at Bishop Kaczmarek's trial was Kazimierz Szpondarski, a Jew, as was the court-appointed "defence" attorney, Mieczysław (Mojżesz) Maślanko. The London *Jewish Chronicle* ("Polish Bishop Defended by Jew," October 9, 1953) reported that by "some irony of fate," Bishop Kaczmarek "was defended by a Jewish lawyer," whose "brilliant handling of the case before the Warsaw Military Tribunal did much … to mitigate the Bishop's sentence." In reality, Maślanko, who headed the state "defence" attorneys, worked hand in hand with the Security Office to torpedo Bishop Kaczmarek's defence and referred to him as a "great [Nazi] collaborator." After the ouster of the Stalinists in 1956, Bishop Kaczmarek's conviction was overturned because "proof of guilt" was lacking. See Mark Paul, "The Catholic Church and the Kielce Tragedy," in *Kielce—July 4, 1946,* 108–14; Jan Śledzianowski, *Ksiądz Czesław Kaczmarek biskup kielecki 1895–1963* (Kielce: No publisher, 1991), 64–66; Śledzianowski, *Pytania nad pogromem kieleckim,* 126, 175–76, 180–84; Jan Józef Kasprzyk, "Kaczmarek Czesław," in *Encyklopedia "Białych Plam"* (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2002), vol. 9, 99–105; Kamiński and Żaryn, *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego,* vol. 1, passim, especially 95–109, 201 (text of Bishop Kaczmarek's condemnation of the pogrom), 259, 271; Kamiński and Żaryn, *Reflections on the Kielce Pogrom,* 102–16, 135. On Mieczysław Maślanko see Tadeusz M. Płużański, "Adwo-kaci," *Naywyższy Czas,* January 26, 2003. The revenge did not end there. Jewish nationalists were intent on sullying his reputation at every turn. Morris Kwasniewski (Moryc Kwaśniewski), a former security officer who was stationed in Kielce and afterwards settled in Canada, used the 40th anniversary of the Kielce pogrom to accuse Bishop Kaczmarek of greeting the Germans invaders with salt and bread when they marched into Kielce in September 1939. See Morris Kwasniewski, "Ugly Rumor Spawned This Forgotten Carnage," *Toronto Sun,* June 27, 1986; Ron Csillag, "Postwar Kielce Pogrom Recalled," *The Canadian Jewish News,* July 3, 1986. This preposterous charge has been authoritartively discredited. Bishop Kaczmarek had taken refuge at a monastery in Stopnica, 65 km from Kielce, and narrowly escaped being executed there by the Germans on September 4, 1939. See Śledzianowski, *Ksiądz Czesław Kaczmarek biskup kielecki 1895–1963,* 64. Other members of the Kielce clergy were also persecuted by the Communist authorities. Rev. Jan Danilewicz, the diocesan curia representative who signed a joint statement with the voivodship governor condemning the Kielce pogrom, only to see it unilaterally reneged by the Communist authorities, was also charged and sentenced to six years' imprisonment in the 1953 show trials. Rev. Józef Dąbrowski, the bishop's personal chaplain, received nine years; Rev. Władysław Widłak, the director of the diocesan seminary, received six years; and Sister Waleria Niklewska received five years. See *Kielce—July 4, 1946,* 113–14. The continued vilification of Bishop Kaczmarek and the Catholic clergy about their alleged responsibility for the Jielce pogrom must be assessed against this background.

Contrary to what is often claimed, Poland was not the only country in Europe that experienced violence directed against Jews after the Second World War. Similar events (riots, disturbances, physical attacks, and murders) also occurred with alarming frequency throughout Eastern Europe. In Czechoslovakia, hundreds of Jews were killed or injured (e.g., Košice, Humenné. Prešov, Veľké Topoľčany, Chynorany, Krásno, Nedanovce, Komárno, Snina, where 15

or 16 Jews were killed, Bratislava, Žilina, Bardejov, Nové Zámky). Violence against Jews erupted in many localities in Hungary (e.g., Miskolc, Ózd, Sajószentpéter, Szegvár, Tótkomlós, Kunmadaras, Diósgyőr, Hajdúhadház, Makó, Mezőkövesd), Romania, the U.S.S.R. (especially in Eastern Galicia and Kiev, but also in Lithuania), and elsewhere. See Peter Meyer, Bernard D. Weinryb, Eugene Duschinsky, and Nicolas Sylvain, *The Jews in the Soviet Satellites* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1953), 105–109 (Czechoslovakia), 419–31 (Hungary); Shimon Kanc, ed., *Yizkor Book in Memory of Rozniatow*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Rozniatow/Rozhnyatov.html>, translation of *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Rozniatow* (Tel Aviv: Rozniatow, Perehinsko, Broszniow and Environs Societies in Israel and the USA, 1974), 207ff. (Broszniów, Strutyń); Abraham Morgenstern, *Chortkov Remembered: The Annihilation of a Jewish Community* ([Dumont, New Jersey]: n.p., 1990), 98 (Czortków); Sári Reuveni, "Antisemitism in Hungary, 1945–1946," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1989): 41–62; *Kielce—July 4, 1946: Background, Context and Events* (Toronto and Chicago: The Polish Educational Foundation in North America, 1996), 89 (Czechoslovakia); Jerzy Robert Nowak, *Spory o historię i współczesność* (Warsaw: von borowiecky, 2000), 267–68 (Hungary); Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 191ff. (Ukraine); David Bankier, ed., *The Jews Are Coming Back: The Return of the Jews to Their Countries of Origin after WW II* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, in association with Berghahn Books, New York and Oxford, 2005), 241 (hundreds of Jews were reportedly murdered in Romania), 259–68 (Slovakia); Dorothy Leivers, *Jews of Kopcheve* (Bergenfield, New Jersey: Avotaynu, 2006), 49 (two rescuers of Jews were murdered by Lithuanian nationalists); Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press; Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2009), 432 (Lithuania). As in Poland, Jews were conspicuous in the leadership of the Communist Party in Hungary—"the government was largely in Jewish hands"—and in the security police; many Jews had joined these institutions to take revenge and, in one notorious case, a group of Jews in the political police killed some 16 people whom they considered responsible for crimes against the Jews. See Peter Kenez, *Hungary from the Nazis to the Soviets: The Establishment of the Communist Regime in Hungary, 1944–1948* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), chapter 7; Peter Kenez, "Pogroms in Hungary, 1946," in Murray Baumgarten, Peter Kenez, and Bruce Thompson, eds., *Varieties of Antisemitism: History, Ideology, Discourse* (Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2009), 228–29, 233–35. Between 5 and 16 Jews were killed and more than 100 injured in Kiev on September 7, 1945, after a Jewish NKGB lieutenant murdered two Ukrainians; apparently, the Ukrainian culprits were not punished. Anti-Jewish violence was also reported in Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkov, and other cities and towns in Ukraine. See Ilya E Lush, *Post World War 2 Pogroms in Eastern Europe*, Internet: <htpp://www.ilyaluvish.com>; Victoria Khiterer, "We Did Not Recognize Our Country: The Rise of Antisemitism in Ukraine before and after the Second World War, 1937–1947," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 26: *Jews and Ukrainians* (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Litman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2014), 361–79, here at 370–72. Survivors returning to their homes in the Czech lands found their property in the hands of hostile and even belligerent Czechs, who often refused to surrender the property to the rightful Jewish owners. See Heda Margolius Kovály, *Under a Cruel Star: A Life in Prague, 1941–1968* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Plunkett Lake Press, 1986), 46–47; Gill, *The Journey Back From Hell*, 430; Smith, *Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust*, 300.

As was to be expected, despite the massive presence of occupation forces, which put a damper on latent anti-Semitic attitudes among the general population, disturbances also occurred in Germany and Austria. A deadly raid on a Jewish DP camp near Stuttgart on March 29, 1946 by some 200 German police accompanied by dogs resulted in one Jewish death (a concentration camp survivor). Many other Jews were roughed up, and their property was plundered and destroyed. A Jewish survivor in Austria recalled: "The war was over, but one could feel anti-Semitism in Austria wherever one went. One day, as a local bus passed Camp Yehudah, a Jewish refugee seeking to alight, was rudely pushed off by the conductor. The refugee hit back. A crowd gathered, Austrian police and American military police came along. The refugees scattered, and an attempt by Austrian police to enter the camp and make arrests was held off. The military police detained Lippa Skolsky, chief of the Jewish police in the camp, Haim Max, of the Brichah, and two youngsters, on suspicion of participating in the rioting. The refugees at once organized a demonstration demanding that al four be freed. General Collins went to the camp in person to calm feelings, and the prisoners were set at liberty. But the Austrian authorities demanded action against the refugees and anti-Semitic outbursts multiplied all over the city, often provoked by Austrian police. One could sense how some Austrians hated us and resented the Nazis' failure to complete their ghastly design. The Americans … gave in to Austrian pressures and arrested five refugees, Skolsky among them, who would be put on trial." See Gefen, *Defying the Holocaust*, 126. Hundreds of Austrians took part in anti-Jewish riots in Bad Ischl in the Salzkammergut on August 20, 1947, and in Offenbach in September 1947. Rioters yelled "Kill the Jews" and chanted Nazi slogans, while Austrian police stood by idly. American police had to disperse the mob and arrested some ringleaders. In both those countries, a large part of the local population had profited from the looting of Jewish property under anti-Semitic Nazi laws. Not surprisngly, at the 1963 war crimes trials of Auschwitz henchmen in Frankfurt, German police officers actually saluted the accused German mass murderers as a sign of respect.

Despite the restoration of law and order and the semblance of normalcy that returned after the defeat of Nazi Germany, so unlike conditions in Soviet-occupied Poland and Eastern Europe, the reception that Jews received when they returned from concentration camps to their homes in Western Europe was unexpected. Jews who returned to the Netherlands and Denmark often found their homes destroyed or occupied, their property stolen, and their jobs gone.

Jews who tried to reclaim their property met with opposition and ill-feeling from those who had taken over their businesses and homes. The official attitude toward restoring Jewish property was miserly, even anti-Semitic. There was a reluctance to return Jewish children if one of the biological parents had died: the child's fate was determined by a Dutch central government committee, headed by a strict Calvinist who felt that Jews had to be "saved" from Judaism. Anti-Semitism showed a marked increase in the Netherlands and Denmark in the summer of 1945. Aggressive anti-Semitic remarks and abuses were regularly voiced, especially in Holland. See Poul Borschenius, *The History of the Jews* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), vol. 5, 57; Dienke Hondius, "Welcome in Amsterdam? Return and Reception of Survivors: New research and Findings," 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. 3, 135–41; Dienke Hondius, "Bitter Homecoming: The Return and Reception of Dutch and Stateless Jews in the Netherlands," in Bankier, *The Jews Are Coming Back,* 108–35, and also 8–9, 137; Andrew Buckser, *After the Rescue: Jewish Identity and Community in Contemporary Denmark* (New York and Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 47 (according to Buckser, Jews who arrived in Denmark from Poland between 1969 and 1971 received a warm welcome from Danes in general, but their reception by the Jews was "cold and scornful"; they referred to them as "Polacks" and treated them as second-class citizens in Jewish community affairs—ibid., 49); Diane L. Wolf, *Beyond Anne Frank: Hidden Children and Postwar Families in Holland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). The same was true in France and Belgium. The mood on the streets of France was ugly. As one Jew recalled, "I was walking along the streets of Paris one day and a Frenchman who passed me said 'Dirty Jew'." See the video testimony of Stanisław Steiner, USC Shoah Holocaust Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, Los Angeles, Interview Code 22053. Jewish survivors, especially foreign born ones, were met with open hostility when they tried to reclaim their property. The prospect of Jews reclaiming their own homes, stores and accounts was regarded as "impudence" and the provisional owners felt a bitter regret: "Why didn't they all perish in the ovens!" As Jews began returning to their homes in Strasbourg and attempted to reclaim their property, the prefect complained that the sudden, massive return of 3,000 foreign-born Jews was causing widespread resentment among the native population. In Paris, anti-Jewish demonstrations occurred in the Third, Fourth, Eleventh and Twentieth arrondissements. In April 1945, 500 demonstrators marched through the streets shouting "France for the French," "Jews to the crematoria," and "Death to the Jews," to protest the return of apartments to the Jews who had been expelled from them. Fights broke out, furniture was thrown out of windows and burned, and the police arrested Jews who tried to oppose the demonstrators. Although a large part of the Jewish population lived in dire poverty, as of 1951 only half of the Jews from Paris recovered their property. See Renée Poznanski, *Jews in France during World War* II (Hanover and London: University Press of New England; Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press in association with United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2001), 464–67; Maud S. Mandel, *In the Aftermath of Genocide: Armenians and Jews in Twentieth-Century France* (Durham and London; Duke University Press, 2003); Renée Poznanski, "French Apprehensions, Jewish Expectations: From a Social Imaginary to a Political Practice," in Bankier, *The Jews Are Coming Back,* 46–47, 48–49. Conditions in Belgium were also unfavourable. See Bankier, *The Jews Are Coming Back,* 8, 80. When 9-year-old Olga Kirshenbaum Weiss returned to her home in Uccle, a middle-class suburb of Brussels, after liberation, "On several occasions, I was attacked by groups of boys who waited until I left school and threw stones at me, shouting 'dirty Jew'; and one day, I was shocked to see a Jewish classmate being pushed into a corner and beaten by several boys." Henry Stark, a pre-teen boy, recalls: "There was much antisemitism in Europe after the war, and Belgium was not immune from it. I got a good strong taste of it when my father enrolled me in Antwerp's foremost French-culture-based school, the *Lycée d'Anvers.* I encountered bullying from both students and from teachers because I was Jewish. … For me direct antisemitism became a fact of life after the liberation." See Fox, *Out of Chaos,* 63, 198. In Greece, the return of Jewish property was extremely slow. Jews who returned from concentration camps were greeted coldly by those who had survived the war in Greece itself: "they were asked why they, and no others, had made it through the camps alive—the unspoken and sometimes not so unspoken implication being that they had collaborated and allowed the others to go to their death." Angered by such charges, many returnees claimed that "they had been better treated in Germany than here," and accused those who had stayed of hoarding their wealth and failing to help them out. See Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430–1950* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 419–20.

It is a little known fact that the most extensive and widespread anti-Jewish rioting in the immediate postwar period occurred in Great Britain, though in a different context. In August 1947, many thousands of Britons went on the rampage demolishing Jewish businesses and desecrating and burning synagogues in many cities throughout the country. Ostensibly, this was revenge for the hanging of two abducted British soldiers by Jewish terrorists ("freedom fighters") in Palestine. The larger background to these events is worth noting. In addition to the militant campaign against British authorities in Palestine, the Irgun and Lehi, terrorist groups, attacked British targets in Europe and launched bombing attacks Britain itself. In late 1946 and early 1947, Irgun carried out a series of sabotage attacks on British Army transportation routes in occupied Germany. At around the same time, an attempt was made by Lehi to drop a bomb on the House of Commons from a chartered plane flown from France; this attempt was stopped just before it was to be carried out, when French police discovered Lehi members preparing to cross the English Channel in a plane that was found to be carrying a large bomb. In October 1946, Lehi bombed the British Embassy in Rome, injuring three people. A number of bombs exploded in London, including one at London's Colonial Club, an

establishment catering to soldiers and students from British colonies in Africa and the West Indies. The bombing caused no fatalities but injured some servicemen. An attempt was also made to destroy the Colonial Office in London with a large bomb, which malfunctioned after its timer broke. According to a senior police official, it would have caused a death rate similar to that of the King David Hotel bombing on July 22, 1946 had it gone off. (The bombing of the King David Hotel by Irgun killed 91 people of various nationalities and 46 were injured). Some 21 letter bombs were addressed to senior British political figures, including Prime Minister Clement Atlee and Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin. Many were intercepted, while others reached their targets but were discovered before they could go off. An Irgun explosives factory was also discovered in London. It is apparent that all this could not have happened without considerable financial and logistical support from British Jews. Moreover, in all likelihood, many British Jews supported the Jewish terrorists' activities against the British forces in Palestine. (It is also worth noting that these are the types of activities that Israel condemns the oppressed Palestinians for committing today.)

The British arrested thousands of Jews during their counterinsurgency campaign in Palestine, often imposing severe prison terms, including for weapons-related offences. They also began using flogging as a judicial punishment. In late December 1946, after an Irgun member was flogged, the group abducted and flogged several British soldiers in return, an event that became known as the Night of Beatings. While this caused the British to end the use of flogging, they then began to apply the death penalty against convicted insurgents. Within months, four imprisoned Jewish fighters, including three Irgun men that had been arrested during the Night of the Beatings, were hanged. In some instances, Irgun abducted British soldiers and police officers, and in one instance a judge, and threatened to kill them if executions took place. This tactic succeeded in stopping a few executions. In May 1947, a large prison break was staged when Irgun fighters, in a coordinated attack, blasted a large hole the prison wall, and Jewish prisoners blasted their way out through the doors with smuggled explosives. Some 28 Jewish prisoners and 182 Arab prisoners escaped. During the operation, nine fighters and escapees were killed, most of them when a getaway truck ran into a British roadblock, and five Irgun fighters and eight escapees were captured. Three out of the five fighters captured were sentenced to death in June; Irgun responded by kidnapping two British sergeants from the Intelligence Corps and threatening to kill them should the sentences be carried out. The British Army carried out extensive search operations. The Haganah cooperated with the British search effort. Efforts to locate the hostages proved fruitless. The British authorities decided to carry out the executions despite the danger to the hostages. On July 29, 1947, the three were executed, and the next day the two British sergeants were killed in response. Their bodies were then hanged from trees in an orange grove near Netanya, and were booby-trapped with a bomb, which later injured a British officer attempting to cut one of the bodies down. (Following this incident, the British government ordered an end to the use of the death penalty in Palestine.) British soldiers and police officers responded by attacking civilians in Tel Aviv, killing five people. Simultaneously, and a wave of anti-Semitic riots swept Britain.

The retaliatory rioting began in Liverpool on Friday, August 1, 1947, and spread to other major British cities, including London, Manchester, Cardiff, Derby and Glasgow, causing widespread damage to Jewish property. The extent of the British anti-Jewish hostility is staggering. Synagogues and easily recognizable Jewish properties and symbols throughout Britain were targeted by attackers as were random Jews who had no known connections to the events in distant Palestine. The rioters included both civilians (mostly young men) and some solders. The outbursts were not orchestrated, but entirely spontaneous and attracted swelling throngs in city after city. Jewish property in Bristol, Newcastle, Swansea, Devonport, and many other places was attacked. In Birmingham, a sign fully a half-block long and three feet high was painted on a wall, declaring: "Gentiles Arise. Resist Jewish enterprise. Remember Paice and Martin." (These were the two British soldiers hanged by the Irgun.) Small Jewish communities also suffered. At Ramsgate (Kent) six panes of glass were broken and a notice board torn down at the synagogue. Four windows of the Hornsey (Middlesex) synagogue were broken by a crowd which threw stones. At Salford (Lancashire) a brick was thrown through the window of a shop in which an 80-year-old woman lay ill. She died soon afterwards. Few of the thousands of rioters were ever apprehended, and most of those punished received a small fine. According one study,

> The provocative nature of the newspaper reporting contributed to the already tense situation surrounding Anglo-Jewry's position in British society, although it was undoubtedly the calculated callousness of the Irgun reprisal hangings, which acted to spark the violent backlash against Anglo-Jewry. The rioting began as a wave of anti-Jewish demonstrations, which started in Liverpool and subsequently spread across Britain's urban centres from London to Glasgow. These 'demonstrations,' fuelled by bank holiday high spirits, quickly turned into a violent outpouring of hatred against the Anglo-Jewish community, as a vendetta for the deaths of the British sergeants in Palestine.
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> Indicative of the breath of the violence, incidents were reported in West Derby, where a wooden synagogue was burnt down, in Glasgow, where 'bricks were thrown through the windows of Jewish shops, and in Liverpool, where 'over a hundred windows belonging to Jewish owners were shattered'. It was also in Liverpool where the rioting was most intensive and long lasting. For over five days the city bore witness to such extreme violence and looting that the Lord Mayor was compelled to issue an appeal to the city 'to assist the police in the prevention of attacks on property and shops supposedly owned by Jews'. In total over 300 Jewish properties were affected by the rioting in Liverpool, and the police made 88 arrests. Confirming the anti-Jewish motivation of the rioting, synagogues and easily

recognisable Jewish properties and symbols throughout Britain were deliberately targeted by the vigilantes. In Hendon, London, windows of the Raleigh Close synagogue were smashed and a piece of paper was found with the words "Jews are sin", Blackpool and St John's Wood synagogues received telephone calls threatening that they would be blown up, and the walls of Plymouth synagogue were attacked and marked with fascist signs and slogans: 'Hang all Jews' and "Destroy Judah". In other attacks on Jewish targets, gravestones in a Jewish cemetery were uprooted in Birmingham, "Hitler was right" was daubed on properties in North Wales, and Jewish property in Halifax, Pendleton, Lancashire, Bolton, Holyhead and Southend were also attacked. In a further incident, the back door of the JC's [Jewish Chronicle's] representative's home in Cardiff was marked "Jews—good old Hitler".

In addition to the widespread nature of the rioting, events in Eccles, Lancashire indicated the broad support and popularity of the anti-Jewish violence. During the spontaneous anti-Jewish demonstration, on 5 August 1947, *The Times* and JC reported that a crowd of 700 people 'cheered each hit' as missiles pelted Jewish properties smashing their windows. In a further revealing incident, fifty abattoir slaughtermen in Birkenhead 'refused to handle kosher meat for a week as a protest against the murder of the two British sergeants in Palestine'.

… the anti-Jewish rioting that swept across Britain in the first week of August 1947 acted to demonstrate unequivocally the perception in Britain that Anglo-Jewry was an alien, community in British society. This perception of Anglo-Jewry's 'separateness' and 'difference' from the remainder of British society is most vividly illustrated in a number of seemingly innocuous signs placed in shop windows in riot-affected areas. In one shop in Liverpool bearing the name 'Lewis' the owner placed a notice "We are not Jews" to avoid being targeted. In Manchester, which also suffered several days of disturbances, a similar notice was placed in shop window announcing: "Don't make another mistake, chums. This shop is 100 per cent British owned, managed and staffed." The implication of the signs was stark: British Jews were regarded as 'Jewish' rather than 'British'. Such a view is reinforced by the discovery in the midst of the rioting of a landmine outside a Jewish premise in Davenport. Whilst the landmine was found to be unarmed, a message was uncovered in place of the explosives, which read: "Only because English lives are involved, this is empty. Down with the Jews."

In an atmosphere arguably more akin to race-obsessed Nazi Germany than free and democratic Britain, proving a citizen's bona fides as a white Christian Briton became a valid and essential means of defence against violent attack.

See Paul Bagon, "The Impact of the Jewish Underground upon Anglo Jewry: 1945–1947," St Antony's College, University of Oxford M-Phil thesis, 2003. According to another author,

On Sunday afternoon [August 3, 1947] the trouble reached Manchester. Small groups of men began breaking the windows of shops in Cheetham Hill, an area just north of the city centre which had been home to a Jewish community since the early 19th century. The pubs closed early that day because there was a shortage of beer, and by the evening the mob's numbers had swelled to several hundred. Most were on foot but others drove through the area, throwing bricks from moving cars.

Soon the streets were covered in broken glass and stones and the crowd moved on to bigger targets, tearing down the canopy of the Great Synagogue on Cheetham Hill Road and surrounding a Jewish wedding party at the Assembly Hall. They shouted abuse at the terrified guests until one in the morning.

The next day, Lever said, "Cheetham Hill Road looked much as it had looked seven years before, when the German bombers had pounded the city for 12 hours. All premises belonging to Jews for the length of a mile down the street had gaping windows and the pavements were littered with glass."

By the end of the bank holiday weekend, anti-Jewish riots had also taken place in Glasgow and Liverpool. There were minor disturbances, too, in Bristol, Hull, London and Warrington, as well as scores of attacks on Jewish property across the country. A solicitor in Liverpool and a Glasgow shopkeeper were beaten up. Nobody was killed, but this was the most widespread anti-Jewish violence the UK had ever seen. In Salford, the day after a crowd of several thousand had thrown stones at shop windows, signs appeared that read: "Hold your fire. These premises are British."

Arsonists in West Derby set fire to a wooden synagogue; workers at Canada Dock in Liverpool returned from the holidays to find "Death to all Jews" painted above the entrance. And in Eccles, a former sergeant major named John Regan was fined £15 for telling a crowd of 700: "Hitler was right. Exterminate every Jew—every man, woman and child. What are you afraid of? There's only a handful of police."

… as the historian Tony Kushner has written in an essay on the links between austerity and the 1947 riots, a popular stereotype persisted of Jews as "black marketeers gaining from the war but not contributing to the effort". The extension of rationing kept the stereotype alive. Ernest Bevin, the

> foreign secretary, had made remarks about the Jews of Europe "pushing to the front of the queue" and during the fuel crisis he made a quip about "Israelites", insinuating that Jewish black marketeers were hoarding fuel. Worse still, Jewish loyalty over Palestine was being questioned openly. In the opening days of 1947 the Sunday Times had addressed an editorial "to British Jews" in which the paper accused them of failing to perform their "civic duty and moral obligations" by denouncing the anti-British violence in Palestine. …
>
> Today, there is little mention of the riots in the official histories. There are only a couple of academic essays beyond Kushner's study, … British politicians, too, were keen to sweep things under the carpet. James Chuter Ede, the postwar home secretary, dismissed the rioting as mere "hooliganism … rather than an indication of public feeling", while magistrates condemned rioters as "un-British" and "unpatriotic". Nations need their feel-good stories and as Rich points out, "The thought that those popular anti-Jewish riots could happen two years after the Holocaust in Britain … runs counter to the anti-fascist mythology of Britain's role in the war. Who wants to go digging that up?"

See Daniel Trilling, "Britain's Last Anti-Jewish Riots: Why Have the 1947 Riots Been Forgotten?" *New Statesman*, May 23, 2012, which is based on Tony Kushner, "Anti-semitism and Austerity: The August 1947 Riots in Britain," in Panikos Panayi, ed., *Racial Violence in Britain, 1840-1950* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996), 149–68.

Moreover, Britain refused to admit Jewish DPs and even considered ways of ridding Britain of Jewish refugees who had entered before the war. See Arieh J. Kochavi, "Pressure Groups versus the American and British Administrations during and after World War II," in Goda, *Jewish Histories of the Holocaust,* 260. Postwar Britain also witnessed the growth of blatant anti-Polish hostility. Even demobilized Polish soldiers, who had fought valiantly for the Allies and were once regarded as heroes for their role in the Battle of Britain, became unpopular. Graffiti demanding "Poles Go Home" and "England for the English" sprung up near Polish bases, and there were incidents of Poles being attacked by armed gangs and hospitalized. For example, on October 26, 1946, twelve Polish airmen from the base in Hucknall had to be hospitalized after being attacked by an English mob. Trade unions, inspired by pro-Soviet propaganda, shunned Poles as "landlords" and "fascists." See Matthew Kelly, *Finding Poland: From Tavistock to Hruzdowa and Back Again* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2010), 283. For eyewitness testimonies, see Bogusia J. Wojciechowska, ed. and comp., *Waiting To Be Heard: The Polish Christian Experience Under Nazi and Stalinist Ocupation, 1939–1945* (Bloomington, Indiana: AuthorHouse, 2009), 281, 289, 290.

By and large, Western European societies were encouraged, even by Jewish survivors, to bury the issue of wartime collaboration. The British authorities systematically covered up collaboration on the part of residents of the Channel Islands and refused to prosecute known collaborators. The Channel Islands were the only part of the British Isles to be occupied by Germany. The English authorities there cooperated closely with the German military in identifying and tracking down members of the tiny Jewish community. See Madeleine Bunting, *The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands under German Rule, 1940–1945,* Revised paperback edition (London: HarperCollins, 1996); Hazel R. Knowles Smith, *The Changing Face of the Channel Islands Occupation* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). Only one member of the eight-member cabinet of Guernsey categorically refused his assent to anti-Jewish edicts. The most thorough and scathing indictment was penned by David Fraser, who wrote: "The documentary record on which this book is based now clearly and beyond question establishes that high-ranking government, police and bureaucratic officials in Jersey and Guernsey participated wholeheartedly and almost without question in the persecution of resident Jews and in the programme of Aryanization aimed at the exclusion of Jewish economic and business interests. They did not protest. They did not invoke underlying principles of British justice or of basic humanity. Instead they not only complied with German commands, but they frequently took the initiative in seeking out Jewish individuals or Jewish businesses for the sole purpose of applying Nazi legalized anti-Semitism as fully as possible." Fraser concludes that these actions "were always informed by an indigenous and widespread anti-Semitism," pointing out that local officials even registered individuals who were not legally speaking Jewish. He reiterates the point that "The entire legal, police and bureaucratic machinery of the Channel Islands actively assisted in the implementation of Nazi anti-Semitic legal norms and practices." Finally, he notes, "In the end, no Island official or lawyer was ever prosecuted or otherwise sanctioned for their participation in the imposition and implementation of the series of legal measures aimed at the Islands' Jewish population." Senator Wilfred Krichevski, who was evacuated to England in 1940, made no effort to investigate the fate of the Islands' Jewish population on his return after liberation. In fact, he reportedly played down their loss and declined to support a request to the Board of British Jews for a memorial. This reticence is attributed to a general worry that remembering the Holocaust could complicate Jews' relationship with non-Jews and might enflame anti-Semitic sentiments. See David Fraser, *The Jews of the Channel Islands and the Rule of Law, 1940–1945: 'Quite contrary to the principles of British justice'* (Brighton and Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2000); Knowles Smith, *The Changing Face of the Channel Islands Occupation,* 145, 166–67.

Moreover, conditions in Poland are generally assessed without regard to the political situation that country faced after the "liberation." While in Western Europe things returned to normal and law and order were restored, in Poland the Soviets imposed a Communist regime and helped liquidate the pro-independence underground that had fought against the Nazis. Unfortunately, all too many Jews chose to support or even serve the new regime and lent a helping hand to this brutal repression and, in tandem with the Stalinist regime, accused the Polish underground of complicity in the

Holocaust. It is sometimes claimed that Kielce was Europe's largest postwar civilian massacre and its last pogrom. The anti-German uprising that engulfed Prague from May 5, 1945, which was perpetrated by Czech revolutionary guards as well as ordinary civilians on both members of the German military and ordinary Germans, clearly exceeded Kielce in both scope and brutality. Germans were driven out of their homes, incarcerated in makeshift detention centres, beaten or otherwise abused, and put to work in menial, physically demanding tasks. Sexual assault, rape and murder (by hanging or stoning) were also widespread. Anti-German riots in the Bohemian town of Ústí nad Labem (Aussig), on July 31, 1945, resulted in at least 100, and possibly several hundred, German deaths. There were many other such occurrences in Czechoslovakia during those months, at a time when the Czechs, and not the Soviets, were in control. See Ahonen, et al., *People on the Move*, 136–37, 139; MacDonogh, *After the Reich*, 132–59. The civilian massacres in Bosnia in 1992–1995 proved once again the claim about Kielce to be false. Western Europeans also carried out a number of massacres of civilians outside Europe in the immediate postwar era. On December 9, 1947, Dutch troops massacred between 150 and 430 unarmed civilians in the West Javanese village of Rawagedeh (now called Balongsari). At the time, the United Nations Committee of Good Offices on the Indonesian Question undertook an investigation and concluded that the action had been "deliberate and ruthless." After a short investigation of their own, Dutch authorities decided it was not then expedient to prosecute their troops. The culprits simply blended into Dutch society unscathed on their return to the Netherlands. On December 12, 1948, British troops (a Scots Guards patrol) indiscriminately killed twenty-four unarmed villagers in the so-called Batang Kali massacre, during counter-insurgency operations against suspected Malay and Chinese communists in Malaya, then a colony of the British Crown. Once again, despite several investigations by the British government since the 1950s, as well as, a re-examination of the evidence by the Royal Malaysia Police between 1993 and 1997, no charges have ever been brought against any of the alleged perpetrators. In fact, the British government hid sensitive files about these colonial wars in a secure facility far from London, and many had been destroyed as well. Western Europeans continued to perpetrate atrocities against Africans with impunity in the 1950s, 1960s and even 1970s, for example, the French in Algeria and the Portuguese in Angola, Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea. On December 16, 1972, Portuguese troops killed hundreds of villagers in Wiriyamu, in Mozambique, thought to be insurgent sympathizers.

Moreover, Europeans Jews (among them Holocaust survivors) perpetrated a number of much larger civilian massacres in Palestine (later Israel) after Kielce. Among them were: the slaughter of as many as 250 Arab villagers in Deir Yassin on April 9, 1948 (recent estimates suggest the toll may be closer to 120); the massacre of more than 80 Arabs in Dueima and scores more in Tantura soon thereafter; the massacre of prisoners of war in a mosque in Lydda on July 12, 1948; and the 1956 slaughter of dozens of innocent Arabs in the village of Kfar Kassem for the crime of failing to observe a curfew of which they were unaware. The last of these crimes resulted in a court martial with light, symbolic sentences; the two previous crimes went unpunished. Unlike the 50th anniversary of the Kielce tragedy, when the Polish authorities organized a large-scale commemoration and issued official apologies, on the 50th anniversary of the much larger massacre at Deir Yassin, the Israeli authorities maintained a shameful silence. (This constitutes a serious regression from the reaction in 1948 when a number of prominent Jews condemned the slaughter.) In 1969, the Israeli Foreign Ministry even published a pamphlet "Background Notes on Current Themes: Deir Yassin" denying that there had been a massacre at Deir Yassin, and calling the story "part of a package of fairy tales, for export and home consumption." As a result, many Israelis and Jews outside of Israel today deny that it ever occurred and others seek to justify it. By and large, the Western media has ignored the event, thus playing into the hands of the revisionists. (A notable exception is Patrick Martin, "Memories of Deir Yassin haunts Palestinians," *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], April 29, 1998.) The peaceful Palestinian Arab village of Deir Yassin, which was located outside of the area assigned by the United Nations to the Jewish State, was attacked by 130 commandos of the Irgun and Stern Gang (Lehi) several weeks before the end of British Mandate rule in Palestine. The massacre of innocent Palestinians—mostly women, children and the elderly—commenced only after the village was seized (and not during battle), and was accompanied by maiming (a woman in her eighth month of pregnancy was shot in the stomach) and widespread looting (jewelry was ripped off the dead and dying victims). Some of the Arab survivors of Deir Yassin were loaded onto a truck and paraded through the Jewish quarters of Jerusalem. Jacques de Reynier, a Swiss doctor and head of the International Red Cross mission in Palestine, witnessed the aftermath of the massacre and reported on the "mopping up" operations in these riveting words:

> "The first thing I saw were people running everywhere, rushing into and out of houses, carrying stun guns, rifles, pistols, and long ornate knives … They seemed half mad. I saw a beautiful young girl, with criminal eyes, carrying a dagger still covered in blood. She displayed it like a trophy. This was the 'cleaning up' team, which was obviously performing its task very conscientiously. … Here the 'cleaning up' had been done with machine guns, then hand grenades. It had been finished off with knives, anyone could see that. The same thing in the next room, but as I was about to leave, I heard something like a sigh. I looked everywhere, turned over all the bodies, and eventually found a little foot, still warm. It was of a little girl of ten, mutilated by a hand grenade, but still alive … everywhere it was the same horrible sight … [The population of the village] had been deliberately massacred in cold blood for, as I observed for myself, this gang was admirably disciplined and only acted under their leaders' orders."

The village of Deir Yassin was subsequently resettled by Jews, who took over the homes of the Palestinians who had fled for their lives. It was renamed Givat Shaul Bet and is today part of Jerusalem. The opening ceremony was attended by cabinet ministers and chief rabbis. Streets were named after the Irgun and Sternists who took part in the attack. The cemetery was bulldozed and, like hundreds of other Palestinian villages, Deir Yassin was wiped off the map. There were no arrests, no prosecutions, no compensation. Today, there are no markers, no plaques, and no memorials at Deir Yassin. Ironically, the slaughter took place within sight of the national memorial for Holocaust victims at Yad Vashem. According to Menachem Begin, the leader of the Irgun at the time, this horrific deed served the future state of Israel well. In his book *The Revolt,* Begin boasted, "Arabs throughout the country, induced to believe wild tales of 'Irgun butchery,' were seized with limitless panic and started to flee for their lives. This mass flight soon developed into a maddened, uncontrollable stampede. The political and economic significance of this development can hardly be overestimated." The dream of an Israel without Palestinians had been sowed and reaped in abundance. To paraphrase Holocaust historian Lucy S. Dawidowicz, who played a considerable role in shaping attitudes about the Poles in the West, "the [Jews] celebrated their independence with pogroms against the [Palestinians]." The Palestinians were driven out of their ancestral homes and continue to be dispossessed today. Their rightful claims to restitution of their seized property and return to their homeland are ignored. Special tours of Deir Yassin led by surviving underground fighters are organized on the anniversary of the "battle." See Daniel A. McGowan and March H. Ellis, eds., *Remembering Deir Yassin: The Future of Israel and Palestine* (New York: Olive Branch Press/Interlink Publishing Group, 1998); Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *O Jerusalem!* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), 310–14; Benny Morris, "The Historiography of Deir Yassin," *Journal of Israeli History*, vol. 24, mo. 1 (2005): 79–107. There were many more massacres and outrages perpetrated against the Palestinians at that time but they are generally forgotten. Elias Chacour, for example, described how the Israeli Defence Forces descended on his Melkite Catholic village of Biram in 1948 and drove the villagers away at gunpoint. Their homes were looted and they were told: "the land belongs to us now and you have no business here." They took refuge in the nearby Palestinian village of Gish which was deserted except for one or two old people. Its residents had also been herded away by Jewish soldiers and later two dozen bodies of villagers were found in a mass grave. Although the residents of Biram obtained a court order in 1953 allowing them to return to their village, they were prevented from doing so at gunpoint by the Israeli army. On September 16, 1953 the Israeli air force and army in a joint operation bombed the village until it was completely destroyed. At the same time it was announced that the land belonging to the villagers had been expropriated by the state for establishing Jewish settlements. The Israeli government has consistently blocked any attempt to restore the land to its rightful owners, thus perpetuating the ethnic cleansing campaign. See Elias Chacour, *Blood Brothers* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Chosen Books, 1984).

Only recently have a few Israeli historians began to challenge the accepted Zionist narrative of the Jews having fought a "heroic" war of independence in 1948 against vicious enemies from within and without. In fact, the evidence points overwhelmingly to ethnic cleansing that was well-planned (rather than isolated incidents of retaliation) with the intent of creating a homogenous Jewish state. The 1948 war provided opportunity to carry out the logic and intent of political Zionism, namely the establishment of a state for Jews without Palestinians or as few as possible. According to Benny Morris, a leading Israeli historian of Israel's War of Independence, recently declassified documents in the archives of the IDF reveal that in 1947, Ben-Gurion and other Zionist leaders concluded that the Jewish state could not come into being in the territory assigned to Jews by the United Nations without the uprooting of 700,000 Palestinians. "In the months of April-May 1948, units of the Haganah were given operational orders that stated explicitly that they were to uproot the villagers, expel them and destroy the villages themselves. This resulted in "far more Israeli acts of massacre that [Morris] had previously thought," including "many cases of rape [that] ended in murder" and executions of Palestinians who were lined up against a wall and shot (in Operation Hiram). The dismantling of Palestinian society, the destruction of Palestinian towns and villages, and the expulsion of 700,000 Palestinians were not unavoidable consequences of the war declared on the emerging Jewish state by Arab countries. Rather, as Benny Morris repeatedly confirms, it was a deliberate and planned operation intended to "cleanse" (the term used in the declassified documents) those parts of Palestine assigned to the Jews as a necessary pre-condition for the emergence of the Jewish state. Remarkably, Morris justifies the war crimes: "There are circumstances in history that justify ethnic cleansing. … The need to establish this [Jewish] state in this place overcame the injustice that was done to the Palestinians by uprooting them." See Henry Siegman, "Israel: The Threat from Within," *The New York Review of Books*, February 26, 2004. Attacks by the Haganah in late April 1948 led to a mass exodus from Haifa, Jaffa, Tiberias, and Safad. Massacres and expulsions also occurred at Dawaymeh, Tantura, Khisas, Sa'sa, Nasr al-Din, Ein Zeitun, Tirat Haifa, al-Bi'na, Dayr al-Assas, Nahf, Safsaf, Jish, Saliha, Hula, Eilabun, Arab al Muwassi, and Majd al Krum. Many of these massacres occurred toward the end of 1948 after the international war was over. There were at least twenty brutal massacres (more than fifty civilians killed in each) and one hundred smaller massacres. According to a former director of the Israeli army archives, "in almost every Arab village occupied by us during the War of Independence, acts were committed which are defined as war crimes, such as murders, massacres, and rapes." Benny Morris notes that "almost all the massacres followed a similar course: a unit (of the IDF) entered a village, rounded up the menfolk in the village square, selected four or ten or fifty of the army-age males … lined them up against a wall and shot them." By June 1, 1948, two weeks after the Jews declared statehood, some 370,000 Palestinian refugees had fled from Jewish-held

territory. The principal cause was "Jewish military attack, or fears of further attack." (The Haganah's litany of crimes also includes planting a bomb on the *Patria,* which led to the ship's sinking in Haifa port on November 25, 1940, killing 267 people, including over 200 Jewish refugees and 50 crew and British soldiers, and injuring 172.) On October 29, 1956, the day war broke out with Egypt, Israeli soldiers massacred 47 Arab civilians including 23 children in Kafr Qasim, near the Green Line separating Israel and the West Bank. The incident happened when the village's local residents were making their way home from work, unaware of a newly imposed curfew. On November 1959, after two years, all eight convicted soldiers were released on orders by the Israel Committee for the Release of Prisoners. Another effect of the 1967 war was further ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian and Syrian populations, followed by Jewish colonization of Jerusalem, Gaza, West Bank, Golan Heights, and Egyptian Sinai. After the fighting had ended, Israel bulldozed thousands of homes in the West Bank and prodded the Palestinians to flee to Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt. According to United Nations' estimates, the war created 325,000 new refugees. The United States, unfortunately, played a rather sordid role in the unfolding of this tragedy by, among other measures, turning Israel into a proxy for its weapons sales. See Ilan Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006); Baylis Thomas, *The Dark Side of Zionism: Israel's Quest for Security through Dominance* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2009), especially 28–30, 68–69, 85. In order to continue Israel's colonization of the West Bank, moral cover is needed, hence the portrayal of the Palestinians as aggressors and terrorists. It is not at all surprising that those who are the most vociferous in their condemnation of Poles for anti-Jewish incidents of the Stalinist era have the least to say about the fate of the Palestinians during this same period. The motivation behind their rather selective condemnation of extremist nationalist acts is thus suspect.

As was the case in the United States for Blacks at that time, Arabs in Israel also had to sit at the back of the bus. Flare-ups between Jews and Arabs, most of them non-lethal, were plentiful over the years but are generally hushed up by the Israeli authorities. For example, a Jerusalem Post Foreign Service report filed by Bill Hutman, reported the following occurrence of May 24, 1996:

> Hundreds of Jewish worshippers went on a rampage in the Old City Friday morning [just before Sabbath], attacking Arab bystanders and damaging Arab property, following all-night prayers for the Shavuot holiday at the Western Wall.
>
> "The rioting was unprovoked, and we still haven't figured out what motivated it," Jerusalem Police spokesperson Shmuel Ben-Ruby said.
>
> The rioters broke windows and damaged merchandise at stores just outside Damascus Gate. They also turned over vendors' stalls and pushed and shoved Arab bystanders. Many merchants quickly closed the shutters on their stores to avoid damage. Ben-Ruby said no injuries were reported.
>
> The Jewish rioters also threw stones at Arab vehicles on Sultan Suleiman Street, outside Damascus Gate. About 25 complaints were filed with police for damage caused by rioting, representing only a small number of the actual instances, Ben-Ruby said.
>
> The unrest caught police by surprise, coming after a quiet all-night study-and-prayer service at the Western Wall, attended by thousands.
>
> The vandalism broke out about 8 a.m., as a crowd of worshippers leaving the Western Wall made its way through the Old City.
>
> Dozens of police were called to the scene and clashed with the rioters. There were no arrests [sic].
>
> Police sources said the rioting was apparently provoked by a group of right-wing Jewish extremists in the crowd of worshippers, who began attacking Arab targets.

An Arab driving through a Jewish neighbourhood in Acre during Yom Kippur was enough to "provoke" an attack by Jewish residents, and an outburst of gangs of Jews and Arabs swarming through the streets for days, smashing shop windows, destroying cars, and throwing rocks at each other, with dozens of rioters being injured in the clashes, as well as the torching of about one dozen Arab houses. Not surprisingly, Jewish politicians accused the Arab minority of staging a "pogrom." See Oakland Ross, "Israelis hope ethnic tensions isolated", *Toronto Star,* October 14, 2008. Jewish settlers in the Occupied Territories, who are bank-rolled by Israel and Jewish organizations around the world, are a constant source of antagonism. When, in an unusual move, Israeli police and soldiers forcibly evicted some 250 Jews from an illegally acquired residence in the West Bank City of Hebron in December 2008, enraged Israeli settlers stormed through the city seeking revenge for the evacuation by attacking and shooting Palestinian civilians. Rampaging settlers also set fire to at least three Palestinian homes and nine cars. Others threw rocks at passing cars. See Oakland Ross, "Settler evictions stir riots," *Toronto Star,* December 5, 2008. Such incidents can be multiplied.

The postwar record of the French was no better. In the Algerian War of the late 1950s, the French government ordered or tolerated the taking of Arab hostages, the burning of villages, and the torturing of prisoners. In exchange, the Algerian Muslim rebels thre bombs into cafés crowded with *pieds-noirs,* Europeans living in Algeria. See Deák, *Europe on Trial,* 216. On October 17, 1961, during the Algerian War, French police took to the streets of Paris to quell an illegal but peaceful demonstration by pro-National Liberation Front Algerians. Many demonstrators died when they were violently herded by police into the River Seine, with some thrown from bridges after being beaten unconscious. Other demonstrators were killed within the courtyard of the Paris police headquarters after being arrested and delivered

there in police buses. How many demonstrators were killed is still unclear, but estimates range from 70 to 200 people. A plaque which commemorates the massacre, unveiled 40 years later, states: "In memory of the many Algerians killed during the bloody repression of the peaceful demonstration of 17 October 1961." However, no one was ever punished for these transgressions. See "Paris Massacre of 1961," Internet: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_massacre_of_1961> and <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massacre_du_17_octobre_1961>.

The British track record is, unfortunately, equally undistinguished. Only in June 2010 did the British Prime Minister acknowledge and apologize for the massacre by British troops of 14 peaceful Catholic civil rights marchers (17 more were wounded) in Londonderry on January 30, 1972, after the release of a scathing report that unequivocally condemned the British actions and exculpated the protesters. The report established beyond doubt that what had long been suspected: that none of the men killed in 1972 had provoked the soldiers in any serious way or possessed any bombs or pistols; that the soldiers had no reason to be firing, and shot the victims from secure positions, in some cases while the victims were cowering, crawling away, waving surrender flags or being treated for injuries. None of the victims were shot accidentally and the only reason that the victims were shot was because they were Catholics. "What happened on Bloody Sunday was both unjustified and unjustifiable," David Cameron told the House of Commons. The Saville Report, which completely reversed an earlier British government report which said that some of the victims had been armed terrorists, came as a result of a concession for a neutral inquiry into Blood Sunday when the IRA disbanded in 1998. See Doug Saunders, "The Blood Sunday Report: After 12 Years and 5,000 Pages, Report Leads to British Apology for Bloody Sunday Events," *The Globe and Mail*, June 16, 2010. Thus the cover-up lasted for almost forty years and British justice fared far worse than Stalinist Poland's response to the Kielce massacre.

Lest American readers become too smug reading these accounts, it is important to recall in this context the racial turmoil that beset the United States during most of the Twentieth Century. Although downtrodden Blacks wielded no political or economic power, and although the country was not in a state of civil strife and police protection was readily available, Blacks frequently fell victim to large-scale racist violence perpetrated by White Americans. During the "The Red Summer of 1919" alone there were 26 race riots in which the White population turned on Black Americans and destroyed their communities, murdering and injuring thousands of Blacks. The most infamous of these was the Chicago Race Riots, in which white mobs made foray after foray into black neighborhoods, killings and wounding 365 black residents and leaving another 1,000 homeless, but most of these incidents are long forgotten. The authorities made little effort to stem this tide. In Tulsa, Oklahoma, at the end of May 1921, incited by the press and by politicians, the city's Whites massacred several hundred innocent Blacks and burned down most of the Black section of the town leaving thousands homeless. In January 1923, mobs of White Americans descended on a Black community in Rosewood, Florida, massacring between 40 and 150 people. Houses were torched and looted, and the community was eradicated. Black churches were set on fire throughout the state. These are just a few of many communal attacks on Blacks during that dark and hidden period of American history. See Brent Staples, "Unearthing a Riot," *The New York Times*, December 19, 1999; *Remembering Rosewood*, Internet: <http://www.displaysforschools.com/history.html>. During the Second World War, Blacks served in segregated units of the American army. Anti-Black riots continued to occur unabated after the Second World War. When Blacks went to use the public swimming pools for the first time in St. Louis, Missouri, on Independence Day in 1949, "Outside the pool fence, a mob of some 200 restless white teen-agers collected. Police arrived in time to escort the Negroes safely from the park. But all that afternoon, fist fights blazed up; Negro boys were chased and beaten by white gangs. In the gathering dusk, one grown-up rabble-rouser spoke out: 'Want to know how to take care of those niggers?' he shouted. 'Get bricks. Smash their heads, the dirty, filthy —.' Swinging baseball bats, the crowd shuffled in mounting excitement. Then someone called out: 'There's some niggers!' The crowd cornered two terror-stricken Negro boys against a fence. Under a volley of fists, clubs and stones, the boys went down—but not before one of them whipped out a knife and stabbed one of his attackers. In a surge of fury, the nearest whites kicked and pummeled the two prostrate bodies, turned angrily on rescuing police with shouts of 'Nigger lovers.' Within an hour the crowd had swollen to number more than 5,000. In the park along bustling Grand Boulevard, busy teen-age gangs hunted down Negroes. Other ones climbed into trucks and circled the park, looking for more targets. … By 2 a.m., when hard-pressed police finally cleared the streets, ten Negroes and five whites had been hospitalized, one critically injured. Next day Mayor Joseph M. Darst ordered both outdoor pools closed, and ruled that St. Louis' pools and playgrounds would stay segregated." See *Time Capsule 1949: The Year in Review, As Reported in the Pages of Time* (New York: Time Inc). Yet no national memorial has been erected in the United States to mark this shameful legacy, and no apologies are offered by American officials for the shameful behaviour of the American people. Other minorities did not fare much better, especially in the 19th century when Chinese people were demonized across the American West. A recent study by Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans* (New York: Random House, 2007), cites records of more than 100 round-ups, pogroms, expulsions and ethnic cleansings (to use the author's various terms) in which white Americans united to drive the Chinese out of their communities from 1850 to 1906. They used warnings, arson, boycotts and violence to achieve their goal. In many circumstances, labour organizations led the campaigns, casting the Chinese as competitors for jobs and depressors of wages. But the middle-class civic leaders, as in case of the city of Tacoma (including the mayor, chief of police, two councilmen, a probate court judge and the president of the YMCA), often acted in alliance with workers. Over 200 Chinese communities and thousands of Chinese were forced from their homes. White citizens were rounded up Chinese

The charge—advanced by Jewish historians—that the pogrom in Kielce was inspired by local hostility toward Jewish survivors who wanted to reclaim their property and possessions has been authoritatively discredited as hundreds of properties were returned to Jews in Kielce without incident.[710] Moreover, there is no evidence that anyone who had to return property to Jews, or was afraid that they might have to, was behind the outbreak of the violence in Kielce. Sources from that era, including Jewish testimonies, do not even allude to that as a factor. As well, many Jews attest to favourable relations with Poles in Kielce after the war.[711] The *American Jewish Year Book,* which closely monitored conditions in Poland, reported that,

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immigrants at gunpoint by the thousands, marched them out of town and burned their homes to the ground, under the rallying cry "California for Americans!"

[709] Cariewskaja, *Teczka specjalna J. W. Stalina,* 421; Anna Cichopek, "The Cracow Pogrom of August 1945: A Narrative Reconstruction," in Zimmerman, *Contested Memories,* 221–38; Anna Cichopek, *Pogrom Żydów w Krakowie, 11 sierpnia 1945 r.* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2000), 78, 81; Jan Tomasz Gross, "In the Aftermath of the Kielce Pogrom: The Special Commission of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland," *Gal Ed,* no. 15–16 (1997): 121. Gross also mentions the following localities were Jews were attacked by the authorites: Bytom, Chrzanów, Bielawa, Legnica, Strzegom, Wałbrzych, Szczecin, and Wieluń. Two Jews who returned to Wielkie Oczy in May 1945 were killed by militiamen, one of whom was later caught and sentenced to a prison term. See the account of Kazimierz Sawiński in Kazimierz Sawiński in Krzysztof Dawid Majus, *Wielkie Oczy, Vielkochi, Velyki Ochi* (Tel Aviv: n.p., 2002); this account is also posted at <http://wielkieoczy.itgo.com/Memories/KS.htm>. (The security police and militia were also responsible for the mistreatment and murder of Germans in Nieszawa.) The rioters formed a tiny percentage of the population, mostly *lumpenproletariat,* in cities where violence occurred. In Kraków, which had a population of some 300,000, several hundred persons took part in the riot in August 1945; they were poorly educated, unskilled, and unemployed. Half of those arrested were newcomers to the city and were housed in former Jewish buildings, while the other half were state functionaries. The riots were confined to the Kazimierz district and did not affect the vast majority of the thousands of Jews who resided throughout the city. Historian Anna Cichopek inflated the Jewish toll in Kraków to five, whereas there is only one confirmed death. See Anna Cichopek, *Pogrom Żydów w Krakowie, 11 sierpnia 1945 r.* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2000); Julian Kwiek, "Wydarzenia antyżydowskie 11 sierpnia 1945 r. w Krakowie: Dokumenty," *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytut Historycznego,* nr 1 (2000): 77–89. Despite this correction, Jan Gross endorsed a range of "from one to five victims" in his *Fear,* 81, and the figure of five is now cited by other writers as a credible count. See, for example, Lowe, *Savage Continent,* 204.

[710] Contrary to Jan T. Gross's thesis, the fear of loss of Jewish property and a perceived threat to material gains allegedly acquired by Poles during the war was by no means a central cause of the violence directed against Jews in the postwar period. Official records from that period confirm that Jews returning to Kielce, and elsewhere, were usually able to reclaim their property without any significant difficulties. Title to hundreds of properties was recovered by Jews in Kielce alone. For the most part they then sold these properties to Poles before leaving Poland. Historian Stanisław Meducki summarizes the findings of his research as follows: "By the strength of a special law enacted 6 May 1945 'On Abandoned Real Estates', a strongly simplified inheritance procedure was applied. Jews could recover their property: former apartments, workshops, firms, on condition that they had not been seized by the Nazis. Courts had to examine every motion within 21 days. In Kielce, Jews did not have any difficulties with recovering their own property. As a rule, every motion was settled favorably and quickly. In most cases, the property was taken over by the relatives of the former owners, whose rights were ascertained on the grounds of witnesses' testimony. Witnesses, most often Poles, neighbors or acquaintances from before the war, testified before the court willingly, without reluctance or prejudice." See Marta Pawlina-Meducka, ed., *Z kroniki utraconego sąsiedztwa: Kielce, wrzesień 2000/From the Chronicle of the Lost Neighborhood: Kielce, September 2000* (Kielce: Kieleckie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 2001), 202. See also Urbański, *Kieleccy Żydzi,* 180–90; Krzysztof Urbański, "Żydzi w Kielcach w latach 1939–1945," in Bukowski, Jankowski, and Żaryn, *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego,* vol. 2, 41–43. There is no evidence that any pogrom, whether in Kielce, Kraków or Rzeszów, was inspired by disgruntled Poles who had lost or feared losing property to Jews. Thousands of properties were returned to Jews throughout Poland without incident, and property disputes accounted for only a small portion, perhaps several hundred cases, of the violent conflicts which Jews experienced. Far more often, Poles came forward as witnesses in property claims filed by Jewish survivors, as borne out by the documents cited below concerning Jedwabne and other places.

[711] See, for example, Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust,* 187; Kamiński and Żaryn, *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego,* vol. 1, 360; Bukowski, Jankowski, and Żaryn, *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego,* vol. 2, 44.

unlike in the Eastern Polish territories seized by the Soviet Union, "The return of Jewish property, if claimed by the owner or his descendant, and if not subject to state control, proceeded more or less smoothly."[712] Indeed, relaxed criteria were in place until the end of 1948 for dispossessed owners or their relatives and heirs, whether residing in Poland or abroad, to reclaim privately owned property in an expedited fashion with minimal costs.[713] Thousands—perhaps tens of thousands—of properties were reclaimed by Jews without incident,[714] which belies the notion that Jews were prevented from or were

[712] *American Jewish Year Book, 5708 (1947–1948),* vol. 49 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947), 390. For examples of nationalized properties, several industrial properties reclaimed by Jews in Częstochowa were later nationalized together with similar properties owned by Poles. See Jarosław Kapsa, "Ocalenie matki ministrów," November 10, 2012, Internet: <http://www.cz.info.pl/zdarzylo-sie-tutaj/6553-historie-jaroslawa-kapsy-opowiesc-31>.

[713] Alina Skibińska, "Problemy rewindykacji żydowskich nieruchomości w latach 1944–1950: Zagadnienia ogólne i szczegółowe (na przykładzie Szczebrzeszyna)," and Łukasz Krzyżanowski, "'Chcielibyśmy, by ten dom nie pozostał w obcych rękach': Sądowa restytucja prywatnego mienia żydowskiego w Polsce na przkładzie Radomia i Kalisza 1945–1948," in Grabowski and Libionka, *Klucze i kasa,* 522–23, 529, 568–69 (judges in Szczebrzszyn facilitated the processing of restitution applications), 575–607. Many of these claims were pursued by Jewish organizations and foreign firms using Jewish lawyers; they were often processed by local courts on the day they were filed.

[714] As mentioned earlier, hundreds of properties were recovered in Kielce alone. In 1945–1948, Jews brought 291 court applications for the return of property in Zamość. See Adam Kopciowski, *Zagłada Żydów w Zamościu* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2005), 203; Grabowski and Libionka, *Klucze i kasa*, 562–63. Jews submitted 240 applications in the municipal court in Włodawa, and were able to recover real estate, houses, farm buildings, livestock, carriages, and utensils. See Adam Kopciowski, "Anti-Jewish Incidents in the Lublin Region in the Early Years after World War II," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials*, vol. 1 (2008): 188. Of approximately 210 privately owned prewar Jewish properties in Szczebrzeszyn, at least one third were reclaimed by 1950 and promptly sold to Christian Poles. See Alina Skibińska, "Problemy rewindykacji żydowskich nieruchomości w latach 1944–1950: Zagadnienia ogólne i szczegółowe (na przykładzie Szczebrzeszyna)," in Grabowski and Libionka, *Klucze i kasa*, 562–63 . Out of a total of 894 properties in Parczew, 301 were in Jewish hands in 1945–1946, including the most valuable ones. See Bechta, *Pogrom czy odwet?*, 217. The return of property also proceeded smoothly in Radom, where several hundred properties were returned to prewar Jewish owners or their heirs. See Sebastian Piątkowski, *Dni życia, dni śmierci: Ludność żydowska w Radomiu w latach 1918–1950* (Warsaw: Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych, 2006), 268–71. For a well-documented study regarding the situation in Szydłowiec see Grzegorz Miernik, "Losy Żydów i nieruchomości pożydowskiej w Szydłowcu po II wojnie światowej," in Jacek Wijaczka, ed., *Żydzi szydłowieccy: Materiały sesji popularnonaukowej 22 lutego 1997 roku* (Szydłowiec: Muzeum Ludowych Instrumentów Muzycznych w Szydłowcu, 1997), 135–66. A Jew from Lublin, who was able to recover several properties with the assistance of helpful Poles, states: "At that time, there was a Minister in the Polish government by the name of Somershteyn [Emil Sommerstein, chairman of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland in 1944–1946]. Any surviving Jew whose property had been taken by others received from the Minister a confirmation of ownership to help him recover the property. … In those days a law was enacted, that any Jew who had a store before the War which passed into foreign hands could get it back." See Shiye Goldberg (Shie Chehever), *The Undefeated* (Tel Aviv: H. Leivick Publishing House, 1985), 215, 220. For additional examples of Jews reclaiming their property in scores of localities throughout Poland see the following memoirs and accounts: Oscar Pinkus, *A Choice of Masks* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 6, 23, 75 (Łosice); J. Berglas and Sh. Yahalomi (Diamant), eds., *Sefer Strizhuv ve-ha-seviva* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Strzyzow in Israel and Diaspora, 1969), 255ff. (Strzyżów); D. Shtokfish, ed., *Sefer Drohiczyn* (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1969), 42ff. (English section) (Drohiczyn); Stanisław Zabierowski, *Rzeszowskie pod okupacją hitlerowską* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1975), 189–90 (Kolbuszowa); Isaiah Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution: Collective and Individual Behavior in Extremis* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), 142 (Zarszyn near Sanok); *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Mielec: Sipur hashmadat ha-kehila ha-yehudit* (New York: Mielec Yizkor Book Committee, 1979), 43ff., translated as *Remembering Mielec: The Destruction of the Jewish Community,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/mielec/Mielec.html> (Mielec); Julius L. Baker and Jacob L. Baker, *Yedwabne History and Memorial Book* (Jerusalem and New York: Yedwabner Societies in Israel and in the United States, 1980), 98 (Goniądz); 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), 286 (Hrubieszów); Goldberg, *The Undefeated*, 204, 211–15, 220–21 (Lublin and vicinity, Kraków); Interview with Molly Muschkies (Angenicki) and Ruth Webber (Muschkies) Ruth, dated April 25, 1985, Internet: <http://www.holocaustcenter.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=235> (Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski);

Samuel P. Oliner, *Restless Memories: Recollections of the Holocaust Years* (Berkeley, California: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1986), 182 (Gorlice); ; Henry Orenstein, *I Shall Live: Surviving Against All Odds, 1939–1945* (New York: Beaufort Books, 1987), 260 (Hrubieszów); Edith Weigand, *Out of the Fury: The Incredible Odysssey of Eliezer Urbach* (Denver: Zhera Publications, 1987), 111 (Skoczów); Rachel Leizerson, *My Story* (Melbourne: n.p., 1990), 89 (Szczuczyn); Interview with Sheila Peretz Etons, April 30, 1990, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Chełm); Alexander Bronowski, *They Were Few* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 42 (Lublin); Arnold Geier, *Heroes of the Holocaust* (Miami: Londonbooks, 1993), 219 (Skarżysko); Sara Rose, *My Lost World: A Survivor's Tale* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1993), 289 (Kraków); Peretz Hochman, *Daring to Live* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publishing House, 1994), 222 (Warsaw); Ryszard Juszkiewicz, *Losy Żydów mławskich w okresie II-ej wojny światowej* (Mława: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Ziemi Mławskiej, 1994), 144 (Mława, with incidents of property claim irregularities); 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), 147 (Tarnów); Elinor J. 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Oliner, *Narrow Escapes: A Boy's Holocaust Memories and Their Legacy* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House, 2000), 153 (Mszanka and Bielanka near Gorlice); Hania Ajzner, *Hania's War* (Caulfield South, Victoria, Australia: Makor Jewish Community Library, 2000), 218 (Warsaw); Dunwill, *Trzy kolory mojego życia,* 172, 184 (Siedlce); Joseph Rosenberg, *My Name is Józef Nowak: The Life and Times of Joseph Rosenberg* (Toronto: Lifestories, 2001), 56–57 (Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski); Jerzy Jacek Bojarski, ed., *Ścieżki pamięci: Żydowskie miasto w Lublinie—losy, miejsca, historia* (Lublin and Rishon LeZion: Norbertinum, Ośrodek "Brama Grodzka–Teatr NN," Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko-Izraelskiej w Lublinie, Stowarzyszenie Środkowoeuropejskie "Dziedzictwo i Współczesność," 2002), 77 (Lublin); Paweł Machcewicz and Krzysztof Persak, eds., *Wokół Jedwabnego* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2002), vol. 2 (*Dokumenty*), 376–84ff. (Białystok, Łomża, Jedwabne), 943 (Radziłów); Adam Kazimierz Musiał, *Lata w ukryciu* (Gliwice: n.p., 2002), 57 (Opacionka near Brzostek), 104 (Tarnów), 120 (Lipiny), 124 (Brnik), 125 (Brnik), 143 (Gruszów Wielki), 145 (Dąbrowa Tarnowska), 184 (large-scale sale of Jewish houses in Tarnów), 188 (Niedźwiedza), 190 (Wojnicz), 312 (Radgoszcz), 483 (Jadowniki Mokre), 508 (Tarnów), 520 (Nieciecza), 536 (Tarnów and vicinity); Museum of Jewish Heritage, A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, *To Life: 36 Stories of Memory and Hope* (Boston, New York, and London: Bulfinch Press, 2002), 82 (Rypin); 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), 94 (Sionna near Kałuszyn); testimony of Yonah Lumko of Radzyń, Yad Vashem Archives, file 03/8971, noted in Daniel Blatman, "Strangers in their Own Land: Polish Jews from Lublin to Kielce," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 15 (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2002), 345 (Blatman, who has evidently not researched the topic, claims that such cases were "evidently few in number"); Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets,* 249, 304 (Kraśnik, Janów Lubelski); Mordechai V. 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Changed Forever, 174 (Łosice); Kurek, *Poza granicą solidarności,* 219 (Wereszczyn near Chełm); Kopel Kolpanitzky, *Sentenced to Life: The Story of a Survivor of the Lahwah Ghetto* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), 190–91 (Białystok); Zila Rennert, *Trois wagons à bestiaux: D'une guerre à l'autre à travers l'Europe centrale, 1914–1946* (Paris: Phébus, 2007), 258–59, 265 (Kraków); Marian Skwara, *Pruszkowscy Żydzi: Sześć dekad zamkniętych zagładą* (Pruszków: Powiatowa i Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna im. 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The Yad Vahem Archives contain many more examples of property reclaimed by their Jewish owners. A number of Jews transferred their property to their Polish rescuers out of gratitude before emigrating from Poland. See, for example, Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations,* vol. 4: *Poland,* Part 1, 185 (Lubaczów), 191 (Sieniawa), 200

fearful of reclaiming their property. Throughout Poland, numerous Poles came forward as witnesses on behalf of Jews in property claims filed by Jewish survivors. In fact, the requirements for prood of relationship were so lax that multiple or conflicting claims were numerous. Violent conflicts with Poles over the return of property were rather rare. They were far less frequent than uneventful sales by Jews of their reclaimed properties to Poles. The former were clearly the exception, the latter the norm. A number of Jews were involved in fraudulent real estate scams, that is, misappropriation of property to which they were not rightfully entitled.[715] Many Jewish properties were heavily in debt and had tax arrears when the war

(Kalisz), 282 (Białystok). According to Mark Verstandig, who served as a legal counsellor with the Ministry of Security, comprehensive legislation for the restitution of private property which had been confiscated by the Nazis (this was for the most part Jewish property), was blocked by Mieczysław Mietkowski, the deputy minister, who was himself Jewish. See Verstandig, *I Rest My Case,* 218. Disrespect for property rights, especially property belonging to "reactionaries", "bourgeois" and other class enemies, was encouraged by the Communist regime. However, Poles did rush to take over abandoned Jewish properties. In Biała Rawska, abandoned Jewish homes remained empty throughout the war, and it was only with the encouragement of the Communist regime that they were occupied by the local poor. See Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twardych,* 59. In the 1960s the government of Poland paid $40 million to the United States government as settlement for property claims of Polish Jews who had immigrated to the United States. Notwithstanding the payment of $177,000 to the Theological Seminary Yeshivath Chachmey in Michigan in 1964 as compensation for a yeshiva building in Lublin taken over by the state, the Jewish community in Poland advanced a further claim on that same property and secured its return in kind in 2001. When word of the double indemnity got out, the leaders of the Jewish community openly opposed the idea of returning the property and pressed on the Polish authorities to sanction this injustice. See "Jesziwa podwójnie zwrócona," *Kurier Lubelski,* September 5, 2008. Another example of unjust enrichment at the expense of the Poles was the return in 2002, to the Jewish community in Poznań, of communal properties which, before the war, were indebted to the municipality and state for several times in excess of their value. See Wojciech Wybranowski, "Oddali z nawiązką," *Nasz Dziennik,* August 28, 2002. There have also been bogus property and compensation claims made by private individuals (Jews) in recent years.

[715] There were frequent cases of individual and groups of Jews misappropriating Jewish property by making fraudulent claims as alleged "lawful heirs" of the deceased owners. Polish courts increasingly became aware of these scams. The Central Committee of Jews in Poland also had grave concerns but was powerless to stop this abuse. See Grabowski and Libionka, *Klucze i kasa,* 528, 532, 536–37, 595–600. In the Białystok region, there was even a Jewish mafia-like ring working closely with Jews in the Security Office (Samuel Faber or Farber, Eliasz Trokenheim) that fraudulently "reclaimed" scores of Jewish properties belonging to deceased Jews (in Białystok, Łomża, Jedwabne, and elsewhere), sold them to Poles, and divided the profits among the ring members. See Jerzy Kułak, "Szaleniec i inni," *Karta* (Warsaw), no. 15 (1995): 121–22; Krzysztof Persak, "Akta postępowań cywilnych z lat 1947–1949 w sprawach dotyczących zmarłych żydowskich mieszkańców Jedwabnego," in Machcewicz and Persak, *Wokół Jedwabnego,* 379–87; Jerzy Kułak, "Faber i S-ka—krótka historia pewnego przekrętu," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 6 (June 2002): 80–83; Anna Pyżewska, "Losy ludności żydowskiej w województwie białostockim w latach 1944–1949—wybrane problemy," in Wijaczka and Miernik, *Z przeszłości Żydów polskich,* 289–91. A returnee to Kraków recalled: "To prove title, one had to obtain a death certificate and then a court order … It was sufficient to find somebody who could state that he had witnessed somebody's death in the ghetto, a concentration camp, or other place of murder. For a small fee many were ready to sign such statements, no matter whether they were truthful or not … Sometimes the presumed dead … unexpectedly came back … By then it was too late." See Henryk Vogler, *Autoportret z pamięci,* Part 3: *Dojrzałość* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1981), 7. Even Jewish communal property was restored to the Jewish community and sold, or simply sold privately. For example, the Jewish community sold the synagogue property in Zabłudów for the sum of 130,000 złotys. A copy of the authorization for this transaction issued by the Voivodship Association of Jewish Communities can be viewed in the Internet at <www.tiac.net/users/bartman/zabludow/datner%20document>. Shiye Goldberg states: "I met a Jew from Levartow [Lubartów] who was engaged in selling synagogues, now abandoned." See Goldberg, *The Undefeated,* 227. In Warsaw, a Jewish criminal ring operated in cahoots with the Security Office searching for gold hidden away by Jews at the start of the war. See Joanna Żelazko, "Złoto dla Bezpieki," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 10 (October 2003): 66–67. In Częstochowa, the surviving Jews emptied the ghetto of large quantities of furniture that remained and sold it to the Poles. See the account of Leo Scher, Louisiana Holocaust Survivors, The Southern Institute for Education and Research, posted at <http://www.tulane.edu/~so-inst/scher.html>. A mundane example involved picking fruit and digging up vegetables from "abandoned" orchards and farms and then selling them in street markets. See Dan Porat, *The Boy: A Holocaust Story* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), 140. An Italian historian puts a bizarre spin on this shameful espisode. Ignoring the many Jewish sources and hard evidence such as the largely Jewish criminal network in

broke out in 1939, and it is not clear if these charges were ever paid off.[716] Some Jews who came into the possession of property of other Jews or Poles did not want to return it to the rightful owners after the war.[717] However, such information does not fit the portrayal of Polish-Jewish relations then or now, and the Communist authorities even censored a newspaper report about the return to Poland, from Palestine, of 435 Jews in 1946.[718] Nor is it keeping with the myth that Poles made fortunes—both during and after the war—by misappropriating Jewish property. Not surprisingly, some Jews claim that buying property from Jews was itself theft because the price of property was deflated. However, if the purchase of property in those times was as lucrative as this claim implies, Jews would have been scooping up properties rather than selling them off. The reality was quite different. The Communist regime had little regard for private property, especially large estates and industrial and commercial property. A large portion of Jewish-owned buildings, notably in Warsaw, had been destroyed during the war throughout Poland. When Jews who had resettled in large cities such as Łódź, Wrocław and Szczecin—where they received furnished apartments by the authorities—returned to their small towns, many of them were in ruins. Returning to Biłgoraj in November 1948 to construct a communal grave for the murdered Jews, they found a town that was virtually destroyed and had the appearance of a dessert.[719] A Jew who returned to Ciechanowiec in 1948 recalled,

> All Jewish homes in the New City … were torched to the ground. … I encountered a similar situation in the Old City. A whole line of Jewish homes destroyed … Not a sign was left of the synagogue or schools. All the stores and fixtures that once made up the market had disappeared.[720]

Białystok, Tonini suggests—defying common sense and citing no hard evidence—that it was Poles who instigated these shenanigans and duped or corrupted Jewish survivors into taking part in them. In actual fact, it was Jews who invariably initiated and drove these transactions. See Carla Tonini, "The Jews of Poland after the Second World War: Most Recent Contributions of Polish Historiography," *Quest: Issues in Contemporary Jewish History*, no. 1 (April 2010), Internet: <http://www.quest-cdecjournal.it/focus.php?id=211>.

[716] Grabowski and Libionka, *Klucze i kasa,* 158, 163.

[717] See, for example, Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twardych,* 178, which mentions the case of a Jewish woman who did not want to return to the rightful Polish owner items looted from the latter's home during the war. See also Hurman, *Pod osłoną nocy,* 124.

[718] Archiwum Akt Nowych, GUKPPi W 3, t. 1/7, k. 6: "Polska drugą ojczyzną," *Gazeta Ludowa*, October 1, 1946. See also the testimony of Alina Fiszgrund, March–August 2005, Internet: <http://www.centropa.org>.

[719] A. [Abraham] Kronenberg, ed., *Khurbn Bilgoraj* (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1956), Polish translation: *Zagłada Biłgoraja: Księga pamięci* (Gdańsk: Słowo/obraz.terytoria, 2009), 233.

[720] Avraham Spielman, "My Pain in Soviet Russia," E. Leoni, ed., *Ciechanowiec-mezoh Bialystok, sefer edut ve-zikaron* (Tel Aviv: The Ciechanovitzer Immigrant Association in Israel and the USA, 1964), 596ff.; translated as *Ciechanowiec-Bialystok District: Memorial and Records*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Ciechanowiec/Ciechanowiec.html>. However, this does not prevent the author from complaining that the Poles "had taken over the Jewish trade," as if commercial life were supposed to have ceased after the Jews had left. The author also noted: "Some of the Christians recognized me and outwardly acted friendly. They greeted me, tipped their hats, and even invited me to visit with them. They expressed sympathy over the loss of my family."

Most incidents involving Jews had concrete causes, and not mythical ones like blood libel charges, which were but a pretext for some of the uneducated rabble that such occurrences inevitably attract. In Rzeszów, a crowd directed their anger against the Jewish residents of a building where the mutilated body of a 9-year-old girl who had been raped was found murdered. The authorities protected the Jews likely responsible for this heinous crime and they escaped punishment, thereby reinforcing the sentiment that Jews could behave with impunity.[721] Many Jews were simply the victims of ordinary crime, especially robbery motivated by greed rather than anti-Semitism.[722] Some of these murders were carried out by Soviet soldiers and falsely attributed to the Polish underground.[723] In a few cases, Jews were killed in the course of robbing Poles or sentenced by the courts for killing fellow Jews. A Jew from Brańsk confided that after the war ended groups of Jewish survivors—some of them dressed in Polish military uniforms—went around robbing in the Białystok area.

> Just before the front advanced a special unit of the NKVD, with whom a few local Communists and Jewish partisans who knew local conditions well cooperated, undertook a reconnaissance of the Polish underground. …
>
> Even those [Jews] who did not attain higher positions [in the government] had connections in those institutions. This allowed many of them to make large sums of money in dealings with property left behind by their co-religionists. …
>
> It was beneficial to have friends in the security office because for some of the Jewish partisans, banditry became second nature. After the war they continued to engage in robberies and no one was ever charged on that account. On the other hand, on the basis of Jewish testimonies many charges were laid against Poles and Belorussians who collaborated with the Germans in the Holocaust. In the rush, a number of entirely innocent people were falsely charged.

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[721] Krzysztof Kaczmarski, "Pogrom, którego nie było—wydarzenia w Rzeszowie 11–12 czerwca 1945 r.: Glosa do *Strachu* J. T. Grossa," *Glaukopis,* no. 11–12 (2008): 263–307; Krzysztof Kaczmarski, "Pogrom, którego nie było," *Nasz Dziennik,* June 27, 2008; Krzysztof Kaczmarski, *Pogrom, którego nie było: Rzeszów 11–12 czerwca 1945 r. Fakty, hipotezy dokumenty* (Rzeszów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Oddział w Rzeszowie, 2008).

[722] Zbigniew Romaniuk documents two cases in Brańsk where the motive was robbery. See Romaniuk, "Brańsk and Its Environs in the Years 1939–1953: Reminiscences of Events," in *The Story of Two Shtetls,* Part One, 89–90, 102. Some examples of robbery in the Kraków voivodship can be found in Julian Kwiek, *Żydzi, Łemkowie, Słowacy w Województwie Krakowskim w latach 1945–1949/50* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 1998), 25. See also Zaremba, *Wielka trwoga,* 350–51, which mentions the activities of a criminal gang who killed both Poles and Jews in Piotrków Trybunalski.

[723] For example, the murder of four members of the Berger family in Połaniec near Staszów in April 1945 is wrongly attributed to the Home Army; in fact, it was the deed of drunken Soviet soldiers, a fact covered up in the official incident report. Interestingly, the commander of the public security office in nearby Sandomierz, which had carriage of the investigation, was a Jew named Captain Hipolit Duliasz. See Dovid Schnipper, "My Town Plontch," in Elhanan Erlich, ed., *Sefer Stashov* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Staszów in Israel and in the Diaspora, 1962), 633ff., translated as *The Staszów Book,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/staszow/sta633.html>; compare with "Odpowiedź na apel Mariana Wojciechowskiego z USA w sprawie stosunków polsko-żydowskich w Połańcu, a szczególnie w sprawie okoliczności śmierci żydowskiej rodziny Bergerów w kwietniu 1945 r.," *Zeszyty Połanieckie: Czasopismo Towarzystwa Kościuszkowskiego w Połańcu* (2005): 6–23. Another Jew describes the murder of a family acquaintance who was caught looting in Lower Silesia and shot by the Russians. See Bolesława Proskurowska, "Memories," in Mizgalski and Sielski, *The Jews of Częstochowa,* 346.

> Only a small number of Jews were engaged in banditry. … Jankiel Kac [Rubin] recalls: "A few months after the liberation, my cousin and another man, Icek B. [Broida], went to steal two cows from some peasants. The farmers caught them. My cousin managed to escape but Icek was killed. I did not go out to steal. … I could not understand how it was that they (my cousin and his friends) always had so much meat. … My cousin tells me that they go around stealing. They ask me to join their group. 'We'll go and steal a calf from a Pole. Niomko, Wolf and I are going.' … I go to steal for the first time. After a while I tell them that I'm going back. … After a few hours they returned with a calf."
>
> Jankiel Kac [Rubin] further recalls that, "In 1945 we lived on Kupiecka Street in Białystok. One night someone knocks on the window. It was my cousin Pejsach Brojcman, who now lives in Australia, and Josif, on their bikes. Their knapsacks were full of clothes and shoes. Brojcman was dressed in the uniform of a Polish corporal and wore an army cap. I ask them where they're coming from. 'We went on a small assignment near Knyszyn where we robbed a teacher.' I thought to myself: when they lived in the forest and went to steal that was something else, because they wanted to live. But why do they continue to steal after the war? If Icek [Broida] had not gone to steal he would still be alive. They did not have to rob."[724]

Arnold Feinreich was the leader of a criminal gang that robbed and killed Poles and Jews in a number of localities. On December 13, 1947, in Sopot, his gang murdered 76-year-old Anna Górska, a Jewish survivor, and raped the family's 16-year-old Polish nanny. Feinrich and a Pole were eventually caught by the authorities and executed.[725]

Zygmunt Klukowski was a physician and Home Army member who lived in the small town of Szczebrzeszyn near Zamość. During the war he penned a detailed diary that has come to be cited frequently by Holocaust historians as a model of objectivity. Ignored by those historians, however, is Dr. Klukowski's diary describing conditions in Poland after the country's "liberation" by the Soviet army.[726] It presents a shocking picture of a world turned upside down. Rather than a return to law and order, as was the case in Western Europe, a wave of new repression on par with the Nazi occupation descended on the country. The vast majority of the Polish population rejected the legitimacy of the new order, and many opposed it with arms. Social ills that came to the forefront under Nazi rule deepened. Assaults and robberies by criminal

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[724] Piotr Szczepański (Zbigniew Romaniuk), "Pogromy, mordy i pogromiki," *Kurier Poranny,* April 12, 1996 (no. 87/1691), edition AB. See also Zbigniew Romaniuk, "Brańsk and Its Environs in the Years 1939–1953: Reminiscences of Events," in *The Story of Two Shtetls,* Part One, 29, 90; Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust,* 115–16. Characteristically, a Jewish survivor turns these Jewish robbers into victims of the Polish Home Army: "Josl's brother Itchale, was a happy seventeen year old teenager. … They both survived the war but soon after Itchale Broida got killed by polish [sic] AKA, Josl was no more the same man. He left Poland with a curse on his lips …" See Goldberg, *A Sparkle of Hope,* 171. For examples of Jews who returned to rob or denounce their Polish benefactors after the Soviet entry, sometimes in their new capacity as Communist militia see Tadeusz Bednarczyk, *Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta: Warszawskie getto i ludzie (1939–1945 i dalej)* (Warsaw: Ojczyzna, 1995), 308–309.

[725] Grzegorz Berendt, "Wykolejeni," *Biuletyn Insytutu Pamięci Narodowej,* no. 11 (November 2010): 85–90.

[726] Zygmunt Klukowski, *Red Shadow: A Physician's Memoir of the Soviet Occupation of Eastern Poland, 1944–1946* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland, 1997), especially 12–122.

elements were frequent occurrences. Killings were committed by various factions including the NKVD, Soviet soldiers, the military, the security police, and the People's Militia. Despondency and demoralization also set in among the partisans, who continued to hide out from the oppressive arm of the Stalinist regime. They carried out desperate acts of retaliation and sometimes engaged in common banditry, which the underground, fighting for its very existence, was powerless to deal with. A formerly upstanding citizen, "Podkowa," known to Klukowski, robbed a church, tearing up the floor to locate a hidden valuable. Klukowski writes:

> During the last several days there have been many cases of robbery in our region. There seems to be a direct connection between the demoralization evident in the circles of former underground soldiers and the robberies. Some of them cannot sit still without any action, and without ongoing military discipline they look to robbery for both excitement and fulfillment of their daily needs.
>
> The fight against banditry is very difficult. Today's authorities are helpless. The underground tolerates the situation and is not involved in any actions to eliminate the guilty parties.

Klukowski's diary shows that Jews generally perished in the same or similar circumstances as Poles during that period—sometimes at the hands of unkown persons and in circumstances that remain very murky. The striking difference is that Jews were not victimized by the new regime, which they generally supported and in whose structures they were overrepresented. While under arrest, Klukowski repeatedly encountered Jewish security agents and functionaries.

> *August 14, 1944*
> The situation there [in Zamość] is getting worse. On Saturday the NKVD arrested "Kabel." … Yesterday in Zwierzyniec, Mr. Szuszkowski from the Zamoyski Estate, and a few others, were arrested. … The NKVD are still searching for "Adam," "Podkowa," and "Grom." The "Borowka" [Borówka] situation has become even stranger. Two days ago he went to a meeting at the NKVD office and never returned.
>
> *August 29, 1944*
> We have received information of new arrests. A couple of weeks ago in Tomaszow [Tomaszów Lubelski] the NKVD arrested a local physician, Dr. Jablonski [Jabłoński]. He is now behind the wire in Majdanek. In Jozefow [Józefów] "Zagloba," [Zagłoba] and in Nowiny "Selim" have been arrested.
>
> *September 7, 1944*
> The NKVD and Berling Army agents are very much interested in Szczebrzeszyn. Against they have been searching for "Wrosz" and "Mlot" [Młot].
>
> *September 22, 1944*

Tonight members of the PPR [Polish Workers' Party] killed two men of the Home Army; "Bur," commandant of the post in Latyczyn and a former school teacher, and "Ryzy" [Ryż], an older man who was a retired policeman and most recently lived on a small farm near Radecznica.

October 2, 1944

Again more people were arrested. … A few days ago, as revenge for the murder of "Bur" and "Ryz," several members of the PPR were killed. One of them was the secretary of the commune Radecznica, Szczerba. In the forest near Osuchy the remains of Inspector "Kalina" were found.

October 10, 1944

Late in the evening on Sunday, Soviet troops encircled the village of Maszow [Tomaszów]. Going from house to house, they arrested approximately three hundred men, all of draft age, and transported them to the military barracks in Zamosc [Zamość]. It seems that this is the new way of forcing enlistment in the so-called Polish army under Russian command. Until now, voluntary recruitment has been a complete fiasco.

October 16, 1944

Somewhere near Zamosc [Zamość] a Jew, Sawicki, was killed. He had been a leader of the Zamosc Communists. We have been receiving more and more information concerning cases of desertion from the Berling Army. Soldiers are fleeing with their arms and uniforms, sometimes in organized units.

November 14, 1944

In Zamosc [Zamość] two Soviet officers were killed … Because of this, we expect severe repercussions.

November 19, 1944

New regulations have been posted. It is legal to walk on the streets only between 7:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. It is illegal to allow anyone to stay overnight without permission from the militia post. Window blackouts will be strictly enforced. All typewriters must be registered with city hall. Anyone who does not obey these regulations will face a military court. Now we are under a new occupation. It reminds us of the times under German occupation.

November 21, 1944

Yesterday evening around six two bandits with hats pulled low over their eyes and scarves covering their faces, armed with handguns, entered my quarters. A third one stayed out in the corridor. Within a moment of entering they began terrorizing us, ordering us to lie on the floor. The leader beat and kicked me while ordering me to pay him 100,000 zlotys [złoty]. I gave him all I had, approximately 45,000 zlotys. He then went to my wife's room and together with his companion began taking everything that had any value. They stole my wife's jewelry, three watches, almost all of my underwear, shoes, and suits. Within half an hour they had taken money and items worth over half a million zlotys. … The leader kicked and beat me once again. He told me that this was

punishment for the ill treatment of his soldiers, which began in 1939 and continued until a few months ago. …

I was physically hurt by the beating and kicking, but more than that mentally hurt by the false accusations. In 1939 I had given up everything to organize help and treatment for the wounded soldiers. The same was done during the occupation and also after the disarmament of the Home Army. …

It is becoming very popular to explain the robberies as patriotic acts and acts of punishment. What happened to me is a sad example of the demoralization among the soldiers of the underground movement. …

We have troubles of other kinds. Our best people are perishing one after another. …

December 14, 1944

Our situation is terrible, almost hopeless. Terror is growing. In Zamosc [Zamość], during the interrogations, the NKVD began beating the prisoners.

December 20, 1944

Last evening was very bloody. At around seven o'clock several people were killed, the hatter Milaraski and his wife, the shoemaker Hojda, his wife, and his mother-in-law, old Hojda who was visiting, and also the metal worker Zbik [Żbik]. Letter carrier Golen [Goleń] and his wife and his wife were taken to an undisclosed location. He had been a known Communist even before the war, and during the eight days of Russian occupation in September 1939, he had been a member of the Red Police. He has probably since been liquidated. Everyone who has been killed was believed to be a Soviet confidant. After the killings every valuable item was taken from the houses. The killing of those people at exactly the same time was a big surprise in town. Those who are truly NKVD informers are scared to death.

December 23, 1944

The few people who still carry on [as partisans] are left to themselves. Many times their decisions are wrong. Banditry is spreading, and no one tries to stop it. Propaganda does not even exist. I have not received any illegal newspaper from the region or district for quite some time. The authority and importance of the organization diminishes day by day.

Many young men who refuse to be drafted are hiding out in the small villages and are trying to organize their own units. It is impossible to keep them in line.

January 10, 1944

A few days ago in Zwierzyniec, young Podczaski of the "Podkowa" unit was killed by a militiaman. The history of the Podczaski family is very tragic. Both parents died in the Bilgoraj [Biłgoraj] prison, tortured during interrogation. One Podczaski was killed during Home Army action against the Germans.

January 26, 1945

On the walls of many buildings [in Zamość] are numerous announcements. Near the entrance to the city hall is a sign that reads, "Down with the bandits of the Home Army."

January 27, 1945

But today a detachment of Polish soldiers, probably from the security in Zamosc [Zamość], arrived and began arresting people. Supposedly more than ten people were transported to the Zamosc prison, or to the NKVD post in Klemensow [Klemensów].

February 3, 1945

In the Zwierzyniec security service a Jew named Bolerman [Dawid Biberman[727]] is very active. He also knows many people.

February 5, 1945

Tonight the following persons were arrested …

Yesterday during a search in Kawenczyn, Berling soldiers killed a teenager, Mazur. But the most important event is the liquidation of Bolerman [Biberman], the new militia commandant in Zwierzyniec. He was shot at ten in the morning as he entered his office.

February 13, 1945

I learned that Bolerman [Biberman] was liquidated by "Sten" Niedzwiecki [Niedźwiecki] and "Huzar" Jozwiakowski [Jóźwiakowski].

March 2, 1945

"Podkowa" says that an internal fight against banditry is beginning. People involved in it have been warned to stop, otherwise they will be shot. … "Sten" Niedzwiecki, who was unable to refrain from banditry, was shot by Lieutenant "Czarny." "Czarny" is now very active in diversion activities.

March 26, 1945

I was in Zwierzyniec. There is a feeling of hopelessness, and spirits are extremely low. People cannot accept the thought that the electoral process does not exist any more. …

At around nine in the evening heavy gunfire was heard. After a short while the local militia commander, Miroslaw [Mirosław] Pinda, was brought in wounded. At the same time over a dozen bolsheviks appeared, led by an NKVD major.

March 28, 1945

In Radecznica two soldiers who came to collect quota deliveries [i.e., mandatory requisitions of grain, produce and animals from farmers—M.P.] have been killed.

[727] Adam Kopciowski, "Anti-Jewish Incidents in the Lublin Region in the Early Years after World War II," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials*, vol. 1 (2008): 184–85.

In Skierbieszowo [Skierbieszów] militiamen and the head of the village council were killed and their bodies burned. From all directions we receive news about attacks on militiamen and members of security. Desertions are on the rise also.

April 1, 1945

He related to me the details of "Wir's" latest action. He had organized a massive attack on a prison camp, but a couple of hours earlier the prisoners had been deported to an unknown location. So they disarmed the two hundred soldiers, guards, and officers, among them a Jewish major who was probably the camp commandant. Some were interrogated, gave important testimony, and were shot.

April 5, 1945

Among them "Sten" and "Piorun" (Ryzner). It so happens that they had carried out a score of robberies. Also, Ryzner was accused of seventeen rapes and "Sten" of a dozen or so. There was no other solution, they had to be liquidated because warnings and reprimands did not work.

May 14, 1945

Today I have encountered an example of how the forest, alas, sometimes causes a breakdown of morality and produces bandits. … the son of the brewery manager in Zwierzyniec. As the father could not control him in Zwierzyniec, he sent the boy to Lozic [Łozice] where he was supposed to attend the gymnasium … But the young man organized a gang anyway and carried out several assaults. He robbed the municipality … and also attacked the gymnasium manager, killing him and severely injuring a five-year-old girl. The boy is lost; he finally will be liquidated.

May 15, 1945

The war with Germany is over; the people are free in many countries, but we still live in difficult conditions, exposed to violence, terror, and barbarian attacks from our so-called friends who are in fact no better than the occupying Germans. … The curfew has been moved to 10:00 P.M., but when it is dark, nobody goes on the streets for fear of meeting the "comrades," who are known to be robbers. … [Their attitude] has become more hostile, you can even hear open threats, especially when the Russians are drunk.

May 21, 1945

The mood is gloomy in Zamosc [Zamość]. Some second lieutenant from security has been killed. There are many "fresh baked" second lieutenants in the streets. They do not look like officers. They are young boys with not-too-intelligent faces who convey an unpleasant, strange feeling. In any case, such a corps of officers is not at all a credit to the army.

June 8, 1945

Some days ago a bolshevik informer was abducted into the forest in Zamosc [Zamość] along with his wife and daughter. The young Zienkiewicz, the son of the brewery manager in Zwierzyniec, was killed in an attack by bandits in Lazamiec [Łosice].

June 17, 1945

I noticed that the years of conspiracy, the underground life, and specific conditions of their work have left a peculiar stamp on these men. They live mostly in a relatively limited world, they only see underground fighting, they are removed from normal social life … They regard themselves as idealistic messengers, ready to despise and push around anyone who is not part of their conspiracy. They are ready to act, fanatics of a kind, ready to fight out solutions to problems, people of dulled sensitivity toward the acts of violence and illegality they command, for instance, various expropriations, decisions regarding the liquidation of dangerous people, etc. At the same time, they are people willing to sacrifice, risking their lives, being pursued, persecuted, and searched, without a home of their own for years, leading a wandering existence, often dirty and lice-infested, without shelter. They have but one aim in view, the final victory, in which they believe fanatically. There are many things about them that shock and irritate me, but in spite of that I feel better than anywhere else among these crazy partisans, people of the forest and the underground.

June 20, 1945

Last night a young girl, Stasia Olszewska, close cousin to Romanowski, was taken from her flat and liquidated. Much valuable information was extracted from her during the interrogation, including her participation in composing a new list of people to be arrested.

June 21, 1945

The young Sawicowna [Sawicówna] has been liquidated in Szperowka [Szperówka]: she was the daughter of the former Communist assistant general.

June 28, 1945

Yesterday in Zwierzyniec, boys from the forest appeared at dinnertime at the home of Szymanski [Szymański], a miller, and severely beat a controller of the mills from Zamosc [Zamość] as well as an important official in charge of the mills from the estate administration.

July 8, 1945

Some weeks ago a Jew, Luft, the son of the new brewery manager was liquidated in Zwierzyniec. That same day old Luft was on his way to Zamosc [Zamość] in a country wagon, carrying 217,000 zloty. Along the way he and his driver were stopped by boys from the "forest." They took care of Luft their way and the driver was set free.

January 12, 1946

At five o'clock on Tuesday morning, January 8, I was awakened by knocking at the door. After opening I saw a line of officers and soldiers from security. …

I was taken to the militia post. There were many security men present. In the commandant's office three officers lolled carelessly on the settee; one of them was wearing a Polish military coat with a glistening silver star of a second lieutenant on the epaulets, but he was also wearing a Russian fur cap with a Soviet red star instead of the Polish eagle. …

Around seven in the morning we were loaded onto a truck already packed tightly with security men. After traveling in this unpleasant, cramped way, we arrived at Zamosc [Zamość] and stopped in front of the security office located in the house of Czerski, near the collegiate church. The Gestapo had kept a post there during the German occupation. …

That afternoon … Finally the door was unlocked and my name called. The jailer took me to the security building … where the "inquisitorial prosecutor" sat. No one else was present. I sat at the table facing him. As I learned later, he was an Ukrainian, Second Lieutenant Leluch. He took a sheet of paper and wrote identifying remarks about the interrogation. …

May 11, 1946

Last night a group of Soviet soldiers attacked the house of a young farmer, Ochmanski [Ochmański] ("Wrzask"), in Brody Duze [Duże]. They robbed the house, and as they left they fired a series of shots at "Wrzask," who was lying on the floor, and killed him on the spot. The same night the Soviets robbed a warehouse of the Rolnik [farmers'] cooperative.

May 19, 1946

Today "Hak" (Grudzinski [Grudziński]) was killed in Radecznica by security agents … They beat him before he died; his hands and legs were broken.

May 22, 1946

The town as well as neighboring villages are deeply saddened. Last evening women leaving the river where they had been washing linen, found the body of "Kawka" in a willow brake. … he had been arrested at night by two men in civilian clothing. … The examination showed twelve gunshot wounds, mostly into his back, back of the head, and sides. Also, his right thigh was fractured and there were numerous indications of a beating by clubs, such as was done to "Hak" in Radecznica some days ago.

June 7, 1946

Among other events, the militia post has been disarmed in Radecznica. The commandant of the post, Zalewski, was killed. Prisoners have revolted in Bilgoraj [Biłgoraj], and many have managed to escape.

June 25, 1946

I am writing this on toilet tissue in the security in Zamosc [Zamość]. I came back home from Bilgoraj [Biłgoraj] yesterday to immediately resume my numerous activities at the hospital. Suddenly, around half past six in the evening, I was summoned from my flat by two men; Second Lieutenant Skorek from security wanted to see me. Both of them were in civilian clothing. They told me they had been ordered to bring me to security in Zamosc immediately … I was finally loaded onto a large truck. I was accompanied by three young Jews, Skorek, and another gentile. It was easy to see that Skorek was a secondary person there. The Jew who had come with Skorek to arrest me was the important one. And he was the only one to sit in the cab.

> We arrived in Zamosc at seven thirty. In the security room I met the president of the district PSL [Polish Peasants' Party], Denkiewicz, and a young village boy. We were not allowed to talk. I sat for two hours in that room, and then one of the Jews who had accompanied me took me to the office on the fourth floor where a secretary wrote down my personal details. … When the Jew left for a moment the secretary began talking to me. … That short talk was helpful for me because when the Jew returned and wanted to take me down to the cells, she told him to place me somewhere else, namely in an empty, third-floor room near the flat of a Soviet captain.
>
> *August 18, 1946*
> Arrests happen often in our area, and they are difficult to evade as they are made by men in civilian clothing. By that method they captured the popular regional commander … Those whom it might concern were very interested in the death of a well-known security agent, Second Lieutenant Skorek. … He had been a treacherous man. He had been commandant of the security post in Szczebrzeszyn for some time. He was the one who arrested me with the help of a Jew from Zamosc [Zamość] in June.
>
> *September 8, 1946*
> The underground movement in our area has been regenerating itself also. My personal feeling is that a new period in the history of the underground in Poland begins, that we enter a new stage in the fight for independence.

Far more Poles than Jews fell victim to banditry and politically motivated murders in the volatile period following the Soviet entry.[728] Violence and lawlessness were encouraged by the conduct of the Soviet occupiers and their illegitimate puppet regime. Conditions were exacerbated by the breakdown of societal norms after almost six years of wartime turmoil, the abundance of weapons available to criminal elements, the disintegration of the anti-Communist underground, and the lack of social and political stability in the aftermath of the war. To reduce the situation of Jews in this complex political reality to one of victimhood due to alleged near universal Polish anti-Semitism is a perversion of the historical record. To accuse Poles in general of killing or attacking Jews simply because they were Jews is simply racist. As Polish historian Krystyna Kersten has argued, and Marek Jan Chodakiewicz has demonstrated in his study *After the Holocaust*, it was most often the case that attacks on Jews were not motivated by the mere fact that they were Jews.[729] Moreover, the vast majority of Poles did not take part in attacks on Jews and and often

[728] Zbigniew Romaniuk documents numerous cases of robberies, assaults and murders perpetrated on Poles by criminal groups, including Jewish ones, the security police and Red Army soldiers in the Brańsk region during this period. See Romaniuk, "Brańsk and Its Environs in the Years 1939–1953: Reminiscences of Events," in *The Story of Two Shtetls,* Part One, 89–98. In the small town of Czyżew, nine Poles and nine Jews were killed in retaliations against Communist collaborators in March and May 1945. See Kazimierz Krajewski and Tomasz Łabuszewski, "W odpowiedzi 'damom'," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 6 (June 2006): 103.

[729] Kersten, *The Establishment of Communist Rule in Poland, 1943–1948,* 216.

remained on amicable terms with Jews they knew.[730] Likewise, the vast majority of Jews did not directly experience violence at the hands of Poles.[731] But, it would have been surprising had Jews *not* also been killed in the civil strife that consumed an estimated 100,000 victims in 1944–1947. Since Jews—at one point as many as 250,000 of them (the numbers fluctuated as Jews kept arriving from the Soviet Union and leaving for the West)—constituted more than one percent of the country's population, one would expect them to account for at least 1,000 of those killed during that period. (What is surprising is that the same authors who bemoan the Jewish deaths have scarcely anything to say about the other 98 percent of the victims of that period.) The single largest—and most *feared*—persecutor in Soviet-dominated Poland was the security service, and its leadership was to a large degree Jewish. Since many Jews aligned themselves with the Communist rulers, it is not surprising that they would have experienced problems on that account. Moreover, as the statistics compiled by historian Marek Jan Chodakiewicz suggest, it is an open question whether numerically more Poles suffered at the hands of Jews, than vice versa, in that period.

The vast majority of Jews who lost their lives in the postwar period were not killed by members of the Polish armed underground, but by individual malfeasants acting on their own initiative.[732] Many, if not most, of the Jews killed by the underground were functionaries of the Communist regime, but these executions are generally attributed to anti-Semitism in Jewish sources.[733] It is also worth noting, however, that Jewish or Polish security personnel who fell into the hands of Polish insurgents were not routinely eliminated. It depended on their past behaviour and local conditions. For example, when the head of the Łomża security office, Eliasz Trokenheim, was apprehended and disarmed by a unit of the nationalist

[730] In a private letter sent by a Jewish woman in Poland to an acquaintance in the West, the author wrote in May 1946: "In the so-called Aryan society there are very many people who help Jews, [and] defend them…" See Zofia Borzymińska, "'I ta propaganda zapuszcza coraz nowe korzenie…' (Listy z Polski pisane w 1946 roku)," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów,* no. 2 (2007): 227–34.

[731] A Jew who returned to Węgrów, his home town, opened a restaurant that was patronized by Poles and prospered. When he was assaulted by a security policeman (a customer), "The restaurant grew quiet. The patrons advised me to go to the commanding officer and tell him what happened. The man had assaulted me for no reason. They even offered to testify on my behalf." See Shraga Feivel Bielawski with Louis W. Liebovich, *The Last Jew from Wegrow: The Memoirs of a Survivor of the Step-by-Step Genocide in Poland* (New York, Westport, Connecticut, and London: Praeger, 1991), 156.

[732] According to a survey of survivor accounts in the archives of the Jewish Historial Institute in Warsaw, of the 54 recorded attacks on Jews only ten or so indicated that the attackers were members of the Polish armed underground. The survey also found that the violence against the Jews reached its highest intensity in the first half of 1945, and that the attacks subsided around the end of 1945, which raises issues as to why a pogrom occurred in Kielce in July of 1946, which was clearly unconnected to the Polish underground, despite Communist and Jewish claims to the contrary. See Magdalena Siek, Aleksandra Bańkowska, and Agnieszka Jarzębowska, "Morderstwa Żydów w latach 1944–1946 na terenie Polski na podstawie kwerendy w zbiorze 301 (Relacje z Zagłady) a Archiwum ŻIH," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów,* no. 3 (2009): 356–67.

[733] For example, the killing in July 1946 of Chaim Nachum Przenice (Henryk Pszenica), the local commander of the Security Office or Citizens' Police in Kałuszyn, is attributed solely to his being a Jew. Although serving in the Stalinist apparatus of terror, by his own admission, Przenice longed to leave Poland and live among his fellow Jews. His death elicited the following comments, which underscore the identification of Jews with the Soviet-imposed regime: "The Nazi beast was not dead. It survived in the hearts of the Polish underground, the fascist anti-Semitic bands who licked one's fingers with the blood of six million murdered Jews, and were still not satisfied. They grit their teeth and lay in ambush in every corner." See Golda Goldman, "Henryk Przenice," Talmi (Wloka), *The Community of Sierpc,* 477–78.

National Armed Forces-National Military Union (NSZ-NZW), Captain Bolesław Kozłowski, the deputy commander of the Białystok region, ordered his release. When members of that formation later fell into the hands of the security office shortly after, they were released by Trokenheim. Before leaving Poland in 1968, Trokenheim paid a visit to Bolesław Kozłowski and their wives later started up a correspondence.[734]

Painting a dire picture of the postwar fate of all Jews, even death camp survivors, Martin Gilbert writes:

> Liberation did not always bring allies or safety: on 2 April 1945, on the liberated soil of Poland, Leon Feldhendler, one of the leaders of the Sobibor [Sobibór] death camp revolt in 1943, was murdered by Poles. … on March 19, [1946] one of only two survivors of the death camp at Belzec [Bełżec], Chaim Hirszman, gave evidence in Lublin of what he had witnessed in the death camp. He was asked to return on the following day to complete his evidence. But on the way home he was murdered, because he was a Jew.[735]

Polish historians paint a different picture of these events. The handful of Jews from Lublin who lost their lives, out of thousands who took up residence there, were, for the most part, connected to the security office. Leon Leon (Leibl or Leib) Feldhendler has become a symbol of those murdered by Poles "as Jews." However, it is appears unlikely that he was even killed by Poles. There is no record of Feldhendler's death in the extensive Lublin police archives from that period, and the date and circumstances of his death are rather murky.[736] Chaim Hirszman was not killed on the street because he was a Jew; rather he was

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[734] Konrad Kozłowski, "Wspomnienie o ojcu," *Glaukopis*, no. 7–8 (2007): 169–70.

[735] Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, 789, 817.

[736] The lack of police records and investigation, typically found in other cases, is surprising given Feldhendler's profile and connections. In addition to the many versions of his death given by Jewish survivors and cited by Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust*, 164, 179 (the perpetrators are identified as "AK," "NSZ" or "mobs of anti-Semtic Poles"), Yad Vashem historians attribute Feldhendler's death to "local nationalists." See Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: *Poland*, Part 2, 691. According to Dov (Berek) Freiberg, an escapee from Sobibór, Feldhendler went to a village near his home town to negotiate the return of some possessions left with a farmer. When he did not return to Lublin that same day, his friends went out to look for him and found him dead at the side of the road, not far from the village. See Freiberg, *To Survive Sobibor*, 419. Philip Bialowitz, an escapee from Sobibór, states that that Feldhendler was killed in his tannery in Lublin, together with another young Jew who was asleep there, in broad daylight, simply because he was a Jew. See Philip Bialowitz, as told to Joseph Bialowitz, *Bunt w Sobiborze: Opowieść o przetrwaniu w Polsce okupowanej przez Niemców* (Warsaw: Nasza Księgarnia, 2008), 235. In the English version of his memoir, however, Bialowitz does not mention the circumstances of Feldhendler's death, or that there was allegedly another victim, but simply states: "He has been shot by unknown assailants. Nobody knows the motive for the murder. … we guess that Leon has been murdered because he was a prominent Jew who was helping other Jews to live [by employing them in his leather factory]." See Philip "Fiszel" Bialowitz with Joseph Bialowitz, *A Promise at Sobibór: A Jewish Boy's Story of Revolt and Survival in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 155. Miles (Shmoil or Meelek) Lerman, Feldhendler's business partner at the time, states that Feldhendler was killed in his home by "Polish extremists," but the motive is unclear. See Interview with Miles Lerman, dated July 17, 2001, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Historian Shmuel Krakowski states that Feldhendler was killed in June 1945 in his Lublin apartment on 4 Kowalska Street by "a Polish anti-Semitic gang". See Krakowski, *The War of the Doomed*, 249. Chaskiel Menche, who shared the premises at 4 Kowalska Street, states that Moishe Blank's son was executed there by the Home Army but that no one else was harmed. Feldhendler was shot, allegedly by the Home Army, afterwards when he was living with Esther, Moshe Blank's son's former girlfriend; he managed to jump out the window and was taken to a hospital where he died. See the interview with Chaskiel Menche, 1983, Internet: <http://www.sobiborinterviews.nl/en/search-interviews?miview=ff&mizig=317&miaet=14&micode=804b&minr=1412836> (Menche makes the bizarre claim that

the Polish underground chopped off the feet of a Jew in a Lublin hospital. That claim is discredited in Adam Kopciowski, "Anti-Jewish Incidents in the Lublin Region in the Early Years after World War II," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials*, vol. 1 (2008): 186.). Another Jewish source places the attempt on Feldhendler's life, allegedly by the Home Army, on April 3, 1945. See Jules Schelvis, *Sobibor: A History of a Death Camp* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 182, 234. According to Feldhendler's wife (girlfriend?) Esther, who was present at the time but was not harmed, Feldhendler was shot in their apartment on 6 Złota Street on April 2, 1945, and died in hospital three days later. The hospital records, however, give his date of death as April 6, 1945. She provides no information about the identity of the culprits or the motive for his murder, but seems to have known them. According to a police report, a Polish woman named Hanna Gil was killed at the same time, possibly Feldhendler's housekeeper. However, her death is not mentioned in Jewish sources, which is a sad commentary on the value placed on the loss of Polish lives. In a radical departure from an earlier claim (that Felhendler was shot at the same time as Hersz Blank—see Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust,* 179), Polish historian Adam Kopciowski acknowledged that Feldheldler dealt in gold and and that robbery may have been the motive for his demise. However, it does not appear that anything was stolen from his apartment. See Hanna Krall, *Wyjątkowo długa linia* (Kraków: a5, 2004), 114–16, 131; Adam Kopciowski, "Anti-Jewish Incidents in the Lublin Region in the Early Years after World War II," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials*, vol. 1 (2008): 190–91; Paweł P. Reszka, "Gdy życie ludzkie straciło wartość," *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Lublin), January 17, 2008. Chaim Zylberklang states that Feldhendler traded with Russians and even travelled with them to Wilno. See Zylberklang, *Z Żółkiewki do Erec Israel*, 157. According to another source, the Jewish survivors who formed an organization in Lublin to promote the emigration of Jews to Palestine were involved in lucrative smuggling operations. "Exodus organizers were sent back to the Soviet Union to bring Jews out, and they bought gold cheaply there, reselling it at inflated prices on their return … 'We also robbed speculators,' that is, Jews who exploited the postwar chaos for shady transactions, said Mordechai Roseman and [Vitka] Kempner openly." See Porat, *The Fall of a Sparrow,* 192. Gabriel Sedlis, one of Abba Kovner's partisans from the Wilno area, paints a much more graphic picture of these little know events. Enormous fortunes were made by Jews who smuggled diamonds and gold from the Soviet Union into Poland, and then on to Cairo. An entire network was set up utilizing Jews in positions of authority who fabricated documents authorizing smugglers entry into the Soviet Union, by official Soviet planes, ostensibly to purchase typewriters with Polish keys that had been left behind in the Polish territories annexed by the Soviets. Smugglers, former partisans, undercover policemen and even NKVD officers worked hand-in-hand to carry out these elaborate schemes. See Renata Gorczyńska, *Jestem z Wilna i inne adresy* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Krakowskie, 2003), 29. Feldhendler was mostly likely involved in such transactions. Polish historian Robert Kuwałek surmises, from Feldhendler's wife's (girlfriend's) postwar testimony deposed at Yad Vashem, that the Feldhendlers likely knew the murderer(s) who came calling. See Bialowitz, *Bunt w Sobiborze,* 235–36 n.90. Her testimony is reproduced in Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today,* volume II: *District Lublin,* 328–29. If that was the case, not reporting the culprits(s), *had they been Poles*, makes no sense, since the Poles responsible for killing Hersz Blank or Blanke, the former husband (boyfriend) of Feldhendler's wife (girlfriend), were apprehended and dealt with harshly by the authorities in Lublin. The sheer multiplicity of conflicting versions of Feldhendler's death illustrates how unreliable survivor accounts can be. Executions of this ilk, by "Jew-hating Poles," have prompted Western observers such as Richard Rashke to philosophize: "At that moment, as I stood under Feldhendler's balcony, *I hated Poland*. I couldn't understand a people who killed and betrayed Jews, who plundered and robbed them. I found it difficult to make distinctions between good Poles and bad ones, between peacetime and wartime, between heroism and the desire to survive, even if that meant selling Jews to the Gestapo for sugar and security. I felt hatred even for that Polish woman living in what once was a Jewish ghetto. And the Polish Jews were not *my* people." See Richard Rashke, *Escape From Sobibor* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), 357. It could also be that this was a Jewish revenge killing which was pinned on the Poles. After all, Feldhendler had been the chairman of the Jewish Council in the town of Żółkiewka, and accounts were sometimes settled after the war with those who had collaborated with the Germans. According to the Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities, "The Judenrat and the Jewish police were responsible for providing the Germans with forced labour. In 1940 the Judenrat sent a group of Jews to the labour camp at Belzec [Bełżec], and shortly afterwards some 300 additional young people were sent to the labour camp at Ruda-Opalin, where they were occupied with digging sewage and irrigation ditches under such severe conditions that many of them died." See "Zolkiewka," in *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Polin,* vol. 7 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), 196–98, translated as *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland,* Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol7_00196>. For an example of such Jewish revenge, see the account of Sonia Guss-Hornstein, who witnessed a group of Jewish men ambush and beat to death a Jew in Łódź who, her father later told her, was a kapo. See 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. 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." See Pomerantz and Winik, *Run East,* 158. Szaja Langleben, the most hated Jewish policeman in the slave-labour camp in Starachowice, returned to Poland and was

liquidated in his home by a small group connected to Freedom and Independence (*Wolność i Niezawiłość*—WiN), a pro-independence underground organization, because he was an "active and dangerous functionary" of the security office in Lublin. Jewish sources state that, after he joined the Communist partisans, he was recruited by the Soviet NKVD and reappeared in Lublin after the liberation working for the Russians. In fact, he was an investigator with the Department of Combating Banditry, whose mandate was the liquidation of the armed anti-communist underground.[737] Another example of the liquidation of a Communist collaborator is Hersz Blanke (Arie Lajbl Blank), who was sentenced to death by the Polish underground. As an agent of the dreaded Security Office in Lublin, Blanke is believed to have been responsible for the deaths of many Home Army members.[738] Chaskiel Ajzenchand ("Kośka"), who actively cooperated with the NKVD and Security Office in arresting Home Army members in the Żelechów area,

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killed in a restaurant in Radom, an apparent target of revenge killing. See Browning, *Remembering Survival,* 360 n.35. When Harry Haft returned to him home town 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 lay 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. Again, it only clicked. 'Maybe it is not your time to die. Next time, you may not be so lucky.'" See Alan Scott Haft, *Harry Haft: Auschwitz Survivor, Challenger of Rocky Marciano* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 89–90.

[737] A brief account of Hirszman's assassination, on March 19, 1946, by one of the participants (based on court records) is provided in Henryk Pająk, *Konspiracja młodzieży szkolnej 1945–1955* (Lublin: Retro, 1994), 130–31. See also Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust,* 135, 149 n12. For confirmation that Hirszman was a member of the security office, a fact that Jewish sources generally pass over in silence, see Alina Cała and Helena Datner-Śpiewak, eds., *Dzieje Żydów w Polsce 1944–1968: Teksty źródłowe* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 1997), 43; Dariusz Libionka, "The Life Story of Chaim Hirszman: Remembrance of the Holocaust and Reflections on Postwar Polish-Jewish Relations," *Yad Vashem Studies,* vol. 34 (2006): 219–47; Adam Kopciowski, "Anti-Jewish Incidents in the Lublin Region in the Early Years after World War II," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials,* vol. 1 (2008): 184–85. Libionka suggests that the principal motive for the assault on Hirszman was the desire to obtain weapons. For a source based on Jewish evidence that acknowledges Hirszman's Soviet ties, see Robin O'Neil, *Belzec: Stepping Stone to Genocide: Hitler's Answer to the Jewish Question,* Chapter 10 (under "Escapes"), Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/belzec1/belzec1.html>.

[738] Five Home Army members were arrested soon after, sentenced to death and executed in connection with Blanke's execution on November 4, 1944. Five other Jews who shared the same premises at 4 Kowalska Street in Lublin, including Toivi Blatt and Stanisław Szmajzner, were not harmed. There is still some uncertainty among historians as to who was behind this execution, as well as the motive. See Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust,* 134, 149; Zofia Leszczyńska, ed., *Straceni na Zamku Lubelskim: Dokumenty procesu 11 żołnierzy AK (kwiecień 1945)* (Lublin: Czas, 1995); Zylberklang, *Z Żółkiewki do Erec Israel,* 49–50 n.123; Adam Kopciowski, "Anti-Jewish Incidents in the Lublin Region in the Early Years after World War II," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials*, vol. 1 (2008): 183–84. Some sources claim Blanke was imprisoned in Sobibór, but he is not listed among the known survivors. See Schelvis, *Sobibor*, 168; Hanna Krall, *The Woman from Hamburg and Other True Stories* (New York: Other Press, 2005), 64–65, 81–83. At least two other escapees from Sobibór joined the security office after "liberation": Toivi Blatt, who assumed the name Stankiewicz, and Yehuda (Leon) Lerner, who, at the age of 18 (sic), became the deputy commander of police in Radom in January 1945 (until the summer of that year), after a stint in a partisan unit led by Chil Grynszpan. See Schelvis, *Sobibor*, 232, 236. Both Toivi Blatt and Stanisław Szmajzner went looking for the person who had initially sheltered Blatt and then turned on him and left him for dead. Not finding him at home, Szmajzner wanted to kill the Pole's daughter, but Blatt prevented Szmajzner from shooting her with his gun. See "Ucieczka z piekła—z Tomaszem Blattem rozmawia Marcin Wroński," *Gazeta Petersburska,* 2010. Internet: <http://www.gazetapetersburska.org/pl/node/880>.

was also liquidated by the Polish underground on April 11, 1945.[739] The execution in Parczew, on February 5, 1946, of four state functionaries—three Jews and one Pole—by a WiN unit is referred to as a "pogrom" in Jewish literature, even though the Jews were targeted as security and militia officers.[740] Indeed, many Jews perished in the service of the Stalinist regime, though not as Jews.[741] Jewish sources, however, appear to be unable to appreciate the difference and count these fallen Stalinist henchmen as victims of anti-Semitism.[742] Some Jews who served in the security police still pretend they do not know why they were

[739] Sulej, *Zdrada i zbrodnia,* 186.

[740] Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust*, 138–40; Wnuk, *Lubelski Okręg AK DSZ i WiN, 1944–1947,* 357; Bechta, *Pogrom czy odwet?,* 241–73; Dariusz Magier, "Pogrom ubeków," *Najwyższy Czas!,* February 14, 2004. As Mariusz Bechta points out, some 40 Jews from Parczew, mostly former partisans, were allowed to set up a "defence militia" which was utilized by the security police to strike at the anti-communist underground. See Bechta, *Pogrom czy odwet?,* 169–70. On Parczew see also David Engel, "Patterns of Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1944–1946," *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 26 (1998): 70–72. Several Jewish police officers, former partisans of Grynszpan, deserted their posts after this incident.

[741] For additional cases of Jewish functionaries who were killed by the anti-Communist underground which are not mentioned in Chodakiewicz's *After the Holocaust,* see: Błażejewicz, *W walce z wrogami Rzeczypospolitej,* 150–51 (Patoki, Narewka); Pietrzak, et al., *Rok pierwszy,* 155 (Henryk Deresiewicz, a security officer in Lublin), 290 (Ignacy Cymerman, a security officer in Chełm); Ryszard Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Podziemie antykomunistyczne wobec Żydów po 1945 roku—wstęp do problematyki (na przykładzie województwa kieleckiego)," in Wijaczka and Miernik, *Z przeszłości Żydów polskich,* 255, 262 (Roman Sznajfeld, a security officer in Kielce; Bolesław Gaut, a police investigator in Radom; Dawid Cale, a militiaman in Rusinów; Albert Grynbaum, a senior security officer in Kielce; Henryk Ochin, a PPR official); Adam Kopciowski, "Anti-Jewish Incidents in the Lublin Region in the Early Years after World War II," in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials*, vol. 1 (2008): 184–86 (Dawid Biberman, a militia commander in Zwierzyniec; Mordka Honig, a militia platoon sergeant; Junak Milsztajn, a militiaman from Lublin, and others). Adam Kopciowski estimates that about 20 percent of the 118 killings of Jews in the Lublin region between the summer of 1944 and autumn 1946 were politically motivated; the rest were likely attributable to robberies, property disputes or anti-Semitism. Ibid., 204. Among the Jewish functionaries killed in and near Siedlce were Jakub Trzemielina, Abram Garbarz, Szymon (Wolf) Garbarz, Mendel Cyn-Cynkowski (Mieczysław Cynkowski), Kalman Orzeł (Dawid Orzeł), and Srul Szulmajster. See Mariusz Bechta, "Wojna rewolucyjna—sowietyzacja Podlasia przez funkcjonariuszy PUBP w Siedlcach po roku 1944 (zarys problematyki)," in Krajewski and Łabuszewski, *Mazowsze i Podlasie w ogniu 1944–1956*, vol. 4, 303–443, which provides important backround information about the so-called pogroms in the villages of Mordy and Mokobody in March 1945 and the "revenge" killings by Jews of an innocent Polish family (Kotuń) in the village of Żelków. (The actual Polish and Jewish culprits were never punished.) The Kałuszyn memorial book states that Shmul Lev was killed because he was a Jew who wanted "to bring to account those who spilled Jewish blood." In fact, both Shmul Lev (Lew Szmul) and Jankiel Komorowski, who were killed on April 12, 1945, were Communist Party (PPR) members. See Yosef Kermish, "Instances of Passive and Active Resistance," in A. Shamri and Sh. Soroka, eds., *Sefer Kaluszyn: Geheylikt der khorev gevorener kehile* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Kaluszyn in Israel, 1961), 338ff., translated as *The Memorial Book of Kaluszyn*, Internet: <http://jewishgen.org/Yizkor/kaluszyn/Kaluszyn.html>; compare with "Kałuszyn," Internet: <http://www.sztetl.org.pl>.

[742] For many Jews, the treatment they experienced in their new roles as henchmen of the Communist regime has remained baffling, up until the present day. The only explanation they can offer is endemic anti-Semitism on the part of the Poles. Harold Werner, for example, writes: "The newly created Polish government offered the Jewish partisans jobs in the government administration in Lublin. We were also given positions in local police forces. However, in these jobs we quickly experienced resentment and hatred directed at us by our anti-Semitic Polish coworkers. In some cases, we were attacked in public by gangs of former Army [sic] Krajowa units. … In Lublin, mobs of anti-Semitic Poles killed a number of Jewish survivors. Among those killed in Lublin were Leon Feldhendler … a young man, named Blank, from the town of Izbica. … Anti-Semitic Poles broke into his house at night and shot him. Even Chiel Grynszpan was the target of this type of violence. He had taken a job as a policeman in Hrubieszow [Hrubieszów] … An Army Krajowa group sent him a package of flowers containing a bomb. … He suffered injuries from the blast but luckily survived." See Werner, *Fighting Back*, 232–33. As noted ealier, it is highly unlikely that Feldhendler was killed by Poles and Blank or Blanke was a Secutity Office agent. Werner's book contains photographs of Jewish partisans dressed in militia uniforms after the war: Chanina (Henry) Barbanel, Leon from Warsaw, Velval Litwak, and Harold (Hersh) Werner. Typical of nationalist Jewish historians, Paweł Śpiewak adamantly insists that every Jew who perished in the

targeted, and suffer from amnesia regarding their stint with the security police. Philip Bialowitz, then Fiszel Białowicz, a military censor with the local Security Office in Zamość, states: "When we were in Zamość someone threw a grenade through the window of a house occupied by Jewish survivors."[743] Similarly, like Yaffa Eliach with respect to assault on her parents' home in Ejszyszki, described in Part One, the authors of a biography of Eli Zborowski do not see any connection between the presence of a Soviet commander in the Zborowski home in Żarki and the ensuing assault by the Polish underground:

> In addition [to the Zborowski family], the officer commanding the Russian troops asked to sleep in the Zborowski house. He was apprehensive staying with Poles, but felt secure with Jews. It was not east to determine the allegiance of Poles and Ukrainians. …
> With no apparent provocation, one day grenades were thrown into the house through the window. Zisel [Zborowski] decided it was no longer safe for them to stay there, so she packed up the children and left for Sosnowiec. …
> After the Zborowski family left, the Russian commander was, in fact, killed by Poles.[744]

In some cases, however, retaliations may have been too sweeping and harsh.[745] Similarly, Poles could find themselves fired on by Jews for no good reason. Some Jews who had hidden in the ruins of Warsaw shot at Poles who brought news of their "liberation" by the Red Army:

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immediate postwar era was an innocent victim of anti-Semitic Poles: "there is no doubt that Jews died not because they had anything at all to do with communism or belonged to some kind of government formation, but only because they were born as Jews." See Paweł Śpiewak, *Żydokomuna: Interpretacje historyczne* (Warsaw: Czerwone i Czarne, 2012), 196.

[743] Małgorzata Szlachetka, "Relacja powstańca z Sobiboru," *Gezeta Wyborcza* (Lublin), October 16, 2008. An escapee from Sobibór who was sheltered by Polish farmers near his home town of Izbica, Bialowitz (Fiszel Białowicz) was enlisted with the Security Office from January 1, 1945 until June 15, 1945. According to official records, he was arrested in May 1945, strangely on suspicion of belonging to the Home Army, and severely beaten during interrogation. See Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, BU 0193/157 (162/V). These episodes are missing from his memoir: Philip "Fiszel" Bialowitz with Joseph Bialowitz, *A Promise at Sobibór: A Jewish Boy's Story of Revolt and Survival in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), published in Polish as Philip Bialowitz, as told to Joseph Bialowitz, *Bunt w Sobiborze: Opowieść o przetrwaniu w Polsce okupowanej przez Niemców* (Warsaw: Nasza Księgarnia, 2008). According to Jewish sources, two Polish officials from the Security Office killed Dudl Safian (Rabaleh), a mill operator. "In order to cover up their act, they carried out an arrest of a group of young Zamość Jews, and brought out a libel that they had, so to speak, sold weapons to the 'AK.' The Jews remained in jail for several weeks. Among them Yidl Safian, a brother of the murdered man, Mordechai Goldberg … After an intervention in Warsaw, at the Security service, they were set free." See Beryl Eisenkopf, "Residents of Zamość in a Fight for Life During the Hitlerist Occupation," 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 Solomon Berger, 2004), 592.

[744] George and Rochel Berman, *A Life of Leadership: Eli Zborowski: From the Underground to Industry to Holocaust Remembrance* (Jersey City, New Jersey: KTAV Publishing House, in association with Yad Vashem Publications, Jerusalem, 2011), 79, 81.

[745] In Raciąż, according to a Jewish woman who spent the war there with her mother passing as Christians (a ruse widely known to the townspeople), the heavy-handed deeds of a Jew called Szymek, who appears to have joined the security police or the NKVD, led to an assault on a house occupied by this Jewish official and other Jews; as luck would have it, Szymek was away and thus avoided punishment, while innocent blood was spilt. See Helena Bodek, *Jak tropione zwierzęta: Wspomnienia* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1993), 149–50. On the other hand, Shalom Yoran, who also returned briefly to that same home town, has no recollection of any of these complicating factors.

> When we were going down into the sewer, two Christians saw us and said "You are Jews, Jews with weapons? You are already liberated." We thought that they were the ones who tapped on the bunker and that they were German agents. We shot one of them. We were all hardened and suspicious.[746]

> On the third night Little Jacob, Masha Claitman's husband, had crawled out. Near the bunker he had met two Poles and covered them with his machine gun.
>
> They had shouted to him, "What are you afraid of? Why are you still buried? You have been free for three days."
>
> He had refused to believe them, had opened fire, wounding one of them, and had "escaped."[747]

Unlike Jewish transgressions, which—as has been shown—generally went unpunished, Polish ones directed at Jews were readily punished by the authorities. In fact, members of the anti-Communist underground were arraigned and punished for a host of crimes directed against the Stalinist regime including murdering Jews even absent any evidence that they had targeted or harmed Jews.[748] As we have already seen, among the Jews who came forward to betray members of the Home Army were even those who had been rescued from the Nazis by Poles.

A case well worth noting, because of its anti-Polish dimension, is that of the father of American novelist Jerzy Kosinski of *The Painted Bird* fame. The Kosinski family was sheltered by Polish villagers in Dąbrowa Rzeczycka near Sandomierz, where they lived openly even though their Jewish origin was no secret. Jerzy's father, Moishe Lewinkopf, who went by the name of Mieczysław Kosiński during the occupation, joined the ranks of the Soviet invaders and turned in the very Poles who had put their lives on the line by accepting his family in their village.

> With much of the village again retreated to the woods, Mieczyslaw Kosinski and his family stayed, along with the red partisans, to greet the Russians. They bore welcoming red banners and hammer-and-sickle emblems—and Henryk Kosinski, now all of four years old, wore a Red Army uniform complete to field cap with red star and an automatic pistol carved out of wood. … The NKVD officers traveling with the front-line unit … were aware of Mieczyslaw Kosinski's sympathies, and made use of him as a translator. … When it came to organizing a civic administration under Soviet

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According to what he had later heard, six young Jewish men who had returned to Raciąż were simply "taken out of their house at night, and disappeared. They were most likely killed." See Yoran, *The Defiant,* 253.

[746] Pninah Papier, "In the Warsaw Ghetto and in the Wyszkow Forests," in 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).

[747] Bernard Goldstein, *The Stars Bear Witness* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1950), 275.

[748] The following examples are found in the court records reproduced in Szwagrzyk, *Golgota wrocławska 1945–1956,* 106, 137, 150–51. It is worth noting that those charged were not only identified by their citizenship but also by their nationality as "Poles", and that Jewish state functionaries played a prominent role in their trials. Ibid., 115, 117, 153.

> rule, it was natural that they should turn to this established PPR [the Communist Polish Workers' Party] member … The PPR, gaining the upper hand under the umbrella of the Red Army, began carrying out reprisals against the Home Army, while the Soviet political officers undertook the task of rooting out future opponents of the regime. Among those targeted were Andrzej Warchol [Warchoł], the Kosinskis' landlord, and Jozef Stepak [Józef Stępak], the administrator [village reeve] from Kepa [Kępa] who had faced down Fuldner and hidden the Kosinskis in his hayloft. …
>
> Official arrests soon followed, on charges of collaboration or hoarding, with the Home Army partisans as primary targets. As a man whose work had given him detailed knowledge of commerce in the village … Mieczyslaw Kosinski was a central informant in the Soviet "cleansing."[749]

Although the Home Army ordered the execution of Moishe Lewinkopf, it was not carried out as he had left the village before the partisans arrived at his home. The rest of the family who remained behind was not harmed in any way. Jerzy Kosinski eventually immigrated to the United States where he made a career for himself maligning his benefactors, and garnered rave reviews from the intellectual elite.[750] The singular ruthlessness he demonstrated in carrying this out (he even enlisted the help of his obliging mother), was justified by a quotation from the Talmud his father had passed on to him: "Your life is more important than your neighbour's."[751] Even after all this came into the open, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum continued to endorse *The Painted Bird* as an "autobiographical" novel about "the wartime wanderings of a

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[749] James Park Sloan, *Jerzy Kosinski: A Biography* (New York: Dutton/Penguin, 1996), 49, 53. The author also goes on to describe (at 59) another "close call" Kosinski's father, now a state "apparatchik," had after he relocated to Jelenia Góra. Apparently, "White" (i.e., anti-Communist) guerrillas stopped his car when he was travelling to Warsaw in the company of the father of Jerzy Urban, another Jew from his home town of Łódź. Urban would eventually become the hated spokesman for General Jaruzelski's martial-law regime and more recently, as founder and publisher of the weekly gutter tabloid *NIE!,* Poland's biggest pornographer.

[750] This charade continued to gather momentum in North America and captivate the Holocaust education market for over two decades despite the fact that it had been exposed as a slanderous hoax by Janina Dembowa, a Jewish woman, as early as June 1968. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 534–37. In fact, as late as 1992, Kosinski published an autobiographical essay claiming that while passing as a Christian child in occupied Poland, he never confessed to a priest that he was Jewish because he was afraid that his true identity might be revealed to the Germans. See Jerzy Kosinski, *Passing By: Selected Essays, 1962–1991* (New York: Random House, 1992), 159. It was not until Joanna Siedlecka, a Polish investigative journalist, published her stirring exposé of Kosinski, *Czarny ptasior* (Gdańsk: Marabut; Warsaw: CIS, 1994), followed two years later by a British Broadcasting Corporation documentary, *Sex, Lies and Jerzy Kosinski,* that the bubble burst. When James Park Sloan picked up on the story for the *New Yorker* ("Kosinski's War," October 10, 1994, 46–53), public reaction (largely Jewish) was predictable: "Why should we listen to all those good Polish witnesses in preference to him?" (letter, November 14, 1994). Tellingly, on April 21, 1996, the *New York Times Book Review* ran a review by Louis Begley (damage control) of Sloan's biography under the title, "True Lies." For more on this controversy see Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry,* 55–57. See also the entry "Jerzy Kosinski" in *Wikipedia*, Internet: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerzy_Kosinski>.

[751] Sloan, *Jerzy Kosinski,* 225, 16. In order to round out his portrayal of Poles as vicious anti-Semites, Kosinski concocted an incident in which he was allegedly assailed in his New York apartment by Polish goons threatening to beat him with lengths of steel pipe whom he skillfully fended off. Ibid., 244–45. Needless to say, this story, like all the others, was eaten up unquestioningly and regurgitated by American literary critics. More recently, it was reported in *Dziennik Łódzki* (May 10–11, 2008) that Kosinski's alleged trip to the Soviet Union, which was the basis for his first book *The Future is Our Comrade: Conversations with the Russians,* published in 1960 under the pseudonym Joseph Novak, was likely a fabrication as well.

young boy through peasant villages in Poland … The graphic descriptions of the brutality and inhumanity facing the boy at every turn paint a picture of [the Poles'] absolute human depravity."[752]

That retaliations against Soviet agents and informers in these circumstances may have encompassed some innocent civilians is, unfortunately, a hazard of war which, as a cruel reality, generally consumes more innocent civilian victims than military and security forces personnel. The so-called liberation of Poland by the Red Army did not usher in a time of peace. On the contrary, the "liberators" declared war on the pro-independence Polish underground, whom they treated as common "bandits,"[753] thus provoking horrendous civil strife that lasted for several years and took the lives of approximately 100,000 victims, a tiny percentage of whom were Jews. The Poles who were imprisoned, tortured, and executed by the Soviet security forces and their local henchmen were no more guilty of wrongdoing than the Jewish civilian victims.

To refer to the fate of one group selectively, in isolation from and to the exclusion of the other, as a purported, accurate reflection of Polish-Jewish relations in that turbulent period, is simply unacceptable. It is not only a crude distortion of history but also demonstrates contempt for the non-Jews, whose fate is conveniently ignored or maligned. On that basis alone, one-sided accounts like Yaffa Eliach's versions of the events in Ejszyszki, as presented in *U.S. News & World Report*, the *New York Times*, and the Public Television Service (PBS), would surely have been rejected for publication or broadcasting and denounced as racist if the roles of Poles and Jews had been reversed.

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[752] U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Fifty Years Ago: Revolt Amid the Darkness—1993 Days of Remembrance* (Washington, 1993). Kosinski's *The Painted Bird* is one of a string of American novels—written almost exclusively by Jewish authors—that unfairly denigrate Poles; others include Leon Uris's *Mila 18*, Herman Wouk's *Winds of War*, Gerald Green's *Holocaust*, and William Styron's *Sophie's Choice*. A fascinating analysis of this topic is found in Thomas S. Gladsky, *Princes, Peasants, and Other Selves: Ethnicity in American Literature* (Amherst: The University Press of Massachusetts, 1992), 163–76, 190–213. Other prominent examples of that style of writing are Alan M. Dershowitz and Elie Wiesel. French-Jewish intellectual Pierre Vidal-Naquet has decried "the sort of primitive anti-Polish sentiments that too often characterize those whom I shall call 'professional Jews'." See Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Jews: History, Memory, and the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 182.

[753] As Norman Davies points out so eloquently in his monumental book *Rising '44,* Poland's Western Allies raised no objections to the Soviet takeover or the depradations of the NKVD in their First Ally's homeland. Given the chance, the Soviets demonstrated amply that they would have treated the British in much the same way, as is illustrated by the "Freston story," which was carefully concealed at the time. See Davies, *Rising '44,* 447–51.

Part Four: Some Closing Observations

Conclusion

Writing in the *New York Times,* Yaffa Eliach let it be known that the moral stakes involved in getting at the truth of what happened in Ejszyszki are high. She made it abundantly clear who the victims were and where all of the blame lies.

> The truth never has many friends, and unpleasant truths are especially friendless. … It is painful and outrageous that it is still difficult for some Poles to accept the facts about the terrible fate of Poland's Jews. It was precisely such a refusal to treat Jews with decency and honesty that contributed to the catastrophe. … When the truth about Eishyshok is denied, more Eishyshoks are likely.[754]

Leaving aside the fact that such platitudes are, for the most part, an exercise in wishful thinking (witness the events of recent years in Bosnia and Rwanda), in this case, they try to pass for blatantly hypocritical "political correctness." The tragic truth is that many Jews became willing accomplices in the Soviet-ordered liquidation of the Polish anti-Nazi underground launched stealthily in mid–1943. By mid–1944, the Soviets were quite open about their agenda. That fact was planely evident ecen then for anyone who cared to see. That there are still those who can't seem to comprehend that reality today, even with Soviet archives opened and with the benefit of hindsight, attests to a partisanship that is neither scholarly nor honest.

Jewish-American investigative journalist John Sack's *An Eye for an Eye* bears out all too poignantly the role that Jews played in Stalin's apparatus of terror. That book, which deals with the district of Upper Silesia, concludes, on the basis of evidence supplied by Jewish participants, that in 1945 every single commander but one and three-quarters of the local agents of the Communist security office were of Jewish origin; that ex-Nazi camps and prisons were refilled with totally innocent people, among them Polish (and German) civilians as well as members of the Polish Home Army; and that torture, starvation, sadistic beatings, and murder were routine.

That there was a racial component, in addition to an ideological (political) one, in such actions is beyond question. The accomplices were all too often Jews who mocked and spoke contemptuously of Poles, and the victims were almost exclusively Poles. In other words, Jews were not always victims of Poles. "In this light," notes British historian Norman Davies, "it is difficult to justify the widespread practice whereby the murderers, the victims, and the bystanders of wartime Poland are each neatly identified with specific ethnic groups."[755] Moreover, casting the focus of the debate on Polish-Jewish relations in terms of "Polish anti-Semitism" brings with it its own perils. As Davies explains,

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[754] Eliach, "The Pogrom at Eishyshok," *New York Times,* August 6, 1996.

[755] Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1022–23.

> I have come to wonder whether the concept of anti-Semitism, which tends to dominate modern discussions, is entirely adequate to its task. … The main defect of anti-Semitism as a conceptual tool lies undoubtedly in its dialectical nature. Like all other products of dialectical thought, from the "anti-Americanism" and "anti-Sovietism" of the McCarthy era to the inevitable "Class Warfare" of the Communist debate, it demands a bipolar, conflictual vision of the world, where all contending elements are reduced to "friend or foe," to "us and them," to "right and wrong." Intelligent gradations are discounted; honest differences cannot always be respected; one-sided prejudices are encouraged. In my view, the science of dialectics, the fascinating but false philosophy of opposites, does not provide a very fruitful means for exploring the complexities of Christian-Jewish history.[756]

Poles were not mere bystanders to the various waves of terror that swept over their country in 1939–1947. Indeed, many Poles suffered during the war and in its immediate aftermath on account of Jews. Jewish victims represented perhaps two percent of the tens of thousands who were killed in Poland in 1944–1947, not by the Nazis but, for the most part, by the Soviet "liberators." Until we acknowledge and remember *all* of the victims of the cataclysm that befell Poland as a result of World War II, as long as that truth is denied, to paraphrase Eliach, more cataclysms like this are likely.

There is no point in attempting to deny that aspect of recent history, painful as it might be for many to admit. But that is precisely what *U.S. News & World Report*, the *New York Times*, and the Public Broadcasting Service do by attributing all murders of Jews during the period in question to virulent anti-Semitism on the part of Poles, and nothing more, and by ignoring everything else in that complex, multi-faceted picture that does not suit their purpose. It is another matter—and one which must never be lost sight of—that neither the Poles nor the Jews who may have been become victimizers at one stage in this conflagration were truly representative of their respective communities. These were marginal, criminal elements that were numerically small in relation to the victimized mainstream.

It is most unfortunate that Eliach's family suffered casualties and she deserves our sympathy on this account. But, at the same time, didn't her father expose the family to such risks by joining the NKVD and giving lodging to Soviet henchmen? What civil war or strife—that in the Occupied Territories among them—has not seen its share of gruesome civilian casualties, often occasioned, in part at least, by racial or religious motives? More importantly, who better than Eliach, a pioneering Holocaust oral historian, should know the pitfalls of placing undue reliance on the account of a seven-year-old child, which is inconsistent with other testimonies and archival documents, without making the slightest effort to put it in its proper historical context? There are no easy answers.

[756] Norman Davies, "The Jewish Strand in European History," in Sławomir Kapralski, ed., *The Jews in Poland*, Vol. II (Cracow: Judaica Foundation Center for Jewish Culture, 1999), 89–90.

A few words from the wise might shed some light on this whole affair. As early as 1950, writing in *Jewish Social Studies,*[757] Samuel Gringauz, himself a survivor who is cited by Raul Hilberg,[758] cautioned that survivors' testimony is "judeocentric, lococentric and egocentric." For him, most of the memoirs and reports were "full of preposterous verbosity, graphomanic exaggeration, dramatic effects, overestimated self-inflation, dilettante philosophizing, would-be lyricism, unchecked rumors, bias, partisan attacks and apologies."[759] Shmuel Krakowski of Yad Vashem Institute stated for the August 17, 1986 issue of the *Jerusalem Post (International Edition),* that "over half of the 20,000 testimonies from Holocaust survivors on record at Yad Vashem are 'unreliable' and have never been used as evidence in Nazi war crimes trials." A careful reading of Holocaust memoirs and testimonies discloses that they most of them are full of factual inaccuracies. Historian Lucy Dawidowicz described the tedium entailed in the process of "separating the documentary wheat from the epitaphic chaff."[760] Dawidowicz writes:

> Many thousands of oral histories by survivors recounting their experiences exist in libraries and archives around the world. Their quality and usefulness vary significantly according to the informant's memory, grasp of events, insights, and of course accuracy. Also important in determining the quality of the account is the interviewer's ability to pursue lines of inquiry that elicit information that has been subconsciously or deliberately suppressed or that supplements an already accumulated body of information on a given subject or place. The longer the time elapsed, the less likely that the informant has retained freshness of recollection or can offer new information. The transcribed testimonies I have examined have been full of errors in dates, names of participants, and places, and there are evident misunderstandings of the events themselves.[761]

Raul Hilberg, the dean of Holocaust historians, concurs with this criticism: "A great percentage of the mistakes I discovered in my own work could be attributed to testimonies."[762] Furthermore, according to Hilberg, "there is a major problem methodically. Even the diaries are problematic because some are filled

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[757] Samuel Gringauz, "Some Methodological Problems in the Study of the Ghetto," *Jewish Social Studies* 12, no. 1 (January, 1950): 65.

[758] "Recording the Holocaust," *Jerusalem Post (International Edition),* June 28, 1986. See also Raul Hilberg, *Sources of Holocaust Research: An Analysis* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001).

[759] In the worst cases, some accounts such as Binjamin Wilkomirski's *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Child* (New York: Schoken Books, 1996) have proven to be outright forgeries. As in case of Kosinski's *The Painted Bird*, Wilkomirski's book was also greeted with the customary rave reviews in the *New York Times Book Review*, *The Nation*, and many other journals, and reaped a number of honours, including the National Jewish Book Award in the United States and the Prix Mémoire de la Shoah in France. Wilkomirski also toured the United States to deliver lectures in major cities sponsored by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. See Doreen Carvajal, "Memory or Holocaust fantasy?" *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto), October 15, 1999, based on the New York Times Service.

[760] Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933–1945* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), 438.

[761] Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the Historians* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1981), 176–77.

[762] Cited in Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry,* 82.

with hearsay. Great caution is indicated."[763] A great many memoirs of Polish Jews, for example, report with relish that the Polish army was defeated within a week, even though Warsaw did not surrender until September 27, 1939, and Polish forces engaged the Germans in battle from October 2 through 5, 1939 in Kock. How free from bias and reliable can such accounts be in their assessment of the Poles?

It is quite understandable, therefore, that historian Christopher Browning, as did Polish leading historians like Tomasz Strzembosz and Tomasz Szarota, took exception to sociologist Jan T. Gross's call for accepting survivors' testimonies at face value, without verification, and pointed out serious deficiencies in his methodology.

> The pitfalls concerning the use of survivor testimony when the emotional desire to believe has been allowed to eclipse the normal critical approach that should apply to any source has, of course, been demonstrated in two public debacles. The early lionization of the Wilkomirski pseudomemoirs only slowly gave way to skeptical investigation … And the conviction of John Demjanjuk in an Israeli court as "Ivan the Terrible" of Treblinka, on the basis of the testimony of Treblinka survivors, had to be overturned by the Israeli Supreme Court …
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> More recently, in his book *Neighbors*, Jan Gross has argued for a default position in favor of survivor testimony. … In a situation in which the logical corollary of a German policy of total extermination was to have no survivor witness whatsoever, and when in so many cases, there is only a handful of survivors, this is a tempting proposition. But however tempting, this default position still strikes me as too low an evidentiary threshold.
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> From studying large numbers of survivor testimonies, we do know that there are certain tendencies and recurring patterns. I think that uncorroborated survivor testimony must always be seen in this light as a possible corrective. For instance, Gross argues that "there were no reasons whatsoever for Jews, in their recollection of Shoah episodes they experienced and witnessed, to attribute to Poles those crimes that were in reality perpetrated by the Germans." This is seemingly logical, but from my experience it is empirically incorrect. On the contrary, survivors tend to remember—with greater vividness, specificity, and outrage—the shattering and gratuitous acts of betrayal by their neighbors more than the systematic acts of anonymous Germans. If recognition of such a tendency is combined with the unequivocal documentation that it was explicit German policy at that time to incite local pogroms without leaving any trace of German involvement, the evidence that Gross has worked through would probably render a somewhat less emphatic and more cautious conclusion concerning the relatively minimal German role at Jedwabne that he portrays. While Gross has found much corroboration of the survivor accounts in the testimony of both bystanders and perpetrators [the latter consist of confessions given to the Stalinist security officers under torture and are *ipso facto* suspect and of little, if any, evidentiary value—*M.P.*] for the decisive Polish role in carrying out the massacre of Jedwabne's Jews, I suspect that the German role

[763] Quoted by Marilyn Henry, "Holocaust 'micro-history' can mislead," *The Jerusalem Post*, April 18, 1999.

> was not just one of granting permission for the massacre but rather one of active instigation, orchestration, and participation.[764]

Tom Segev explains why the practices adopted by Yad Vashem, and followed by other institutions that simply record survivor's testimonies, cannot provide scholarly assurance of the authenticity of those testimonies:

> The Holocaust and Heroism Memorial Act of 1953 gave Yad Vashem the status of official historian by stating that among the institution's tasks was "to gather, investigate, and publish all evidence of the Holocaust and Heroism." The first historical effort made by the institution was, in fact, recording interviews with survivors. These interviews have a certain historical value, but the interviewers did not press their subjects with questions and did not demand proof or confront the survivors with existing information that might contradict their testimony. For witnesses, telling their stories was a holy obligation to the dead, and sometimes also a release for their personal stress, a kind of testimonial therapy. Yad Vashem simply recorded what they had to say.[765]

Unfortunately, these observations hold true for all too many memoirs and accounts published without much, if any, quality control.[766] The resultant portrayal of Poles is all too typical of the double-standard that

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[764] Christopher R. Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 42–43. Despite these reservations, and those expressed in his 2010 study *Remembering Survival*, where he points out that memories may become "degrade by overexposure to Holocaust tropes" (p. 11), Christopher Browning based his assessment of Polish-Jewish relations—during the interwar period, under German occupation, and postwar—exclusively on Jewish accounts without any effort to verify them against Polish sources. Browning did so notwithstanding the prevalence of negative stereotypes in many testimonies (p. 175) and the following admission: "I am also faced with conflicting and contradictory—in some cases, clearly mistaken—memories and testimonies. In some instances, differing memories and testimonies simply should not and cannot be reconciled, and critical judgments must be made." (P. 7.) As for interwar relations, "A very distinct minority of survivors remembered Poles and Jews as getting along fairly well"—likely those who maintained relations with Poles. "Far more prevalent are bitter memories of a widespread anti-Semitism in Wierzbnik"—generally those who had little to do with Poles. (P. 21.) Browning also noted a trend in more recent testimonies "in which the portrayal of Poles increasingly bordered on that of co-perpetrators and not just unsympathetic or hostile bystanders." (P. 50.) One myth Browning perpetuates, due to the shortcomings of his research, is that unlike the Home Army and National Armed Forces, who are accused of robbing and murdering Jews (which sometimes did occur), the Communist underground welcomed them. See Browning, *Remembering Survival*, 252. As noted earlier, the People's Guard (later the People's Army) murdered scores, if not hundreds, of Jewish refugees, including many in the area on which Browning's study is focused. See Chodakiewicz, *Tajne oblicze GL-AL i PPR*, vol. 3, 14, and Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, "Proces Tadeusza Maja: Z dziejów oddziału AL 'Świt' na Kielecczyźnie," *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały,* vol. 7 (2011): 170–210.

[765] Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 462.

[766] Recently, Raul Hilberg bemoaned: "How come we have no decent quality control when it comes to evaluating Holocaust material for publication?" Quoted in Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry*, 60. The following memoirs from Warsaw are illustrative of this phenomenon. After their rescue by the Home Army in December 1944, Yitzhak Zuckerman, Marek Edelman and other ghetto fighters, lived in Grodzisk, a small town outside of Warsaw, under the protection of the Home Army, who even delivered to them secret mail from overseas. The charlatan Roman Grunspan takes credit for, among other obvious fabrications, the task of locating Yitzhak Zuckerman in a Warsaw bunker after the Red Army "liberated" that city in January 1945. Grunspan's memoirs parade around under the deceptive title, *The Uprising of the Death Box of Warsaw: A Documentary Book about Jewish and Christian Lives under Nazi Rule in the Warsaw Ghetto and in the Non-Jewish Region of Warsaw* (New York: Vantage Press, 1978), 201. Grunspan also claims to have been part of a three-member hit squad called "Parasol" (Umbrella) who assassinated the notorious

henchman General Franz Kutschera, who headed the SS and the police for the District of Warsaw, on "Aleja sucha" (sic) 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 carried out by the Home Army bears little resemblance to Grunspan's tale: "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 Richard C. Lukas, *The Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles under German Occupation, 1939–1944* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 92. Avrom Feldberg is another survivor of the Warsaw ghetto who spins a tale of heroism along the same lines. Allegedly a member of the Jewish Fighting Organization who joined up with unnamed Polish partisans, Feldberg claims to have headed a team of five Polish partisans who executed the unnamed chief of police on the Aryan side in the Fall of 1942. See Alvin Abram, *The Light After Dark II: Six More Stories of Triumph After All Hope Had Gone…* (Toronto: AMA Graphics Incorporated, 2000), 132. (Interestingly, he also states that he later met a Jewish woman who told him that the police chief was sheltering her in the basement of his house.) However, the execution of the "Blue" police chief Aleksander Reszczyński, who cooperated with the Home Army's counter-intelligence and who was not looked on favourably by the Germans, was carried out by a four-member squad of the People's Guard (Gwardia Ludowa) on March 5, 1943 in circumstances that bear little resemblance to those given by Feldberg. See Adam Hempel, *Pogrobowcy klęski: Rzecz o policji "granatowej" w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1990), 321–23, 383–87. Another blatantly charlatan memoir is that of Maurice Shainberg, who allegedly descends from "a family of prominent rabbis." Shainberg claims to have been the guard of ŻZW leader Paweł Frankel yet knows little about how that organization started and how it interacted with ŻOB; gets the date of the creation of the Warsaw ghetto wrong by a year; carries out all sorts of daring missions (e.g., the bombing of a Nazi conference in the spring of 1941 in which 38 German police are killed); participates in a meeting with the Polish underground in a non-existent church; thinks that Żagiew, a Jewish collaborationist organization, was "three pro-German Polish groups," and makes the fantastic claim that ŻZW killed about 600 (sic) "members of these anti-Semitic organizations"; does not know that the Jewish police took part in the great deportation of the summer of 1942 and thinks that it occurred in the spring of 1943; claims that it was not the Jewish police and Jewish Gestapo agents, but rather "Poles…watched over our every step, keeping the Germans informed about our activities and hiding places." After the Soviet "liberation" Shainberg claims that he joined the intelligence section of the Polish army, quickly rose to the rank of major, and became the personal aide of Colonel Zaitsev, the Soviet military intelligence head in Poland. In that latter role, he allegedly penetrated Zaitsev's secret diary containing detailed information about the Katyn massacre and entrusted the pages he copied from the diary to a Resurrectionist priest in Poznań by the name of Kwiatkowski. See Maurice Shainberg, *Breaking from the KGB: Warsaw Ghetto Fighter…Intelligence Officer…Defector to the West* (New York, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv: Shapolsky, 1996), 70–99, 165–74. Shainberg is not mentioned in Chaim Lazar Litai's detailed monograph about the ŻZW, *Muranowska 7: The Warsaw Ghetto Rising* (Tel Aviv: Massada–P.E.C. Press, 1966). It has been established that there was no Rev. Kwiatkowski in Poznań at the time and, although Shainberg claims to have attained the rank of major before April 1944 (p. 155), the photograph of a Polish military certificate from May 1946 gives his rank as second lieutenant ("podporucznik"). Several of the photographs reproduced in the book appear to contain superimposed images. Furthermore, Shainberg's assumed named (Mieczysław Prużański) does not appear in the Ministry of Public Security's personnel files for 1944–1947 under any rank. See Andrzej Krzysztof Kunert and Rafał E. Stolarski, *"Bijące serce partii": Dzienniki personalne Ministerstwa Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego,* vol. 1: *1945–1947* (Warsaw: Rada Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa, and Adiutor, 2001), 235ff. Another blatant forgery is Jacob Bierman's racist tract, *The Penalty of Innocence: From the Diary of Yakoiv Zeiv Weiler* (New York, Washington and Hollywood: Vantage Press, 1973), which is "Dedicated to Truth and Justice" and, of course, purports to be "a true story." Yakoiv, who supposedly worked closely with the Communist Polish People's Party, claims to have "thrown quantities of weapons, ammunition, hand grenades [sic] … over the high ghetto fence," and after the fighting, his boys "waited at every hole" to help thousands of Jews escape from the ghetto. Near the ghetto wall he allegedly saw "mobs of Poles … fighting with each other over the dead Jewish victims. They had, with their sharp knives, cut the faces to make it easier to pull gold crowns from the victims' mouths." Ibid., 87–89. No serious Holocaust historian has advanced such preposterous charges. Another somewhat less obvious, but undoubtedly fabricated memoir is that of Mieczysław Grajewski: Martin Gray (with Max Gallo), *For Those I Loved* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), which is translated from the French. The author claims to have joined the Jewish Fighting Organization in March 1943, and, with his excellent knowledge of the maze of sewers, was able to smuggle into the ghetto weapons and munitions acquired through contacts he made with the People's Army and Home Army. He then became a fighter of herculean proportions who, in his spare time, led women, children and old men, and fighters too, through the sewers to safety. Ibid., 198–211. Gray's exploits, such as his alleged participation in a raid on the German prison in Pińsk on January 18, 1943 (carried out by the Home Army), have come under close and devastating scrutiny by Polish historians. For a summary of the debate which appeared in many Polish newspapers including *Gazeta Wyborcza*, see Jerzy Robert Nowak, *Spory o historię i współczesność* (Warsaw: von borowiecky, 2000), 359–61. His writings have been sharply rebuked by Holocaust historians Gitta Sereny and Yisrael Gutman. A 145-minute French-language film based on Gray's memoirs *Au*

nom de tous les miens, directed by Robert Enrico and staring Michael York, was released in 1983 and an English-language U.S. version in 1990. Another memoir that is full of startling revelations that no serious historian has endorsed is that of Jack Eisner, who founded the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization in 1962. In his memoir, *The Survivor,* Eisner claims that he joined an unaffiliated underground group led by Artek Milner, and that through his arms supplier he managed to acquire for one thousand dollars a brand-new Schmeisser machine gun stolen from a SS depot. Eisner challenges the widely held contention that arms were difficult to obtain in the ghetto: "Until then, I'd been an armed smuggler with a bunker to my credit, like many others in the central ghetto who also had guns and bunkers." Eisner's gang of smugglers also controlled two "toll" tunnels in the ghetto which brought that group an enormous revenue, collecting in the course of just one day "more than one hundred thousand zlotys—enough to buy half a dozen Molotov bottles and several guns." One of his daring missions was, allegedly, the execution of the Jewish police officer Kronenberg. This is probably a reference to Firstenberg, a high-ranking officer in the Jewish ghetto police who was executed by the ŻZW in February 1943. See Chaim Lazar Litai, *Muranowska 7: The Warsaw Ghetto Rising* (Tel Aviv: Massada–P.E.C. Press, 1966), 196. Eisner also claims that in January 1943, on the third day (sic) of fighting, he and his friend Artek Milner opened fire on the German soldiers who had entered the ghetto to round up Jews for deportation and carried out a routing that the fledgling ŻOB could only dream of: "Artek whispered, 'It's now or never,' and aimed his Schmeisser, spraying a barrage of bullets. Within seconds, half a dozen Germans were lying in their own blood. The panicked horses began to gallop in all directions. Rudy and I opened fire with our pistols." These events are not acknowledged by historians. It was after that exploit that Artek allegedly decided that his group of more than forty members should join forces with the ŻZW. Contrary to what Eisner writes, all reliable sources confirm that the Polish flag was hoisted alongside the Jewish flag by the ŻZW on April 19, 1943, the first day of the revolt. In his diary, SS Brigadeführer Jürgen Stroop, the German general who quelled the revolt, wrote: "The main Jewish battle group, mixed with Polish bandits, had already retired during the first and second day to the so-called Muranowski Square. There, it was reinforced by a considerable number of Polish bandits. Its plan was to hold the Ghetto by every means in order to prevent us from invading it. The Jewish and Polish standards were hoisted at the top of a concrete building as a challenge to us. These two standards, however, were captured on the second day of the action by a special raiding party." See Jürgen Stroop, *The Stroop Report: The Jewish Quarter of Warsaw Is No More!* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979). A Polish eyewitness who lived outside the ghetto walls, across the street from ŻZW headquarters, describes the event in her memoir: "On the roof just across, we could see people walking around, all carrying arms. At a certain moment we witnessed a unique sight—they hoisted a blue-and-white flag and a red-and-white flag. We burst into cheers. 'Look! Look! The Jewish flag! The Jews have captured Muranowski Square!' … We embraced and kissed one another." See Alicja Kaczyńska, *Obok piekła: Wspomnienia z okupacji niemieckiej w Warszawie* (Gdańsk: Marpress, 1993), 67. According to David Landau, another alleged ŻZW member, it was he who organized the hoisting of the Polish flag, asking his Polish colleague Jan Kostański to bring it into the ghetto. See David J. Landau, alias Dudek, Janek and Jan, *Caged: A Story of Jewish Resistance* (Sydney: Macmillan, 2000), 216, 222–24. On the flags see also 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), 339; and Engelking and Leociak, *Getto warszawskie,* 736–37, translated as *The Warsaw Ghetto*. Eisner, however, maintains that a Polish flag was raised only after the Home Army had complained to the ŻZW, and that because of his knowledge of the sewers acquired as a smuggler, he was the one who was sent to escort the Home Army messenger who brought the flag to the ghetto on April 20, in somewhat different circumstances. See Jack Eisner, *The Survivor* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1980), 141–81. (Eisner's book was turned into a play written by Susan Nanus and performed on Broadway in March 1981; a film, *War and Love,* directed by Moshe Mizrahi, screenplay by Abby Mann, produced by Jack Eisner, and released by Cannon Group, 1985; and an opera, *Jacek,* written by David A. Yeagley (2000).) A number of historians have questioned the veracity of Eisner's memoir, as well as Maurice Shainberg's memoir *Breaking From the KGB.* See August Grabski, "Czy Polacy walczyli w powstaniu w getcie? Rzecz o polskich sojusznikach Żydowskiego Związku Walki," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów,* no. 4 (2007): 423; Libionka and Weinbaum, *Bohaterowie, hochsztaplerzy, opisywacze,* 194–203, 220–27. Another memoir that falsely attributes an accomplishment of the Zośka battalion of the Home Army to the Communist People's Guard or People's Army, namely, the liberation of several hundred foreign Jews from the so-called Gęsiówka concentration camp in Warsaw (and not Pawiak as the author claims) on August 5, 1944, is Yehuda Nir, *The Lost Childhood: A Memoir* (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1989), 132, 159. Beyond any serious consideration of integrity is Leon Uris's novel *Mila 18,* which is a thinly disguised anti-Polish diatribe replete with historical inaccuracies and of dubious literary merit. Interestingly, historian David Engel has exposed the role of Warsaw's Jewish Historical Institute in manipulating and censoring Calel Perechodnik's memoir, published under the title *Am I a Murderer?*; the manuscript of Perechodnik's memoir, which was located in the Yad Vashem Archives, has been published in its uncut version as Calek Perechodnik, *Spowiedź* (Warsaw: Karta, 2004). See "Ukazało się poprawione wydanie wspomnień Perechodnika," *Polska Agencja Prasowa,* November 26, 2004; Zbigniew Gluza, "Prawdziwa 'Spowiedź' Perechodnika," *Rzeczpospolita,* November 29, 2004. Testimonies in the archives of the Jewish Historical Institute are known to have been altered after the fact, in one case to paint a more dire picture of life in the Warsaw ghetto. See, for example, no. 301/5062. Moreover, the important role of the Jewish Military Organization (ŻZW) in the Warsaw ghetto uprising—an organization with strong ties to the anti-Communist

permeates much of Holocaust literature: Polish collaborators are in the forefront, whereas Jews who collaborated with the Soviets and Nazis are nowhere to be seen. Moreover, the problem appears to be escalating as increasingly more strident and, at times, outrageous views find their way into books published by respected publishing houses and scholarly periodicals published by reputable institutions. The impact on how Polish-Jewish relations are portrayed in North American is particularly deleterious.[767] In the opinion of

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Polish underground—has been virtually eliminated in writings of both the Communists and Jews who have championed the Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB).

[767] See, for example, David Cymet, "Polish State Antisemitism as a Major Factor Leading to the Holocaust," *Journal of Genocide Research,* vol. 1, no. 2 (June 1999): 169–212, which charges that Poles were the co-authors of the Holocaust and inspired the Germans to attack Jews on Kristallnacht. The author uses no Polish-language sources, despite the fact that the actions of the Polish government are his main concern. See the critical review of this article by Jerzy Tomaszewski, "Upside-Down History," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 14 (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001), 377–80. On the alleged Polish inspiration for the Nazis to attack Jews on Kristallnacht, see also John and Carol Garrard, "Barbarossa's First Victims: The Jews of Brest," *East European Jewish Affairs,* vol. 28, no. 2 (Winter 1998–99): 3–47, especially 13. For an attempt to compare antisemitism in pre-war Poland with that in Nazi Germany, see William W. Hagen, "Before the 'Final Solution': Toward a Comparative Analysis of Political Antisemitism in Interwar Germany and Poland," *The Journal of Modern History,* no. 68 (June 1996): 351–81. Hagen's theories have been endorsed in Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 240, where we learn that "all the major components of the post-Pilsudski Polish polity adopted exclusionary, violent ideologies … In this environment the physical removal and even destruction of ethnic groups who violated the desired harmony of the national body was acceptable." In actual fact, the United States with its racial policies (legislated segregation, institutionalized discrimination, pogroms, lynchings, church burnings, medical experimentation on and day-to-day harassment of Blacks and Native Indians) shared far more in common with Nazi Germany than Poland did, and unlike the citizens of totalitarian regimes such as Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union, the average American citizen, who democratically elected their government and endorsed its policies, cannot shrug off this legacy of oppressing poor, powerless minorities who posed no threat to the state. These examples can be multiplied and include recent books such as Leo Cooper's *In the Shadow of the Polish Eagle: The Poles, the Holocaust and Beyond* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2000), which historian David Engel trashed in no uncertain terms: "The book is thus worse than useless; it is a step backward in a field that has made much progress." See *Slavic Review,* vol. 61, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 140–41. Nor is it surprising that Reuben Ainsztein, the author of the most vicious sustained attack on the Polish underground *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe*, penned an equally hostile and racist memoir—*In Lands Not My Own: A Wartime Journey* (New York: Random House, 2002)—branding all Poles as anti-Semites and natural allies of the Nazis. (A far more telling barometer of a predilection for Fascism is the fact that, in 1938, 10,000 out of Italy's 47,000 Jews, in other words almost all the adult male Jews in that country, were card-carrying members of the Fascist party. See Nicholas Farrel, "It Happened in Italy Too," *The Spectator,* December 7, 1996.) For a critique of Ainsztein's book see M.B. Biskupski, "Poles, Jews and the Second Polish Republic, 1918–1945: Memoir As Indictment," *The Polish Review,* vol. 48, no. 1 (2003): 101–108. Another example is John Weiss, who postulates in his *The Politics of Hate: Anti-Semitism, History, and the Holocaust in Modern Europe* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003), 192: "We can never know, but it seems likely that without the alliance with the West and the murderous policies of the Nazis toward the Poles, a *majority* of Poles would have been willing participants and not simply indifferent bystanders during the Holocaust." (John Weiss is an emeritus professor at Lehman College and the Graduate Center of the City University in New York**.)** Omer Bartov, an Israeli-American Holocaust historian, suggests that World War II was a disguised blessing for the Poles because they allegedly struck it rich as a result of grabbing Jewish property (in fact, most Jewish property was seized by the Germans): "the very term 'bystander' is largely meaningless. The majority of the non-Jewish population profited from the genocide and either directly or indirectly collaborated with the perpetrators of the Holocaust. Even if at times the non-Jews also resisted the occupation for their own reasons, only a minority was involved in rescue and feared the vengeance of the majority. In this sense no one was passive or indifferent." See Omer Bartov, "Much Forgotten, Little Learned," *Yad Vashem Studies,* vol. 35, no. 2 (2007): 276. Emboldened by strident writing of the ilk of Jan Gross, Joanna Michlic and Omer Bartov, Rachel Feldhay Brenner, of the Center for Jewish Studies at the University of Wisconsin, writes tediously of joint German-Polish complicity in the Holocaust: "the prevailing majority of Poles subscribed to the German racial view of Jews as sub-human species and therefore legitimate objects of extermination; and many voluntarily collaborated with the perpetrators, blackmailing and denouncing the Jews on the 'Aryan' side of the city. The cooperation between the Poles and the Germans effectively dehumanized the Jews; they became grotesque creatures who lost their human image. … the 'Aryan side' … became an arena of Polish persecution of the Jews. The prevailing agreement of the Poles with the German treatment of the Jews created compatibility between the occupier and the occupied … The ideological horizon

of the extermination of the Jews that the majority of the Poles shared with the German occupier precluded the voice of humanism." See Rachel Feldhay Brenner, "The 'Poor' Polish Writers Look at the Ghetto: A Struggle with Self and History, The Case of Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz," Conference Paper, "Between Coexistence and Divorce: 25 Years of Research on the History and Culture of Polish Jewry and Polish-Jewish Relations," Hebrew University of Jerusalem, March 17–19, 2009. An Israeli professor of philosophy at an American university writes much in the same vein, but on a personal level, arguing that it was the Poles who inspired the Germans to carry out the Holocaust: "Personally, it was only after I met the Polish people that I could finally understand how the Holocaust happened. It is not the case, as some argued, that it was the largest concentration of Jews that motivated the Nazis to build their extermination camp in Poland. Rather, the Germans constructed all their major extermination camps in Poland because they understood the deep and religiously motivated hatred that the Polish masses held against their Jewish neighbors; neither were the death-camps built in Poland for the purpose of exterminating the Polish nation, as Polish historians want us to believe." See Yoram Lubling, *Twice-Dead: Moshe Y. Lubling, the Ethics of Memory, and the Treblinka Revolt* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 107. Swedish historian Kristian Gerner portrays Germans and Poles as suffering parallel fates surrounding the Holocaust: "For both Poles and Germans, the relation to the Holocaust was influenced by the parallel story of Nazi atrocities against the Poles in the war and the Polish expulsion of and atrocities against civilian Germans at the end of the war." See Kristian Gerner, "Ambivalence, Bivalence and Polyvalence: Historical Culture in the German-Polish Borderlands" in *Echoes of the Holocaust: Historical Culture in Contemporary Europe*, edited by Klas-Göran Karlsson and Ulf Zander (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2003), 115–40, here at p. 118–19. Jan Grabowski goes so far as to accuse Polish children of being incapable of being mere bystanders to the Holocaust: "But no one, in these circumstances, could remain a neutral, emotionally detached witness, often described by historians as a 'bystander to the Holocaust.' … each rural inhabitant—each man, woman, and child—had a role to play in this horrible theatre of death." See Jan Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013), 83. This bizarre, ahistorical current, which has been decried by preeminent Holocaust historians such as Raul Hilberg and Israel Gutman, has in fact spawned a new historical genre in the United States which concerns itself not with Polish-Jewish relations as such, but with Polish "anti-Semitism," which is premised on the assumption that whatever conflict arose between Poles and Jews in the past, it was the Polish side which was at fault (with perhaps a few inconsequential exceptions). See the Collaborative Research Project on Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland under contract with the National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, directed by Professor Robert Blobaum of the Department of History, University of West Virginia, which includes in its complement historians like the aforementioned William W. Hagen, published as Robert Blobaum, ed., *Antisemitism and Its Opponents in Modern Poland* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005). These publications should be contrasted with the thoughtful and well-researched works—but alas far fewer in number—that present a complex and nuanced portrait of Polish-Jewish relations, such as Eva Hoffman's *Shtetl: The Life and Death of a Small Town and the World of Polish Jews* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997); Rosa Lehmann's *Symbiosis and Ambivalence: Poles and Jews in a Small Galician Town* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001); and Shimon Redlich's *Together and Apart in Brzezany: Poles, Jews and Ukrainians, 1919–1945* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002). This pronounced bifurcation in recent trends went unnoticed in Joshua D. Zimmerman's essay, "Changing Perceptions in the Historiography of Polish-Jewish Relations during the Second World," which paints a rosy, but not too accurate picture, of mainstream Jewish historiography (which can be, and very often is, as strident as ever) having gradually abandoned (from the 1980s) what Zimmerman concedes had been a longstanding maligning of Poles. See Zimmerman, *Contested Memories*, 1–16.

A highly biased and pseudo-moralistic approach has also infected German scholarship on Polish-Jewish relations, which exhibits a strong undercurrent of shifting blame for the Holocaust onto non-Germans, especially Poles. A prominent exponent of that approach is historian Klaus-Peter Friedrich, for whom alleged Polish "collaboration" with the Nazis and "false position of victimization" have become an obsession. (The latter formulation is found in his article "The Nazi Murder of Jews in Polish Eyes." *Polin*, vol. 22 (2010): 410.) Friedrich's lack of balance in assessing the Polish record has been noted by a number of non-Polish scholars. In his review of Friedrich's essay "Zusammenarbeit und Mittäterschaft in Polen 1939–1945," in Christoph Dieckmann, Babette Quinkert, and Tatjana Tönsmeyer, *Kooperation und Verbrechen: Former der "Kollaboration" im östlichen Europa 1939–1945* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), Bernhard Chiari points out that Friedrich ignores the achievements of the Polish underground and stresses alleged Polish-German cooperation against their "common" enemies: the Communists and Jews. See Bernhard Chiari's review in *Sehepunkte*, vol. 4 (2004), no. 10, http://www.sehepunkte.historicum.net/2004/10/5865.html. Even William Hagen has noted that Friedrich embraces "one-sided Western stereotypes of Polish attitudes" that the Poles allegedly believed they were the only real victims of the war and denied Jewish claims to victimhood. Hagen argues, contrary to Friedrich, that the Polish underground press's primary with the fate of the Catholic Poles is not *ipso facto* evidence of anti-Semitism or moral indifferentism. See William W. Hagen's review of Friedrich's *Der nationalsozialistische Judenmord und das polnisch-jüdische Verhältnis im Diskurs der polnischen Untergrundpresse (1942–1944)* (Marburg: Verlag Herder-Institut, 2006), in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol, 23, no. 3 (Winter 2009): 487–90. A far more scathing review of Klaus-Peter Friedrich's article "Collaboration in a 'Land without a Quisling': Patterns of Cooperation with the Nazi German Occupation Regime in Poland during World War II," *Slavic Review*, vol. 64, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 711–46 was authored by John Connelly: "Why the Poles Collaborated So Little—And Why That Is No

historian István Deák, "No issue in Holocaust literature is more burdened by misunderstanding, mendacity, and sheer racial prejudice than that of Polish-Jewish relations during World War II."[768] There has thus developed an enormous gap between the ever-growing Holocaust literature and the relatively small corpus of genuine scholarship on the Nazi Holocaust.[769] And that is why we rely on historians, honest ones, to analyze the sources critically and put them in their proper perspective.

American historian John Radziłowski has signaled and underscored the attendant dangers of the polarized debate in his excellent critique of Eliach's book *Their Once Was a World* where he stated:

> At the same time debate over Polish-Jewish history in the Holocaust era has been increasingly politicized. Charges once confined to the darker recesses of the popular media now appear in scholarly journals; for example, charges that Poles were the co-authors of the Holocaust or inspired Germans to attack Jews on Kristallnacht. The appearance of such flawed scholarship tests the ability of Western Holocaust scholars to police their field through rigorous peer review, but they have focused more intensive attention on confirmed or alleged cases of Poles killing Jews … The causes of these incidents are ascribed to vicious and unreasoning Polish antisemitism if not an outright desire to assist the Nazis in exterminating Jews. These explanations are rarely given careful scrutiny.
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> The best known case in this regard is that of the town of Ejszyszki (Eishyshok) raised by Yaffa Eliach first in numerous articles and interviews in the mass media and later in her book *There Once Was a World: A 900-Year Old Chronicle of the Shtetl of Eishyshok.* The author has enjoyed unlimited access to the popular media in the United States, and the book was promptly nominated for a National Book Award. … Criticism of the author has been largely absent from the press, and serious scholarship has been slow to catch up. …

Reason for Nationalist Hubris," *Slavic Review*, vol. 64, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 771–81. However, that study hardly begins to enumerate the many historical errors and misinterpretations that permeate his texts. Despite these glaring shortcomings, Friedrich has no problem in finding venues for his writings in leading academic publications and receives invitations to scholarly conferences on Polish-Jewish topics. At a recent conference Friedrich characterized the German assault on Poland not as a war of annihilation, but as being "in the tradition of the struggle of nationalities (*Volkstumkampf*) on the borderlands—albeit recklessly brutalized by Nazi ideology." But "Nazi ideology notwithstanding, the growing pressures of the war economy implied a tacit factual *upgrading* of the Poles' status." Having declared the Jews to be one of their three enemies, along with the Germans and Soviets, the Poles found "common ground" with the Germans in despoiling and persecuting the Jews. See Klaus-Peter Friedrich, "Relations between Jews and Poles under Nazi Rule: The Crucial Period, 1939–1941," Conference Paper, "Between Coexistence and Divorce: 25 Years of Research on the History and Culture of Polish Jewry and Polish-Jewish Relations," Hebrew University of Jerusalem, March 17–19, 2009. (Surprisingly, the "common ground" argument in not levelled at the French, Dutch, Belgians or Czechs, who also "profited" from the deportation of several hundred thousand affluent Jews, or at the Jews under Soviet rule who "profited" from the removal of Poles from their prewar positions.) Tellingly, it is in Germany—*of all countries*—where Jan Gross's *Neighbours* received unprecedented and more attention than any other book about Poland, and where alleged Polish "collaboration" with the Nazis has become the most discussed topic in Polish history, eclipsing knowledge of German wartime atrocities directed at Poles.

[768] István Deák, "Memories of Hell," *The New York Review of Books,* June 26, 1997.

[769] For the distinction between the two, see Norman G. Finkelstein and Ruth Bettina Birn, *A Nation on Trial: The Goldhagen Thesis and Historical Truth* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998), part one, section 3. See also generally Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry*, 41–78.

> In examining the recent cases and claims that have been raised of Poles attacking Jews during the war, some larger points of context need to be kept in mind. Almost all of the controversial and publicized cases known in the West come from areas of Poland that were occupied by the Soviet Union from the final months of 1939 to June 1941. This crucial constant, thus far overlooked in the West, suggests that either Poles in this region were somehow different from Poles elsewhere or that some events occurred in these areas to alter the situation dramatically. These lands had a particularly complex ethno-religious history, a fact unappreciated by most scholars narrowly focused on one set of events in a limited time period. This is not merely a matter of just Poles and Jews, but a multidimensional problem. …
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> The constant of Soviet occupation should spark greater interest than it has, and there are still those who seek to excuse or downplay what was done by the Soviets and their local collaborators, the scale of the Soviet crimes, and the effect they had on subsequent tragedies. Although cracks have begun to appear in the cherished mythology of Second World War Soviet exploits, on the crucial question of Soviet complicity in the mass murder of Jews (directly or indirectly), Poles, and others, and in sparking serious ethnic conflict, little has been said even by scholars who should know better. Of Eliach's account of the history of Ejszyszki little good can be said, and the damage she has done to Polish-Jewish relations will take a long time to heal, if it ever does. *There Once Was A World*, her film, and her journalistic accounts demonstrate the pitfalls of turning history to the service of politics.
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> Over-politicization of the profession has taken its toll. Historians like Eliach have fallen into the trap of believing history is merely a Darwinian struggle of the interests of one group against another so that evidence may be tailored to fit the interests of one's own group at that moment. All research is reduced to a crude residue of one group justifying its own actions and condemning the actions of the others.[770]

In recent years, the trickle has turned into a veritable flood with half-baked, highly speculative and even absurd theories being advanced by seemingly rational, well-versed historians.[771] Moreover, there is a

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[770] Radziłowski, "Ejszyszki Revisited, 1939–1945," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 15 (2002): 454–55, 467–77.

[771] A case in point is Jewish-American sociologist Jan T. Gross, whose role in legitimizing the dissemination in American historical discourse of the crudest prejudices about wartime Polish conduct cannot be overstated. Gross postulates a non-dynamic view of Polish-Jewish relations predetermined by various degrees of anti-Semitism. He advances, without any serious research or evidence, sweeping claims about Poles, while at the same time becoming an apologist for Jewish conduct under the Soviet occupation and in the postwar period. He maintains, for example, that "it is manifest that the local non-Jewish [i.e., Polish] population enthusiastically greeted entering Wehrmacht units in 1941 and *broadly engaged in collaboration* with the Germans, up to and including participation in the exterminatory war against the Jews"; and that "in the process of Communist takeover in Poland after the war, the natural allies of the Communist Party, on the local level were people who had been compromised during the German occupation." See Gross, *Neighbors*, 155, 164. A great defender of Jews who greeted the Soviets *en masse* in September 1939, Gross does allow the Poles, who were severely oppressed by the Soviet invaders, the luxury of choice he gave to the Jews to prefer the Germans, whose rule they had not yet experienced and who were advancing in an orderly fashion. Polish historians have taken Gross to task in the past for his unwarranted generalizations based on scant research. For example, Andrzej Friszke takes issue with Gross's baseless charge that the Polish underground press was, with few exceptions, opposed to the Jews. See Andrzej Friszke, "Publicystyka Polski Podziemnej wobec zagłady Żydów 1939–1944," in Grześkowiak-Łuczyk, *Polska, Polacy, mniejszości narodowe,* 212. For a devastating critique of Gross's recent scholarship by well-versed scholars see: Bogdan Musiał, "Tezy dotyczące pogromu w Jedwabnem: Uwagi krytyczne do książki 'Sąsiedzi' autorstwa Jana Tomasza Grossa" in *Dzieje Najnowsze*, no. 3 (2001): 253–80, an English version

growing tendency toward excessive "moralizing," where the conduct of the Poles is subjected to intense and one-sided scrutiny, often ahistorically, in order to advance a particular interpretation of events that is favourable to the author's select group (whose conduct is seemingly beyond reproach).[772] This study, as well as the forthcoming *Neighbours on the Eve of the Holocaust,* endeavours to show that a radical reappraisal of wartime Polish-Jewish relations is long overdue. It must of necessity include the Soviet Union as a factor on an equal footing with Nazi Germany, a *sine qua non* for a proper understanding of Poland's wartime fate. Furthermore, Jews cannot be viewed simply as passive players in the Polish-German-Soviet Russian paradigm. The existing treatment of Poles as observers (with a growing tendency to move them into the camp of Nazi perpetrators), Jews as victims, and Soviets as liberators must be discarded once and for all. Although no one can deny that perhaps as many as 2.8 million of Poland's 3.3 million Jewish population perished in the Holocaust, Jews were active participants in the events that overtook Eastern Poland in 1939–1941, and once again made their presence felt from 1944 on.

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of which, "The Pogrom in Jedwabne: Critical Remarks about Jan T. Gross's *Neighbors,*" is found in Antony Polonsky and Joanna B. Michlic, eds., *The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 304–343; Alexander B. Rossino, "Polish 'Neighbours' and German Invaders: Anti-Jewish Violence in the Białystok District during the Opening Weeks of Operation Barbarossa," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,* vol. 16 (Oxford and Portland, Oregon: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2003), 431–52; Wojciech Roszkowski, "After *Neighbors*: Seeking Universal Standards," *Slavic Review,* vol. 61, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 460–65; Anna M. Cienciala, "The Jedwabne Massacre: Update and Review," *The Polish Review,* vol. 48, no. 1 (2003): 49–72; Dariusz Sola, "Jedwabne: Revisiting the Evidence and Nature of the Crime," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies,* vol. 17, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 139–52; Marek J. Chodakiewicz, "Ordinary Terror: Communist and Nazi Occupation Policies. Jedwabne 1939–1945," *Glaukopis,* no. 1 (2003): 266–76; Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *The Massacre in Jedwabne, July 10, 1941: Before, During, and After* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 2005). Many publicists have been quick to espouse Jan T. Gross's efforts to substitute one myth, that of "Judeo-commune," for an equally perverse one: "endeko-fascist-commune." Writing in the September–October 2002 issue of *Foreign Affairs,* in an article entitled "Poles and Jews," Abraham Brumberg offered these rambling and internally contradictory views on the Nazi and Stalinist occupation: "The ruling Communist Party became, its formal ideology notwithstanding, the heir to the National Democrats in its vehement nationalism and obeisance to Moscow as the guarantor of Polish security (an article of faith in Dmowski's writings). … Still another writer, Jerzy Sławomir Mac, rebutted the smug assertions that Poland, unlike other occupied countries, produced no collaborationists, no traitors, and no quislings. On the contrary, said Mac, quite a few Poles actually served the Nazi cause, and others were ready to serve. It was only 'Hitler's decision that he could do without Polish allies' that put an end to their hopes."

[772] Another proponent of this approach is Brian Porter, who views the role of historians in the following terms: "it is our task to show how specific worldviews emerge in specific times and places, and how those worldviews, shape social reality and individual actions." See Brian Porter, "Explaining Jedwabne: The Perils of Understanding," *The Polish Review,* vol. 27, no. 1 (2002): 26. This approach goes hand in hand with the author's penchant for focusing almost exclusively on the conduct of the Poles when assessing Polish-Jewish relations, and by judging that conduct against present-day standards.

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