

HUNT FOR THE JEWS



*Betrayal and Murder in
German-Occupied Poland*

Jan Grabowski

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This book is dedicated to the memory of Władysław Fischbaum, Szymon Hajbergier, Lejb Millet, Apolonia Brand, Mr. Kampf, Blanka Goldfinger and her family, Mrs. Kupfelman, Mrs. Bloch, five members of the Fogel family from Kraków, Lejb Herszfeld, his wife and daughter, Estera Polonicer, Mendel Minc, Kałm Wilk, Baruch, Sara, Regina, Fela, Helena and Ryfka Szneps, Chwałka, Juma and her two children, Otek (age eleven), Estera and Dalka Metzger, Icek Mendel, Mendel Kogel, Sala Drelich, Maria and Rywka Einhorn, Józef Adler, Pejka Kapelner, Mendel Kapelner, Josek Leinmann, Jakub "Black" from Opatowiec, Mrs. Holender, Mrs. Langer and her family, Mrs. Grozman (baker's wife), Mr. Sztum, Mr. Frass, the Spatz family, the Fischer family, Lidia Sass, Giena Raber, Maria Wildfajer, Mrs. Schacher, Michał Pinkas and his family, David Wassersturm's father, sisters, uncle and aunt, the Ehrlich sisters, Lejba and Arona Ehrenberg, Chaim Knie, Sala and Hela Süß, Rozalia Polanecka, Mrs. Lipka and her three daughters, Moises Maltz, Jankiel Liebermann, Regina Goldberg's mother, Mojżesz Baldinger, Mr. Neumann, Łaja Jakubowicz and her son, Elida Weinberg, Rafael Friess, his wife and child, Rozalia Abram, Dawid, Hirsz and Estera Wajzer, Paweł Szacher, the Kornhauser family, Peretz Kupfer, Hana Kupfer, Karolina Grün, Dawid and Ruchla Lewkowicz and their children, Jankiel (who was killed in January 1945), and all the nameless Jews who kept fighting until the end.

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For my father, who survived the hunt

Non omnis moriar

Non omnis moriar—my proud estate,
of table linen fields and wardrobes staunch
like fortresses, with precious bedclothes, sheets,
bright dresses—all remain behind me now.
And as I did not leave here any heir
you, Chomin's wife, the snitch's daring wife,
Volksdeutcher's mother, swift informant, do
allow your hand to dig up Jewish things.
May they serve you and yours, and not some strangers.
“My dear ones”—it's no song, nor empty name.
I do remember you, and when the Schupo came,
you did remember me. Reminded them of me.
So let my friends all sit with goblets raised
to toast my memory and their own wealth,
their drapes and kilims, candlesticks and bowls.
And may they drink all night, till break of dawn,
and then begin to search for jewels and gold
in mattresses and sofas, quilts and under rugs.
Oh, and what quick work they'll make of it!
Thick clumps of horsehair, sea grass stuffing, clouds
of cushions torn and puffs of eiderdown
will coat their hands and turn their arms to wings.
My blood will bind these fibers with fresh down,
and thus transform these wingèd ones to angels

Zuzanna Ginczanka (1917–1944)

Translated by Irena Grudzińska-Gross, Aniela Pramik, and Geoffrey Cebula

Non omnis moriar

Non omnis moriar—moje dumne włosci,
Łąki moich obrusów, twierdze szaf niezłomnych,
Prześcieradła rozległe, drogocenna pościel
I suknie, jasne suknie pozostaną po mnie.
Nie zostawiłam tutaj żadnego dziedzica,
Niech więc rzeczy żydowskie twoja dłoń wyszpera,
Chominowo, lwowianko, dzielna żono szpicla,
Donosicielko chyża, matko folksdojczera.
Tobie, twoim niech służą, bo po cóż by obcym.
Bliscy moi—nie lutnia to, nie puste imię.
Pamiętam o was, wyście, kiedy szli szupowcy,
Też pamiętali o mnie. Przypomnieli i mnie.
Niech przyjaciele moi siądą przy pucharze
I zapiją mój pogrzeb i własne bogactwo:
Kilimy i makaty, półmiski, lichtarze—
Niechaj piją noc całą, a o świcie brzasku
Niech zaczną szukać cennych kamieni i złota
W kanapach, materacach, kołdrach i dywanach.
O, jak będzie się palić w ręku im robota,
Kłęby włosia końskiego i morskiego siana,
Chmury prutych poduszek i obłoki pierzyn
Do rąk im przylgną, w skrzydła zmieniają ręce obie;
To krew moja pakuły z puchem zlepi świeżym
I uskrzydłone nagle w aniołów przerobi.

Zuzanna Ginczanka, *Udźwignąć własne szczęście*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------|--|
| AAN | [Archive of Contemporary Records, Warsaw] Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie |
| AIPN | [Archive of the IPN, Warsaw] Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Warszawie |
| APKr | [State Archive in Kraków] Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie |
| APW | [Warsaw City Archive, Milanówek section] Archiwum Państwowe m.st. Warszawy w Milanówku |
| AYV | Yad Vashem Archive, Jerusalem |
| AŻIH | [Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw] Archiwum ŻIH. |
| BAL | Bundesarchiv, Aussenstelle Ludwigsburg |
| BN | [National Library, Warsaw], Biblioteka Narodowa |
| CKŻP | Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce [Central Committee of Jews in Poland] |
| Gestapo | Geheime Staatspolizei [Secret State Police] |
| GG | [General Government] General Gouvernement |
| GKBZpNP | [Main Commission to Investigate Crimes Against the Polish Nation] Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu. |
| Greko | Grenzkommissariat [Border Police Station] |
| HSSPF | Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer [Higher Commander of Police and SS] |
| IPN | Institute of National Remembrance [Instytut Pamięci Narodowej] |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| KdS | Commander of the Security Police and the Security Service [Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und der Sicherheitsdienstes] |
| Kripo | Kriminalpolizei [Criminal Police] |
| MW | Młodzież Wszechpolska [All-Polish Youth] |
| NSKK | Nationalsozialistisches Kraftfahrkorps [National-Socialist Motor Corps] |
| NSZ | Narodowe Siły Zbrojne [National Armed Forces] |
| OD | Ordnungsdienst [Order Service—official name of the Jewish police]. |
| ORPO | Ordnungspolizei [Order Police] |
| OSP | Ochotnicza Straż Pożarna [Voluntary Firefighters] |
| OWP | Obóz Wielkiej Polski- [Camp of Great Poland] |
| PP | Policja Polska Generalnego Gubernatorstwa- [Polish Police of the GovernmentGeneral] |
| PPR | Polska Partia Robotnicza [Polish Workers' Party] |
| PZPR | Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza [Polish United Workers' Party] |
| RAD | Reichsarbeitsdienst [Reich's Work Service] |
| SAK _r | [Kraków Appellate Court] Sąd Apelacyjny w Krakowie |
| Schupo | Schutzpolizei [Protective Police] |
| SD | Sicherheitsdienst [Security Service] |
| Sipo | Sicherheitspolizei [Security Police] |
| SN | Stronnictwo Narodowe [National Party] |
| SOK _r | [District Court in Kraków] Sąd Okręgowy w Krakowie |
| SS | Schutzstaffeln |
| SWWW | [Warsaw Voivodship Court] Sąd Wojewódzki dla Województwa Warszawskiego |
| USHMM | United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C. |
| WP | [Polish Army] Wojsko Polskie |
| ZBoWiD | [Polish Veteran's Association] Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację |
| ŻIH | [Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw] Żydowski Instytut Historyczny |
| ŻOB | [Jewish Fighting Organization] Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa |
| ŻSS | [Jewish Social Self-Help] Żydowska Samopomoc Społeczna |

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INTRODUCTION

This book is an account of events that happened at the margins of the Holocaust, far from the factories of death, far from the well-oiled machine of destruction, and far away from historical scrutiny.¹ Here, death came sometimes in the form of a German gendarme, or a Polish “blue” policeman, but often it came in the familiar form of a neighbor, and although the tools of the executioners often lacked sophistication, they were equally deadly.² This is a story of the *Judenjagd* in Dąbrowa Tarnowska, a rural county in southeastern Poland. The expression *Judenjagd* (“hunt for the Jews”) was used by German policemen and gendarmes to describe the search for Jewish refugees who ran away from the liquidated ghettos and sought shelter among non-Jews in occupied Poland.³ There is no question that this kind of hunt became one of the most important tasks of the German police forces in occupied Poland (known then as the *Generalgouvernement*), and during the fall and winter of 1942/43 it was, no doubt, their most important task. The reports filed by the gendarmerie from the various districts of the *Generalgouvernement* give us a good idea about the scale of this phenomenon. One of the most complete sets of these records covers *Warschau-Land*, or villages and smaller towns in the vicinity of Warsaw, but similar reports have been preserved for the Lublin and Radom areas, located, respectively, east and south of the former capital of Poland. Jews were being hunted down quite literally until the final days of German rule. In the files of the German Special Court in Lwów (*Sondergericht Lemberg*), one can find numerous investigations against Poles and Ukrainians accused of harboring Jews. Some of the accused were found guilty and sentenced to death in the sum-

mer of 1944, just weeks before the city fell into Soviet hands.⁴ In several cases, German judges rejected pleas for clemency, routinely submitted by the people on death row, and asked the prison officials to speed up the execution of the convicts. All of this was still happening as late as early July, barely days before the Russians stormed the city.⁵ The officials paid less attention to the killings of Jews, which were done in a routine and businesslike manner. One way or another, the Jews, from the fall of 1942, were removed beyond the reach of the law. Emmanuel Ringelblum, the historian of the Warsaw ghetto, aptly referred to Jews who still struggled to survive as “the dead on furlough.” Nevertheless, the hunt for Jews and the punishment of those who dared to help them were still a priority for the Germans, even when the Third Reich started to crumble around them.

We know little about Jewish–Polish relations in the rural areas of the *Generalgouvernement*. Much more has been written about the urban setting, especially in cases involving large ghettos. Nevertheless, to fully understand the logic of the wartime fate of Polish Jews, one has to inquire into the relationships between the “Aryan” population and the Jewish victims in rural areas. We know even less about the fate of Jews who went “underground” following mass deportations to extermination camps during the fall and winter of 1942. More than forty years ago, the Polish–Jewish historian Szymon Datner observed that “practically every hamlet, village, town, and city in the *Generalgouvernement* was witness to the murders of Jews who fled the ghettos, or escaped death trains. These victims, who—unlike the hundreds of thousands and millions of those who perished in gas chambers and were killed in mass executions—quite often can be individually identified, deserve our special attention. They were people who tried, in their own way, to fight for their survival.” Here, Datner was making reference to the Jews who remained from the very beginning outside the ghettos, or those who fled the ghettos during their final liquidation. In the end, Datner estimated the number of Jews who survived the war on the territory of occupied Poland at close to 100,000. According to him, another 100,000 Jews fell prey to the Germans or their local helpers, or were murdered in various unexplained circumstances.⁶ According to more recent estimates, however, the number of survivors has been reduced to no more than 50,000 people, while the number of Jewish victims who perished on the “Aryan” side has been revised significantly upward.⁷ Historians agree today that close to 10 percent of the 2.5 million Polish Jews who survived until the summer of 1942 tried to escape extermination. Given the numbers above, one can assume that the num-

Bełżec, Sobibór, Chełmno, and Auschwitz. But it is also true that these deaths, which occurred away from witnesses' eyes, were far removed from survivors' own experience. They had heard about the German machine of murder, but they lacked firsthand knowledge of the factories of death. They were painfully aware, however, of the brutality and horror of the everyday struggle to survive on the "Aryan" side, among the gentiles. One of the survivors summarized these thoughts in a very succinct and poignant way:

My survival was dependent upon the absence of hostile behavior of Poles who hated Jews. Poland is my motherland; Polish is my native language. Poles helped me to survive the Holocaust. I remember gratefully the few who were my protectors. I resent the many that harmed countless Jews, and the millions who were eager to do so. The trouble was not lack of friends, but the multitude of enemies. The denunciations of the Jews who were hiding or were on false papers were not a sporadic activity, but an endemic problem. Virtually all Poles resisted, passively or actively, the German occupation. However, the majority of the Polish population assisted the Germans in their efforts to annihilate the Jews. We should not expect ordinary, decent people to take heroic action. There is no moral obligation to be a hero, but it is a criminal offense to be an accessory to murder. Whoever denounced a Jew on false papers was a cowardly killer. The death of my cousin Miriam was a joint project of Poles and Germans.⁸

This, of course, is not a "scientific" analysis, but a *cri de coeur*, the cry of an anguished heart, and a plea for overdue justice. Leo Drellich from Dąbrowa Tarnowska spoke in similar terms: "The Germans, they shot you, that's all. The Poles murdered you with axes, they helped the Germans. If it were not for them, 50 percent of Jews would have survived."⁹ Once again, Drellich was certainly not referring to the overall Jewish tragedy during the Shoah, but to his own experiences in hiding—especially to that moment when local peasants armed with clubs and axes tried to kill him and his brother. Symcha Hampel, who went into hiding in a village close to Radomsko, noted in his wartime diary:

Poland is probably the only country in the world where practically the whole society betrayed and handed over to the Germans each hidden Jew, their fellow citizen. I want to stress that thousands of Jewish children have been caught this way, handed over to the German murderers and sent on to the gas chambers. The Poles worked hard and well [to make it possible]. . . . The entire Polish society is to be blamed, and the Polish clergy most of all. Only now, living among the Poles, can I see how deeply entrenched is antisemitism in Polish society . . . the priests often discussed the Jews in church and thanked God that these parasites

were gone once and for all. They were grateful to Hitler for having done the dirty work [for them].¹⁰

These sweeping, often unjust, comments made by desperate Jews did not reflect the entire and very complex reality of everyday life and death under occupation. But they certainly conveyed well the state of mind, feelings, and attitudes of the Jews who struggled to survive from day to day in hiding.

During the war, the Poles (and other bystanders, to use a term that is slowly becoming obsolete) had little to say in matters of life and death of the Jews. The only exception was the period of the *Judenjagd*, when the only way to salvation led through the hearts of Poles. This was the only time, and the only situation, when Poles (or, for that matter, Ukrainians, Belorussians, or Balts) decided which Jews would live or die. And, as we know today, many failed this test of humanity. More importantly, the Jews who went into hiding had very different expectations as far as Germans and their Polish co-citizens were concerned. While the Germans were seen as the embodiment of evil and harbingers of death, the Poles were perceived as potential allies in the desperate struggle for survival. Betrayal, denunciation, or outright murder of close ones at the hands of former neighbors, compatriots, or friends left deep scars and a sense of bitter and profound disappointment. "Death administered by people well known to the victims evoked special suffering, as they must have also felt betrayed," wrote Jan Gross, "but we now realize that death at the hands of neighbors must have been also, literally, very painful."¹¹

In Polish wartime accounts one frequently encounters the statement "the Germans arrived and took the Jews away." One of the goals of this book is to answer the question about how exactly the Germans knew where to look for the Jews, and to uncover the circumstances surrounding the detection and death of unfortunate refugees hidden in the villages and forests of the Polish countryside. Holocaust and mass murder that were perpetrated within urban and rural contexts differed greatly. Speaking about Rwanda, journalist Jean Hatzfeld once observed that urban societies have an urban genocide, while rural societies have a rural genocide.¹² Hatzfeld's assertion holds equally true for the extermination of the Polish Jews. Jews living in the cities early on were isolated in ghettos and brutally, suddenly, and permanently removed to the margin of mainstream society. Numerous commercial, social, financial, and, not infrequently, family ties that for generations had linked the Jewish and Polish communities became first strained and later severed for good. With the

erection of ghetto walls and barbed-wire fences separating the “Jewish quarter” and the “Aryan side,” the fate of these two communities started to evolve along very different trajectories. With the flow of weeks, months, and years, those Jews who were hidden behind ghetto walls became quite simply invisible in the eyes of the average Polish burgher. Adam Chętnik, a distinguished Polish ethnographer, noted in his diary in 1941: “In Warsaw one does not see Jews anymore, and some say that it would be hard to get used to them once again. In any case, we do not feel their absence.”¹³ In 1942, when the liquidation of the ghettos began, for many “Aryans” the Jews existed largely beyond the “horizon of perception.” From time to time disturbing news arrived from behind the walls of the “Jewish quarter,” but such information was definitely not a major preoccupation for the gentile population living in the “Aryan” section of the city.

The situation in the rural areas of the Generalgouvernement was very different. Jews who were able to remain in their homes, as well as those who were forced to relocate to nearby towns, maintained strong ties with the Polish population. In spite of various restrictions placed by the Germans (but seldom enforced in the countryside), Jews continued to exercise their prewar professions, working as small-time merchants, artisans, or, in the spirit of the new times, as laborers on Polish farms. One would, however, be ill-advised to think that these everyday bonds translated into a better understanding between Jews and Poles during the later period. In 1934, Thomas Savery, British consul in Warsaw, informed a visiting representative of British Jews that “the peasants and the Jews get along pretty well because they feel a mutual, good-natured contempt for each other. The Jews despise the peasants for their hard and dirty work on the land, and the peasants despise the Jews for confining themselves to trade and money making.”¹⁴ Even if the British diplomat was right, the situation during the war evolved dramatically, and little was left of “good-natured contempt.” Zofia Kossak-Szczucka, Polish writer, Catholic activist, and co-founder of Żegota (the secret Polish Council to Aid Jews), caught the essence of this tragic shift. In 1942 she wrote: “Today, German barbarity has blunted peasants’ compassion, taken away their moral judgment. Lightning from heavens does not strike the murderers of children, blood which was spilled is not avenged. Perhaps it is true that the Jew is a cursed creature, and can be killed with impunity. This explains why more and more peasants are taking an active part in the German action of extermination [of the Jews].”¹⁵

The alleged closeness between Jews and gentiles living in the rural areas did not translate, according to contemporary witnesses, into stronger empathy, better treatment, or more energetic attempts at rescue. On the contrary, many peasants, seduced by modest prizes and inducements offered by the Germans, became actively involved in hunting down the Jews. Others joined the search out of fear. In many cases, the fleeing Jews had left their belongings with trusted peasants for safekeeping. For some farmers, this was too much of a temptation, and Jewish merchandise, money, or livestock became a reason for betrayal or even murder. Not that the peasants were the only ones tempted by the lure of “Jewish things.” One Jewish survivor later recalled:

We left some of our things (bales of cloth) with the local priest, in Radomyśl. One evening I decided to go back to our kind priest in order to recover some of our possessions because we were left without resources and we were starving. The priest greeted me with following words: “You know, I am unable to guarantee your safety here. As far as your stuff is concerned: Pielach (the local Polish policeman) took all of it.” I said to him that it was of little consequence to me whether I starved to death or was shot by Pielach. I only asked him to give me some bread. He promised to send me some bread to a place in the fields, which we had agreed upon. I never saw the bread and I never saw the priest again.¹⁶

The chances of survival on the “Aryan side” in the rural areas were therefore not good. Christopher R. Browning, writing about Jewish inmates in German work camps, stated that “fear of denunciation by hostile Poles was one of the great deterrents to escape. Indeed, among those who escaped, many experienced not only denunciation but robbery and even murder.”¹⁷ Emmanuel Ringelblum, the founder of the Oneg Shabbat ghetto archive, reflected on the nature of Jewish–Polish relations under occupation. He wrote his last study in Warsaw, in the winter of 1944, hidden in an underground bunker with a score of other Jewish refugees. Although cut off from the outside world, the Jewish historian possessed an impressive knowledge of the issue—of the brighter and less rosy aspects of Polish–Jewish co-existence during the war. His understanding was based on years of work with his colleagues from Oneg Shabbat, his own experiences from the 1939–1943 period, and from the reading of thousands of testimonies, memoirs, and letters that arrived at Oneg Shabbat and passed through his hands. Ringelblum, like few others, was able to fully understand the magnitude of the tragedy of the Jewish people, and to see the threats await-

ing those who tried to survive among the “Aryans.” According to him, hiding in rural areas was fraught with danger. The challenges were deadly, because the majority of urban Jews had little knowledge of the types of risks associated with surviving in a village milieu. Ringelblum wrote:

As regards Jews’ hiding in the countryside, this proves to be a difficult matter, as in small towns and particularly in villages everybody knows everybody else and a stranger arouses general curiosity. The Germans knew very well that after every “resettlement action,” some Jews would be hiding at their Christian neighbors’ houses or in the vicinity, in the countryside. To clear the surrounding area of Jews, the Germans would employ two tactics: the method of rewards and the method of threats. Financial rewards and rewards in kind were put on the head of every Jew, in addition to which the clothes and belongings of those captured were also assigned to the captors. In western “Little Poland,”¹⁸ in Borek Fałęcki, Wieliczka, Bochnia, and Swoszowice, for instance, 500 złoty and a kilogram of sugar were being offered for every captured Jew. These tactics resulted in success for the Germans. The local population in great numbers turned Jews over to the Germans, who shot these “criminals.” . . . Besides rewards, the Germans also utilized a system of punishments for hiding the Jews. Posters threatening capital punishment for this “crime” appeared before every “liquidation action” against the Jews in any given locality.¹⁹

This passage is particularly apt, since it describes the situation in the area of our immediate interest.

1

DĄBROWA TARNOWSKA

Writing about the extermination of Jews in the small Galician town of Buczacz, Omer Bartov raised an important question: “Genocide would have been much harder to accomplish, and its success much less complete, had the Germans not found so many collaborators willing, even eager, to do the killing, the hunting down, the brutalizing, and the plundering. Conversely, hardly any of the handful of Jews who lived to tell the tale would have survived had it not been for those Ukrainians and Poles who gave them food or shelter, even if at times they charged them for the service and not infrequently drove them out or denounced them once the Jews’ resources ran out.”¹ In order to understand the genocide, Bartov argued, we need to reconstruct the events from bottom up, from the local level, from the level of single murders, all the way to the planners of the *Endlösung*. An analysis of the situation in one chosen area, such as a single county in occupied Poland can, it is hoped, bring us closer to this goal.²

This book looks at the fate of those Jews who, following the liquidation of local ghettos in 1942, went into hiding on the territory of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County. The choice of the area is dictated, on the one hand, by a substantial volume of preserved and available archival evidence and, on the other hand, by its overwhelmingly rural and farming character. Some scholars have suggested that the widespread outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence and pogroms that occurred behind the advancing German lines in the summer and fall of 1941 were somehow related to the previous political sympathies of the Jews. According to these scholars, the arrival of the Germans unleashed a fury of

retribution against the Jews, who were perceived as active collaborators with the Bolsheviks who had occupied much of eastern Poland during the period of 1939–1941. Although much of this argument was later debunked by historians, the notion of “Jew-communist” still persists in the literature, not only in popular accounts, or in the media, but in academic circles as well. Writing about Poles who saved Jews on the eastern borderlands (*Kresy*), one award-winning historian wrote of “us” (Poles) pitted against “the enemy” (Jews):

We see the Polish suffering under the Soviet occupation, suffering caused by the Jews. Therefore, the Righteous, if they were Catholics (Christians), they came close to holiness, and [today] should be considered candidates for beatification. Saving the life of an enemy, an enemy who betrayed us [*sic*], denounced us [*sic*], who made mockery of our suffering and who caused this suffering [in the first place], and who could still revert to the same practice in the future, was an act of boundless compassion.³

In the face of arguments such as these, it needs to be stressed that Dąbrowa Tarnowska County—situated well to the west of the Soviet–German demarcation line—never found itself under Soviet occupation. From the very beginning of war, the area was occupied by the Germans, who remained firmly in control of it until January 1945. To explain the murders and betrayals of Dąbrowa Jews at the hands of their neighbors, we need, quite obviously, to look for other explanations than the convenient excuse of an earlier “Jewish collaboration with the Soviets.”

One has to begin with the physical and human geography of the region. The county, situated some fifty miles east of Kraków and ten miles north of Tarnów, before the war was a typical farming area. In the north, its border runs along the Vistula River, while the Dunajec River marks its western frontier. In 1939, arable land made up 74 percent of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County; the rest was made up of forests and meadows. The county was divided into two administrative areas (Żabno and Dąbrowa), which covered 101 villages. According to the detailed index of 1925,⁴ the population numbered 63,717 people, including 4,815 Jews. The “urban” population (two small towns) numbered 3,888 inhabitants (including 2,460 Jews), and the villages had a population of, respectively, 59,829 and 2,355 people. According to the last prewar census, taken in 1931, the county was home to 66,678 people, including 4,807 Jews. The next decade witnessed a steady transfer of people from the villages to Dąbrowa Tarnowska, the only sizeable town in the county.⁵ The local “urban” population thus grew to 8,484

inhabitants, including 3,012 Jews, while the rural population declined slightly, to 58,194 (including 1,795 Jews). Dąbrowa and Żabno both enjoyed municipal rights, although the latter was, for all practical purposes, a large village rather than a city. Szczucin, a sizeable community located close to the Vistula River, north of Dąbrowa, in 1934 lost its municipal status due to its declining population. Dąbrowa Tarnowska County embraced seven large villages (*large* meaning more than 1,000 inhabitants), including the most populous one, Radgoszcz, which had a population of 3,400. More numerous and more typical for the area, however, were small villages and hamlets with fewer than 500 inhabitants. The county was subdivided into eight communes (*gmina*): Dąbrowa Tarnowska, Bolesław, Gręboszów, Mędrzechów, Olesno, Radgoszcz, Wietrzychowice, and Szczucin. The list is important, since the county as such had been dissolved by the Germans in 1939, but the structure and borders of the communes of which it was previously composed remained unchanged. Finally, it should be mentioned that until 1918, before the rebirth of the Polish state, Dąbrowa County was a “frontier” area. While Dąbrowa was still within Austria-Hungary, the lands north of the Vistula River already belonged to the Russian Empire.⁶ This, in turn, was to have a significant impact on the development of Jewish–Polish relations in the area.

A historian wishing to learn more about the wartime fate of the Jews of Dąbrowa can take advantage of fairly well-preserved archival documentation. This allows us to study not only the early years of occupation, but also the post-1942 period, which in this case will be of particular interest to us. In order to shed as much light as possible on the Jewish tragedy, we shall have recourse to a method that can be called *triangulation of memory*. Three types of sources allow us to see this wartime reality from three very different points of view. First are the testimonies of Jews who survived the war in hiding. These accounts, filed shortly after the war with the local offices of the Central Committee of Polish Jews (Centralny Komitet Żydów Polskich; CKŻP), were later transferred under the custody of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw (ŻIH) and are today known as collections 301 and 302. Altogether, more than seven thousand of these testimonies are preserved in ŻIH holdings. Their historical value is linked, in part, to the early date of their creation (the ŻIH testimonies were collected, for the most part, between 1945 and 1948 period). More importantly, these testimonies were created without ulterior motives, and their only goal was to preserve the historical evidence and to bear witness to the tragedy of the Shoah. People emerging from the Holocaust, painfully aware that they were

the only survivors of the murdered nation of Polish Jews, knew that their duty was to leave an exact, credible, and accurate historical record. Another group of survivors' testimonies was collected, twenty years later, in Israel. They can be found today at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, in archival series 0.33, M.1.1.E and 0.3. Finally, since 1995, the Visual History Foundation (VHF) has registered more than fifty thousand filmed interviews with survivors. Taken together, the ŻIH, Yad Vashem, and VHF collections provide us with twenty-four accounts of Jews who survived the war hidden in Dąbrowa Tarnowska and in nearby villages.⁷

Jewish testimonies need to be set against and compared with the records of Polish courts created shortly after the war, mostly during the late 1940s. The trials (known as the "August Trials") were conducted on the basis of the August 31, 1944 decree "concerning the punishment of Fascist-Nazi criminals, guilty of murders and mistreatment of civilians and prisoners of war and traitors of the Polish Nation." We shall pay particular attention to these "traitors of the Polish Nation" because it is among them that we find individuals who denounced, mistreated, or simply murdered their Jewish fellow citizens. According to the contemporary interpretation of the law, all actions undertaken by Poles that helped the Germans to exterminate Jews constituted a form of collaboration with the enemy. Between 1945 and 1946, the "August Trials" were heard by Special Criminal Courts (*Specjalny Sąd Karny*), but by the end of 1946 regular courts had taken over. The cases followed a normal judicial process, starting with the local district courts, through the courts of appeal, and sometimes were appealed all the way to the Supreme Court. More importantly, there is no evidence that the "Jewish" trials were tampered with by the ruling communists. Quite the contrary, in the aftermath of the Kielce pogrom,⁸ the authorities seem to have been reluctant to pursue these cases (possibly for fear of international backlash), resulting in short sentences and quick release of suspects from prisons. The reluctance of communist authorities to prosecute these cases extended even to "ideologically tempting" targets, such as local commanders of the staunchly anticommunist Home Army (AK) who were implicated in murders and denunciations of Jews.⁹

The court evidence presented in this book has been taken, in the majority of cases, from the files of the Kraków Appellate Court (Krakowski Sąd Apelacyjny; SAKr) and, to a lesser extent, from the records of the Kraków District Court (Krakowski Sąd Okręgowy; SOKr).¹⁰ The records of the Kraków courts contain forty-five trials of people prosecuted for denunciation and murder of

Jews who went into hiding in the area of Dąbrowa Tarnowska. Fifty-six other investigations concern similar cases from neighboring counties. Altogether, the pertinent court files deal with two hundred accused and more than one thousand witnesses. A typical file of the Kraków Appellate Court numbers two hundred–five hundred pages and includes the records of investigation (depositions of witnesses, interrogations of suspects, denunciations, etc.), transcripts of court hearings, sentences, appeals to the Supreme Court, requests for pardon, and collectively signed petitions in favor of the accused or convicts.

In practically all cases, the investigations were triggered by “confidential information,” or another form of denunciation, that arrived at the local offices of the People’s Militia, or were delivered directly to the organs of the State Security (UBP). There were only four cases in which investigations were initiated by Jewish survivors who decided to denounce people responsible for the deaths of their close ones. Most of these trials were held during the 1947–1950 period, after the Kielce pogrom, when the vast majority of survivors from the Holocaust had already fled Poland. Those who stayed behind made a conscious decision to adapt to the new reality and, quite naturally, were highly unlikely to accuse their non-Jewish neighbors of wartime crimes against the Jews. Under these circumstances, the extenuating accounts of rare Jewish survivors still able and willing to testify in Polish courts became appreciated and highly valued by the magistrates and—above all—by the accused. This mechanism was first described in the case of early investigations into the 1941 Jedwabne massacre. The few Jewish survivors still present in the area, paralyzed with fear, hastened to provide their Polish neighbors, murderers of the Jews, with an alibi. This was the case of Marianna Ramotowska (originally Rachela Finkelsztejn) from Radziłów, who not only kept quiet about the Jedwabne massacre, to which she was a witness, but who also spoke out in favor of her “Aryan” neighbors, the killers. The situation in the Dąbrowa area was no different—there were at least two Jews who survived the war in the area and were willing, on several occasions, to provide alibis to the Poles who faced the court.

The third group of sources was created by the German authorities or, more precisely, by the West German system of justice. In the 1960s, German authorities initiated a series of investigations into the crimes committed during the war by gendarmes and other policemen stationed in Dąbrowa Tarnowska. These valuable records shed more light on the fate of Dąbrowa Jews, and are today kept at the central archive in Ludwigsburg. The remaining German records used in this book came from the files of the Polish Main Commission to

Investigate Crimes Against the Polish Nation (GKBZpNP), which can today be found in the Warsaw archive of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN). In the case of the German records, we are dealing mainly with investigations conducted during the 1960s and 1970s by the Public Prosecutors' Offices in Bochum, Cologne, and Dortmund, and concerning the extermination of the Jewish population of Tarnów and Dąbrowa. Unlike Jewish testimonies, the German court records pose several methodological problems, related to the way in which they were created. The investigations were initiated a quarter century after the events, and the suspects (quite often high-ranking West German officials, judges, or policemen) knew the law well and knew even better how to minimize their own responsibility. The proceedings were conducted with little enthusiasm by the prosecutors, who were visibly confused by the strange-sounding names and terms from the distant *Kreishauptmannschaft* Tarnów.¹¹ The German materials are not without value, but one needs to sift through a large volume of such evidence before reaching any conclusions.¹² On the other hand, these "Ludwigsburg" investigations featured a large number of Jewish and Polish witnesses who testified in Israel, Poland, and, occasionally, Germany. The Jews (most of whom had left Poland in 1946–1948) retold the accounts given just after the war in front of the Jewish Historical Commissions, in Poland. Despite the passage of time, their testimonies from the 1940s and the depositions given in Germany twenty years later bear a striking resemblance to each other. Meanwhile, the accounts and depositions of Polish witnesses from the 1960s are altogether a different matter. A comparison of accounts made during the 1945–1950 period with the 1960–1975 testimonies reveals a significant change of tone and an important "correction of narrative." The testimonies were gathered (on behalf of the German Prosecutor's office) by local authorities, in the presence of Polish prosecutors. We can take for granted that any information potentially implicating Polish citizens, or hinting at Polish complicity, in wartime murders of Jews would be the last thing to be shared by Polish officials with their German counterparts. After all, the Germans were investigating other Germans—in this case German gendarmes and Gestapo officers—and the possible involvement of the local "Aryan" population was deemed of no consequence. In order to seize the logic of this "correction of narrative," we can look at the murder of Mendel Kogel, a wealthy miller from Bolesław, a large village located north of Dąbrowa, close to the Vistula River. There is no doubt that Kogel had been murdered by a German gendarme in the spring of 1943. In 1945, shortly after the war, Kogel's two

sons (who survived the concentration camps) returned to Bolesław, where they started digging and asking questions about the circumstances surrounding the death of their father. Soon, they alerted the authorities in Dąbrowa and in Tarnów to the results of their private investigation.¹³ In the course of the next few months, the prosecutors learned that Mendel Kogel had been caught by the local peasants and later delivered (or, to use the local euphemism, “rendered”) to the Germans, for execution.¹⁴ The head of the local administration told the authorities that “Dudek could not find this Jew, so he started looking for him. During the search, he located the Jew in a barn and brought him to the police station in Bolesław . . . the same day this Jew was shot by the gendarmes.”¹⁵ The peasants selected by the Germans to the burial detail first knocked out Kogel’s gold teeth with a shovel, and later buried his body in nearby woods.¹⁶ So much for the testimonies from 1949. Twenty years later, the Main Commission heard from a farmer from Bolesław. The witness testified that one day an exhausted Mendel Kogel showed up in the village and told the peasants that he was no longer willing to continue hiding and that he had lost his will to live. The Poles kept telling him—insisted the witness—to seek shelter, but Kogel refused, and was soon shot by one Neureiter, a German gendarme. This was the version that was eventually communicated to the German prosecutors in Bochum. Indeed, as far as the final moments of miller Mendel Kogel are concerned, the discrepancies between two versions are minor—in both cases the victim was shot by a German policeman. But here the similarities end, raising difficult questions about the extent of complicity, motivation, and the degree of personal initiative exercised by the local “Aryan” population in tracking down and “rendering” the Jews to the Germans. These are some of the questions with which we shall struggle throughout this book.

In addition to the three types of historical sources described above, the historical evidence gathered for this book includes local press and selected archival documentation dealing with the prewar period. All in all, the Jewish, Polish, and German documents allow us to follow the destinies of 337 Jews who, after the liquidation of the ghettos, tried to survive in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County. Of this number, 51 succeeded, and survived in hiding until the liberation, while 286 others perished during the years 1942–1945. A detailed study of the circumstances surrounding their lives and deaths will allow us to grasp the techniques of *Judenjagd* developed by the Germans, the strategies of survival used by the refugees, and the attitudes of the local populace facing the realities of the implementation of the “Final Solution.”

2

JEWS AND POLES IN DĄBROWA TARNOWSKA BEFORE 1939

Seen through the lens of its ethnic composition, there was little to distinguish Dąbrowa Tarnowska County from other rural areas of Poland. Shortly before the war, local Jews made up 8 percent of the total population, or slightly less than the national average of 10 percent. The majority of Jews in the county lived in Dąbrowa, but nearly two thousand others dwelled in nearby villages, and their lifestyle differed little from that of the Polish peasants. In Galicia—the southern part of Poland that for more than a century found itself under Austrian rule—Jews could buy land and farm. This, in turn, resulted in the existence of a large group of Jewish farmers, a phenomenon unknown in other areas of Poland, which until 1918 were part of the Russian Empire.¹ In the rest of Poland, even though the percentage of the Jewish population was significantly higher, Jews were concentrated heavily in cities, towns, and shtetls. Consequently, their contacts with non-Jews were limited to commercial dealings and to the exchange of services.

It has often been said that the alienation of Jews from Polish society (or other societies of East-Central Europe, for that matter) was not only linked to religious and cultural differences, but was also directly related to professional and spatial separations. Jews, for the most part, engaged in small-time trade and craftsmanship, only rarely entering into direct, neighborly relations with local peasants. In “Little Poland,” the vast region of extending from Kraków to Lwów and beyond, the situation was different. Next to Jews living in the towns

(e.g., Dąbrowa Tarnowska and in the much smaller Żabno), Jewish farmers could be found in small villages, where their way of life differed little from that of their Christian neighbors. This peculiar aspect of Jewish lifestyle and Jewish presence will allow us to look at the influence of geographical and professional proximity on attitudes toward the Jews at the time of the Final Solution.

In order to find out more about the Jewish presence in the Dąbrowa area, one needs to look at hard statistical data. The Index of Cities of the Polish Republic (*Skorowidz Miast Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*) is probably the only publication that goes beyond the summary statistics related to population counts for various cities and counties, and provides information about individual villages as well.² Although between 1921 and 1939 the number of Jews living in the area of our interest grew, the earlier data are of great value, as they indicate which areas had higher concentrations of the Jewish population. Following the prewar Polish administrative divisions, the table annexed at the end of this book (table 6) first lists the villages that belonged to the Dąbrowa Court District, and later those which fell under the Żabno jurisdiction. The table includes only these settlements counting ten or more inhabitants “of Mosaic faith”—to use the census expression. The table cites forty-five villages and towns—half of the county’s settlements.³ Many other villages were home to fewer than ten Jews (usually one or two families per village), but, more significantly, only twenty-one villages in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County had no Jews at all.

During the war, Emmanuel Ringelblum wrote about Jews who went into hiding in the rural areas:

The threats and rewards [offered by the Germans], however, did not always achieve the desired effect. In small towns where Jews had lived with the Christian population in harmony for centuries, Jews found refuge with Polish neighbors, friends and acquaintances whom they had known and been friendly with for long years and even for generations. A peasant or burgher would give a Jewish fugitive shelter. However, the length of time that it was possible to go on hiding a Jew depended on two things—the German terror and the surrounding atmosphere. Where the environment had been infected with anti-Semitism before the war, hiding Jews presented great difficulties, and denunciations by anti-Semitic neighbors were more to be feared there than the German terror.⁴

We should, therefore, attempt to answer the question raised by the Jewish historian: was the Christian population of the Tarnów area infected with antisemitism even before the war?

Overall, during the late 1930s, relations between Jews and Poles underwent a process of steady erosion. Anti-Jewish sentiments, fostered not only by the radical fringe but also by mainstream political parties, and by the Catholic Church, gained ground throughout the Polish Republic. Even Prime Minister Felicjan Sławoj-Skłodkowski, seen by many as sympathetic to the plight of minorities, declared himself in favor of an economic boycott of Jewish commerce. In his speech delivered in the Polish parliament (Sejm) on June 4, 1936, the prime minister said “yes, to economic struggle, but no to physical violence.” To many Jews (and non-Jews, for that matter), this declaration of the prime minister was a direct and formal admission that discrimination based on race was now not only condoned, but sanctioned by the state.⁵ In order to seize the dynamics of the process of marginalization of Jews in the Tarnów area, we will rely on two sources: detailed reports filed by the Department of Public Security of the Kraków State Office⁶ and court files from Tarnów-area tribunals.⁷ While the authorities were most preoccupied with the danger of communist sedition, they also regarded nationalists, and their anti-Jewish campaigns in particular, as a potential threat to public security. The preserved documentation indicates clearly that, in the 1930s, in the Tarnów area (not unlike in other areas of “Little Poland”), anti-Jewish violence had become a growing concern to the authorities. Economic boycotts, encouraged from the beginning of the decade by the nationalistic National Democratic Party (Endecja) and with the visible support of the Catholic Church, became everyday occurrences in the cities and towns of the Tarnów area. With the flow of time, anti-Jewish violence breached party lines, and investigations into beatings, threats, and assaults reveal the participation not only of nationalists but by members of the Peasants’ Party as well. The reports of the Department of Public Security and the files of the Tarnów police point to growing violence, fueled by brochures, posters, and other pieces of hate propaganda imported from Kraków and Warsaw.⁸

The titles of investigation dossiers of the Tarnów police speak for themselves: proceedings against unknown individuals who distributed between six hundred and eight hundred copies of anti-Jewish leaflets at the market in Ryglice, published by the Camp of Greater Poland (Obóz Wielkiej Polski); proceedings against Stefan Klimecki, member of the National Party (Stronnictwo Narodowe; SN) and others arrested for antisemitic agitation in Brzesko; investigation of Ignacy Kędzierski, suspected of antisemitic excesses; proceedings against Michał Nowak and Józef Jedryka, arrested for smashing windows in Jewish stores; investigation of Stanisław Węgrzyn in a case of deadly use of

force by a policeman during anti-Jewish riots; anti-Jewish riots in the Brzesko area; boycott of Grunberg family stores; smashing windows in the house of Chaim Münz; distribution of anti-Jewish leaflets titled "Do not buy from a Jew!"; distribution of posters accusing Jews of murdering a Polish student; the case of Stanisław Klekot from Otfinów, accused of instigating hate against Jews, smashing their windows, and setting their houses on fire; or the investigation of Jan Czub, who called for attacks against Jews. And these are only some of the cases opened in 1932–1933 by the Tarnów prosecutor's office.

The riots had a devastating impact on Jewish commerce; stands were smashed and overturned, merchandise was lost, customers were scared away, and the merchants themselves were quite frequently beaten up. Anti-Jewish violence grew with time: synagogues were vandalized, and in order to disperse the increasingly menacing crowds, the police had to use deadly force. The cycle of violence fueled further rioting, causing even more victims and more damage. The reports of the Security Department became alarming: starting in 1936, in Tarnów and in its surrounding areas, traditionally a stronghold of the Peasants' Party, the nationalists (Camp of Greater Poland and—among students—the All-Polish Youth⁹) began to gain ground. According to the police, the campaigns of hate orchestrated by members of the All-Polish Youth were of particular concern.¹⁰ One Jew remembered growing up in Dąbrowa before the war: "The attitude of Poles toward the Jews was not friendly; sometimes Jews were beaten up, but there were no organized anti-Jewish riots. Shortly before the war, however, antisemitism became rampant, and hooligans prevented all Poles from entering Jewish stores."¹¹ In the context of these dangerous incidents, the case of one Stefania K., accused of smashing windows in Jewish homes and of attempted torching of a synagogue in Wietrzychowice, seems almost trivial.¹² Stefania K. underwent a medical examination in order to ascertain her mental condition: "The suspect has always been a good and devout Catholic," wrote one of the psychiatrists involved, "and she came to the conclusion that Jews were the source of all evil in the world—they spread communism around the world, they fight the Catholic faith and they strive to overthrow the social order. So, she felt that God himself instructed her to draw the attention of the [Polish] society to the Jewish question." The doctor from Tarnów concluded that "her actions are not only an expression of normal antisemitism, so frequently seen nowadays, but a sign of illness, confirmed by a petition written to the League of Nations and to high-placed individuals." In contrast, a police report describing the attempted hanging of seven-year old Szymon Issler (who

was on his way to school in Dąbrowa) looked much less amusing. A group of people caught the boy (shouting “hold the kike!”), threw a rope over a branch, and placed a noose around his neck. Once in police custody, they claimed that it had only been a joke. Furthermore, in cases of anti-Jewish violence, the Tarnów police were not always helpful. Pinkas Ickowicz of Szczurowa (a town west of Dąbrowa), a victim of assault who filed a complaint with the police, was advised by officers Żyndroń and Wesołowski in the following way: “What do you want here, you filthy Jew!? If you want your rights, off you go to Palestine!” Finally, the policemen gave Ickowicz a friendly warning to get lost, or else “if he tried to be smart, they would smack him in the face.”¹³ The growing radicalization of anti-Jewish attitudes was, no doubt, directly linked to the campaign of hate led, during the 1930s, by the Catholic press.¹⁴ The Kraków diocese was home to some Church-sponsored journals, such as *Dzwon Niedzielný* (The Sunday Bell) and *Gość Niedzielný* (The Sunday Guest) that led the chorus of hatred. In Tarnów, antisemitic campaigns were instigated by the Catholic weekly *Nasza Sprawa* (Our Cause), whose editorials regularly called for “de-Judification” of the Polish economy and culture.¹⁵

The growth of anti-Jewish sentiments in Dąbrowa found a strong echo in the accounts of survivors, who—many years later—shared their recollections with the Visual History Foundation. Isadore Petersile, from Dąbrowa Tarnowska, vividly recalled the growth of antisemitism shortly before the war. According to Abraham Kuhn, also from Dąbrowa, anti-Jewish violence was felt in public schools. Harold Brand remembered Poles who believed that Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus. For Joseph Matzer (b. 1923), the periods of fear were around Christmas and Easter. During Christmas, Poles would blame Jews for the death of Christ, while at Easter the Jewish community would be terrorized with the specter of the blood libel circulating among the gentiles. Freda Walzman (b. Schenker in 1915) and Morris Suss (b. 1921) were convinced that the attitude of the Catholic clergy was at the root of the evil. According to Suss, Sundays were especially unpleasant for Jews—gentiles leaving church were likely to become violent when meeting a “citizen of Mosaic faith.” Carl Willner (b. 1924) referred to a “semi-afraid state,” or simmering fear, which characterized the life of the Jewish community of Dąbrowa in the last years before the war. Rae Weitz (b. Goldman in 1925) recalled similar fear in her hometown of Żabno, while Zofia Nowik (b. Bloch in 1922), from the small village of Skrzyńka, recalled being taunted as a “dirty Jewess,” but also had had many pleasant experiences with her gentile friends. Leon Silber from Szczu-

cin (b. 1916) remembered Polish peasants beating up Jews, and Ann Shore (b. Goldman in 1929) stated simply that “our common enemy was the Poles, who were very antisemitic.” Abraham Mahler (b. 1920), from Szczucin, claimed that one of the most active antisemites was a local priest who never missed an opportunity to campaign against the Jews. Chaim Banker, from Radomyśl, recalled that relations with Poles were, by and large, friendly—at least until 1938. Later, before the outbreak of the war, the situation started to deteriorate. Antoni Balaryn, a Pole from the same village, confirmed Banker’s assessment. Morris Suss, even before the war, was convinced that Jews had no future in Dąbrowa. According to him, the situation started to unravel when, sometime around 1936, Poles started blocking Jewish stores, chasing away gentile customers from “non-Aryan” stands, strangling Jewish commerce and pushing the Jewish community into financial distress and misery.

Although the police reports, court files, and testimonies of survivors do not justify a conclusion that Polish–Jewish relations in the Tarnów area prior to World War II were worse than elsewhere, they certainly suggest that these relations were not good—and that they underwent a process of steady erosion during these years.

3

FIRST YEARS OF OCCUPATION

Although the fate of Dąbrowa's Jews during the first years of the war goes beyond the scope of this study, we cannot leave this topic without at least a brief overview.¹ The occupation of Dąbrowa County started on Friday, September 8, 1939. At first, the responsibility for the area lay in the hands of the *Wehrmacht*, but civil administration took over from the army as soon as October 26, 1939. Dąbrowa Tarnowska was incorporated into the Tarnów Region (*Kreishauptmannschaft Tarnów*).² Dąbrowa Tarnowska County was abolished and in its place the Germans created the so-called Local Office of the Commissioner (*Landkommissariat*), responsible to the Tarnów authorities. A Dr. Kern was appointed the first local commissioner of Dąbrowa, and in 1941 he was succeeded by a Dr. Strahler. In the late fall of 1939, most of the regular German troops left the Tarnów region, leaving control over the local population in the hands of the *Volksdeutsche* and the police. With time, the Special Service (*Sonderdienst*—a paramilitary organization created in May 1940 by Governor General Hans Frank), made up of ethnic Germans, gained much influence.³ A detachment of Dąbrowa gendarmerie, composed of twelve gendarmes and led by Lieutenant Rudolf Landgraf,⁴ found a home in the building of a former high school. Landgraf was also in charge of the Polish “blue” police of the *Landkommissariat* Dąbrowa. The detachments of Polish “blue” police were located in the town of Dąbrowa Tarnowska and in larger villages such as Otfinów, Radgoszcz, Szczucin, Mędrzychów, Bolesław, and Wietrzychowice. Typically, every rural detachment would have a complement of six “blue” policemen, sometimes

reinforced by a German gendarme, who would issue orders to his Polish underlings. At the end of 1943, with the growing threat of partisan attacks, smaller police outposts were abandoned and their personnel consolidated in central locations.⁵ In addition to Polish police and German gendarmes, Dąbrowa County was sometimes raided by Gestapo agents and Polish plainclothes officers (*Kripo*) from nearby Tarnów.⁶ In mid-1944, the rapidly advancing Soviet forces halted their offensive east of the Vistula River, at the very borders of Dąbrowa County. While neighboring Mielec County was liberated in July 1944, Dąbrowa remained under German occupation until mid-January 1945. During that time, the entire county became a staging area for frontline troops and a place of massive concentration of German forces, including two divisions of *Waffen-SS*. This, in turn, had immediate and disastrous consequences for the last remaining Jews, who, until then, had managed to survive in hiding.

From the early days of occupation, draconian regulations became a norm for the population of the Tarnów region. The Germans introduced harsh penalties for a variety of offenses against the “new order,” and criminalization of even the most innocuous activities served as a constant reminder of the new relations of power between the conqueror and the conquered. On October 10, 1939, the chief of the civil administration issued a ban on “conscious listening to foreign radio broadcasts” and threatened offenders with jail terms.⁷ Public dissemination and discussion of news gathered from such broadcasts was also threatened with prison or, in some cases, with the death penalty. Ernst Kundt, city commissioner for Tarnów, ordered the removal of all privately owned telephones, and radio antennas from the rooftops.⁸ On October 18, 1939, the Germans started to ruthlessly enforce the fiscal regulations and demanded immediate payment of overdue income, municipal and village taxes, as well as unpaid water, gas, and electricity bills. In cases of noncompliance, debtors faced terms of incarceration in one of the three labor camps (*Arbeitserziehungslager*; *AEL*) that had opened in the area. Another set of regulations dealt with symbolic issues: patriotic songs were banned, together with all public displays of the symbols of the former Polish state, and street names were either translated into German or renamed altogether. Additionally, in view of upcoming requisitions, all inhabitants of the Tarnów region had to register their livestock. The consumption of electricity was radically limited and regulated; special teams inspected houses and apartments in order to check the efficiency of all household heating devices.⁹

The waves of German-imposed restrictions and regulations struck the Jewish community hard, but the Poles were hurting too. On the Nazi ladder of “racial respectability,” the Poles found themselves, to put it simply, just a rung above their “non-Aryan” co-citizens. And so, the curfew for Germans living in Tarnów was 11:30 PM, for Poles 10:30 PM, and for Jews 9 PM. Certain parks were declared off limits to Poles, but Jews had no right to enter any city park at all. In July 1940, the citizens of Dąbrowa Tarnowska, Tarnów, and the region were informed that they had to deliver nonferrous metals to the state. However, while Poles had to deliver 3 kg of copper, lead, or nickel per family, Jewish households had to come up with 1 kg more.¹⁰ Finally, the monthly heating gas allocation for Poles was fixed at 150 cubic meters, while Jews were restricted to 60 cubic meters per month.¹¹

The ghettoization of the Jewish population of the Kraków district began in the winter of 1940.¹² The largest ghetto (outside of Kraków) had been created in Tarnów and had a population of some 40,000 people. There were two smaller ghettos located in the Tarnów area—one in Dąbrowa Tarnowska (population 3,200), and another one in Żabno (population 600). The Dąbrowa ghetto was located in the eastern part of the city, squeezed into three city blocks. On January 25, 1940, the Germans appointed Eliezer Weinberger (a local lawyer) to head the Jewish Council (*Judenrat*). The Jewish police (*Ordnungsdienst*; OD), made up of twenty agents, came under the authority of one Kalman Fenichel.¹³ Other members of the council included Samuel Kuflik, Lazar Balsam, Szabtai Rokach, and Jakub Derszowicz—prominent figures in Dąbrowa’s Jewish community.¹⁴ While the *Judenrat* and the OD were created and appointed by the Germans, the Jews of Dąbrowa started to organize their own institutions as well. First and foremost was the Jewish Social Self-Help (*Żydowska Samopomoc Społeczna*; ŻSS), which was tasked with caring for the poorest members of the ghetto society. Between January and December 1941, the kitchens financed by the Jewish Self-Help fed, on average, four hundred people each day.¹⁵ During the summer and fall of that year, when the hunger in the ghetto reached epidemic proportions, the *Judenrat* continued to give out 70 grams of bread daily to the most destitute.¹⁶ To care for the sick, the ŻSS established a small clinic, headed by a Dr. Teufel, himself a deportee from Bielsko. The Jewish Self-Help from Dąbrowa was in touch with ŻSS headquarters in Warsaw and in Kraków, and organized medical supplies for the ghetto. The Dąbrowa ghetto was separated from the “Aryan” side of the city in part with a wooden fence, and in part with barbed wire. Despite the restrictions on movement, leaving the ghetto, accord-

ing to one survivor, was not really much of a problem.¹⁷ The problem was to survive on the outside. The population of the ghetto fluctuated between 2,500 and 3,200 people. In the first months of the war, several hundred local Jews fled eastward, under the Soviet occupation. Some of them stayed in the Soviet Union, while others—terrified of the economic and political conditions in the East—trickled slowly back to Dąbrowa during the fall and winter of 1939. In early 1940, a number of Jews from Germany and Kraków were resettled into the ghetto, resulting in appalling living conditions in the already overcrowded “Jewish quarter.” Later, at the end of 1941 and during the spring–summer of 1942 (immediately before the liquidation of the local ghettos), the Germans started to remove Jews from smaller communities in the area, dumping them in Dąbrowa.¹⁸ On a much smaller scale the same pattern of migrations and resettlements can be observed in the tiny Żabno ghetto, whose inhabitants—at the end of 1940—had to accept some Jewish families from Germany.¹⁹ Keeping the Jews in a state of constant fear and uncertainty of the future was, quite obviously, part of the German plan. The threats (sometimes real, sometimes just fearful gossip) contributed to growing panic among the ghetto dwellers.

German terror targeting the Jews started early, at the beginning of the occupation. Some people were randomly shot in the streets, while others (religious Jews in particular) became objects of sadistic mistreatment. The victims were beaten up, forced to perform “dances” in the streets, or shaved in such a way as to leave signs of swastikas on their heads.²⁰ In certain cases people were treated even worse and had their beards torn out, clump by clump.²¹ In Szczucin (north of Dąbrowa), the Germans paraded the Jews through the town, forcing them to sing *Wir, Juden wollten den Krieg!* (We Jews wanted the war!).²² Later, some of the unfortunate Szczucin Jews were severely beaten and taken to Tarnów prison. As early as in September 1939, shortly after their arrival in Dąbrowa, the soldiers of the *Wehrmacht* began herding Jews to perform forced—and usually humiliating—labor. Some of those taken to work disappeared without a trace. With time, the use of Jewish forced labor was “rationalized” and became part of a centrally regulated process of exploitation. In 1940, in nearby Pustków (east of Dąbrowa Tarnowska), the Germans opened a labor camp and sent a large number of local Jews there.²³ Another notorious penal labor camp, operated by the SS, was built in Szebnie, some thirty miles east of Dąbrowa. Both camps were initially intended for Jews only but, by 1941, they started to take in Polish inmates as well.²⁴ Still other Jews caught in the German nets were sent off to the so-called “underground city,” an aircraft factory in Mielec (*Flugzeugwerke*

Mielec). Finally, some Jews were used for local needs: in large farming operations nearby, in Breń, Skrzynka, or digging dykes and levees along the Vistula and Dunajec rivers.

While forced labor as such was feared, working on the farms was, for many, a welcome opportunity to escape the everyday terror of the ghetto, offering a chance to buy food for the hungry families left behind. Taking advantage of this pool of very cheap labor, some wealthy farmers and estate owners signed contracts with the Germans to “lease” a number of Jewish workers, particularly during the harvest. One such farmer, Jan Augustyński of Gorzyce, each year (between 1940 and 1942) had more than a dozen young Jews from Dąbrowa working on his land. Another farmer, a *Volksdeutscher*²⁵ from Skrzynka, employed an even larger number of young Jews from Dąbrowa. The “work contracts” in the countryside also offered hope of survival at the time of extermination. In the summer of 1942, some of these Jews, having learned about the impending liquidation of the ghetto, fled the work details and sought shelter among gentiles in the area.²⁶ One Jewish youth who worked in Skrzynka recalled shortly after the war, “We worked 20 hours per day, with no pay. We slept in a barn, and we were fed by two Jewish women, who were working in the kitchen. We were apprehensive and time and again people fled to the forest. After six months one *szajgac*²⁷ told me that we would soon be liquidated, so then I fled as well, together with two other Jews.”²⁸ Still other Jews worked in Breń, in the agricultural conglomerate of Baron Konopka, a local aristocrat.²⁹ One of the young Jewish women employed in Breń later wrote that “all Jews who worked with us on the estate had to live in a common barrack. The conditions were quite appalling: a half-collapsed hovel with three rooms and no floors. But the managers of the estate were decent people, so they did not enforce this regulation and most of the Jews lived elsewhere.”³⁰ Work in the fields was, however, of short duration and Jews were later shipped back to the ghetto. In at least one case, young Jewish laborers were taken straight from the farms and marched off to the death trains destined for Bełżec.³¹

In the meantime, the situation in Dąbrowa ghetto grew more desperate with each passing month. Jewish businesses were expropriated and larger stores were placed under the authority of the German Trustees’ Office (*Treuhänderverwaltung*). The trustees themselves were recruited from among local Poles, and Jewish owners lost any say over the management of their own property.³² The widespread misery gave rise to brisk trade between the impoverished Jews, who were selling off their last possessions, and local Poles, who supplied the

ghetto with foodstuffs smuggled from the “Aryan” side. German overseers of the ghetto, including local gendarmes, requested special “payments,” and hostages kept in Dąbrowa prison were the best guarantee of compliance of the community and of the *Judenrat*. House searches and brazen robberies became everyday features of ghetto existence. Finally, the “pacification actions” began.

One of the first *Aktionen*, as the Germans called these brutal campaigns of terror, occurred on September 9, 1940, when the combined forces of Dąbrowa and Tarnów gendarmerie descended on the ghetto and opened fire on randomly selected pedestrians, killing fourteen people.³³ Other “actions” took place in March and April 1942, claiming more than one hundred lives. One of the survivors recalled these events: “The worst actions took place in the spring, shortly after Passover. They took people from a list, mostly wealthy ones. At that time they shot the family of Dr. Schindel. Schindel saved himself by jumping off a balcony, but thirty-five other people were shot at that time. The Germans took Berel Zys, the secretary of the *Judenrat*, and his fiancée, and they shot them both in the fields, outside the ghetto.” The *Aktion* referred to by this witness took place on April 28th, and resulted in the deaths of several of the most prominent members of the Dąbrowa ghetto. The Germans arrived in the ghetto in the middle of the night with a list of some forty people (it was later alleged that some members of the *Judenrat* provided the Gestapo with this list),³⁴ and they executed their victims in the nearby Jewish cemetery. On Shavuot of 1942,³⁵ another *Aktion* took place: “The Germans took a large number of people, loaded them in railway cattle cars and shipped them off, probably to Bełżec. After this ‘action,’ those who remained were concentrated in a small ghetto. Thirty people had to squeeze into a small room.”³⁶ An “action” of this kind also took place in the Żabno ghetto, where thirty prominent members of the local Jewish community were pulled, during the night, out of their homes and shot in the market square.³⁷ Staff Sergeant Heinrich Anlauf from the Tarnów gendarmerie put it succinctly: “We fixed them so well [the Jews] that water boiled in their asses out of fear.”³⁸ A Polish witness from nearby Radomyśl observed that at that time “Zimmermann and Jeck, two Gestapo agents from Mielec, used to arrive in town, drink vodka at Wysocki’s bar, then they demanded ransom from the *Judenrat*, and later started to shoot the Jews, as if they were taking part in a regular hunt.”³⁹ Although the local Jews knew nothing about it, the “actions” conducted in Dąbrowa ghetto in the spring of 1942 were part of a larger plan of increased terror and a prelude to extermination. The plan, conceived by the Kraków Gestapo, targeted the leaders of Jewish communi-

Table 3.1. Population of Dąbrowa County: Poles and Jews, 1931–1943

| Commune (gmina) | Population 1931 | Jews, 1931 | Jews, June 1941 | Jews, May 1942 | Total population, general census of March 1, 1943 |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|---|
| Dąbrowa (county) | 66,678 | 4,807 | 5,409 | 5,401 | 57,730 |
| Bolesław | | | 248 | 250 | 5,995 |
| Dąbrowa—city | 6,484 | 3,012 | 3,071 | 3,106 | 3,657 |
| Dąbrowa (commune) | | | 46 | | 9,330 |
| Mędrzechów | | | 157 | 180 | 6,627 |
| Otfinów | | | 125 | 121 | 5111 |
| Radgoszcz | | | 240 | 188 | 9,764 |
| Szczucin | | | 707 | 776 | 9,112 |
| Żabno | | | 665 | 600 | 2,023 |
| Wietrzychowice | | | 150 | 180 | 6,111 |

Note: Table is based on following sources: the 2nd General Census of 1931; *Amtliches Gemeinde- und Dorfverzeichnis für das Generalgouvernement auf Grund der Summarischen Bevölkerungsbestandsaufnahme am 1. März 1943 (Gebundene Ausgabe)*, the report of the Polish Self-Help Committee (*Polski Komitet Opiekuńczy*). I quote from Aleksandra Pietrzyk, “Powiat Dąbrowski w Latach Okupacji Hitlerowskiej, 1939–1945,” in: *Dąbrowa Tarnowska. Zarys dziejów miasta i powiatu* (Warsaw-Kraków: PWN, 1974), 576. Data from June 1941, as in A. Pietrzykova, “*Region tarnowski w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej. Polityka okupanta i ruch oporu*” [Tarnów Region during the Nazi Occupation: The Policies of the Occupier and the Resistance].

ties and was intended to instill fear into the ghetto communities and to take away from the Jews any will to resist before the final liquidation “actions.” According to testimonies given after the war by the Gestapo agents involved, the orders came down from the very top; these so-called *Kommunistenaktionen*⁴⁰ followed a scenario carefully prepared by the planners in the Kraków offices of Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, the Chief of Police and the SS (Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer; HPSSF) for the *Generalgouvernement*.⁴¹ Similar “actions” took place in other districts. In the Warsaw ghetto, for instance, during the *Aktion* of April 18, 1942, fifty people, also chosen from a list, were shot in the streets.⁴²

About that time, the Jews of Dąbrowa started to prepare for the worst, building ingenious hideouts under houses, inside double walls, and in attics. The idea was to survive the initial fury of the Germans, wait until the police were gone, and emerge from the hideouts to live another day. The idea that the “final solution” was, indeed, final, was not a concept that the Jews of Dąbrowa were ready to accept. Although repression and terror struck first and foremost the ghetto Jews, those still living in the villages were not spared either. In the village of Skrzynka, for instance, Jewish families had to give up their cows as early as in the summer of 1940. Later on they were forced to surrender all of their remaining livestock. They were also told not to leave a two-kilometer radius around the village. Finally, in mid-1942, they lost their houses and were transported to the ghetto in Dąbrowa. In all cases, the local elder was the bearer of bad news. All he did, though, as he explained himself to the Jewish inhabitants of Skrzynka, was to follow the orders coming from the *voit*’s office,⁴³ and the *voit* followed the policy elaborated by the Germans.⁴⁴ Interestingly, at this early stage the “rural” Jews had less to fear from the Germans than from the locals—most of all from the local Polish “blue” police who enforced the regulations in remote areas. This topic will be discussed at length later on.

Data from table 3.1 suggest surprising stability of the Jewish population in Dąbrowa Tarnowska and in the area during the opening years of the war. We can assume, however, that this alleged stability had less to do with the internal population dynamics, and much more to do with forced migrations. Hundreds of Jews who fled to the east in 1939 were replaced by hundreds of newcomers expelled by the Germans from Kraków, or even from Germany. The simultaneous decline of the “Aryan” population can, most probably, be attributed to the German policy of sending young Poles to work as laborers for the Reich. Most surprising are the stable numbers of the rural Jewish population. The Jews living in Dąbrowa-area villages were able, it seems, to avoid expulsion to the

ghetto until the very end. Most of them still lived in their own houses as late as May 1942. Indeed, as we learn from German documents, the resettlement of rural Jews into the Dąbrowa ghetto took place in June–July 1942—shortly before the deportations to the Bełżec death camp. Finally, in the summer of 1942, some Jews from the liquidated ghettos of Mielec County sought shelter in Dąbrowa.⁴⁵ The most dramatic decline of the population of Dąbrowa County is related, of course, to the extermination of the Jews which happened between the count of May 1942 and that of the March 1943 census. The March 1, 1943 data tell us a story of a county that was made “*Judenrein*”—cleansed of Jews.

4

THE DESTRUCTION OF DĄBROWA TARNOWSKA

The extermination of Jews of Dąbrowa Tarnowska, Tarnów, and other cities and towns of the Kraków District was directly linked to the opening of the Bełżec extermination camp, in March 1942. Although the Jews of Lublin and of Lwów (Lemberg, Lviv) were among the first victims of Bełżec, the transports from the Kraków District soon followed. During the summer and fall of 1942, when the camp reached its “full capacity,” the gas chambers of Bełżec claimed the lives of up to four thousand people each day. The first *Aktion* in Kraków took place in March 1942, when more than 1,500 people were selected from the lists requested by the Germans, and prepared in advance by the *Ordnungsdienst*—the Jewish police.¹ The main liquidation action started on May 30th and lasted until June 8, 1942.² The news about the *Aktion* in Kraków quickly reached Dąbrowa Tarnowska, although no one was certain about the exact fate of the deportees. Some thought that liquidations were similar to previous sweeps that had been organized from time to time by the Germans, to send Jews to labor camps. A Mr. Fertig, living in Mędrzechów, wrote to the Jewish Self-Help (ŻSS) headquarters in order to find out “what happened to my brother, and which labor camp he might have been sent to.”³ The destruction of the Jews of Tarnów and Rzeszów came at the heels of the liquidation in Kraków. In Rzeszów, on June 10, 1942, the German authorities imposed a 1 million zloty levy on the Jewish community. Similar levies were requested of Jews in Tarnów. On June 19th, the Germans ordered that the Jews immediately pay all due taxes and bills, as well as outstanding bank loans and debts to Aryan creditors.⁴ On June 25th,

Jews living in the city were requested to fill in registration forms and in case of noncompliance offenders were threatened with an automatic penalty of death. The *Aktion* started on July 6th. A similar scheme was repeated throughout the region, in all other ghettos. Once the liquidations of smaller ghettos of the Kraków District had been completed, the Germans moved on to the next stage and created several so-called “secondary ghettos” (*Restghetto*) in Kraków, Bochnia, Tarnów, Rzeszów, and Przemyśl.⁵ The *Restghettos* had a twofold purpose: first, to defuse the state of panic and to offer a glimmer of hope to Jews still surviving in the ghettos, and second, to persuade the Jews who had fled to leave their hideouts and shelters, and to return to “permanent” ghettos, in order to legalize their existence. For many, especially for those without sufficient financial resources, hiding outside the ghetto was not a long-term option. Some Jews, left with no choice, as they were living in the hideouts in local villages in constant fear of denunciation and death, returned to the secondary ghettos to await their fate.⁶

What was the fate of the Dąbrowa Tarnowska ghetto in the context of the general tragedy sweeping through the Jewish communities of the Kraków District? After the previously mentioned *Aktion* of April 28, 1942, there came a moment of lull.⁷ In June, however, several hundred people were taken away to Tarnów, from where they were sent straight to the gas chambers of Bełżec. The main “liquidation action” in Dąbrowa took place on July 17, 1942, when close to two thousand Jews were deported to Bełżec, and one hundred others were executed in the streets. The first description of this *Aktion* comes from Chaja Rosenblatt, who, having learned from a well-informed Pole about the imminent “resettlement,” chose to gather her family and flee into the night. Shortly after dawn, marching through the woods, close to the main road toward Tarnów, she suddenly heard “a horrible, terrifying, noise. We turn our eyes on the road, and we see a long column [of cars] rolling towards Dąbrowa. In the column we could see army lorries, cars and armored cars. The column was nearly a kilometer long. It was obvious that the deportation commission was on its way to Dąbrowa to exterminate the Jews.”⁸ While Rosenblatt watched the “deportation column” roll by, Alter Milet was still in the Dąbrowa ghetto. Shortly after the war, he recalled: “There were 26 cattle wagons waiting in the station, and 1,800 people were herded inside. One hundred others were killed during the ‘action,’ while people were taken from their homes. The transport went straight to Bełżec.”⁹ Many inhabitants of the Dąbrowa Tarnowska ghetto expected the imminent *Aktion*, and went into hiding into the hideouts that were usually located inside their houses. One of them was Rivka Schenker, a young woman

who some time earlier had fled the liquidated Jewish community in nearby Radomyśl Wielki and had arrived in Dąbrowa just days before the *Aktion*:

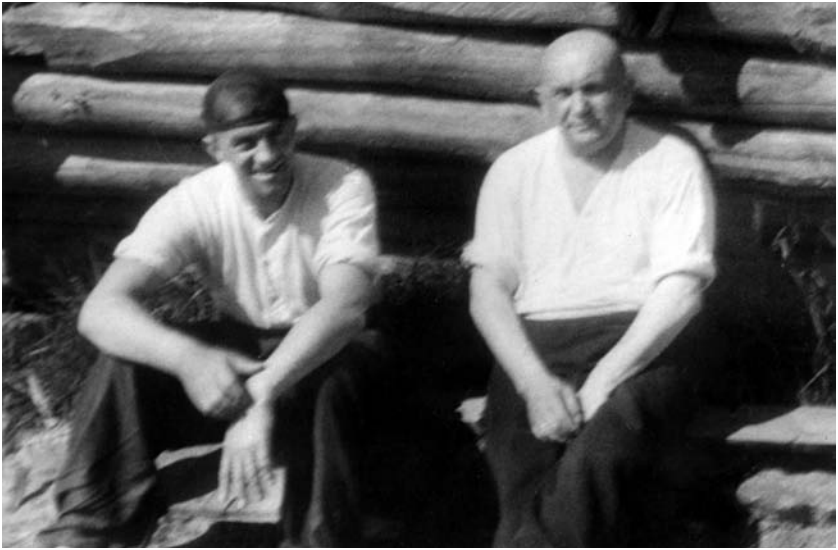
One day Daddy came home and said that there will be a deportation, and that we had to get ready. Father and Reuben stopped going to work, everyone was nervous but it didn't help much. We were 10 people and we kept watch one after another; at night we slept with our clothes on, and we all were in one room. Our life was tragic but in a situation like this a man becomes hard as stone. A whole month went by like this, and every day we went through the same [drill]. One day father came to Sala and said that he had heard that we would be deported that night. We started immediately to pack up, we took our best things and we slipped into our hideout. Everyone was extremely nervous, and we all had the same thought: I started to pray and begged God to let us leave our hideout alive. We were so nervous and it was so quiet in the streets; you couldn't see a living soul. At 4 A.M., as I watched through a little hole in the wall of the hideout, I saw many cars arrive. We were in the attic, so no one could see me, but I was able to see everything. My heart was racing and I stood as if paralysed. In such a situation one turns into a stone. I turned to Rubin [Reuben] and told him that the Germans had arrived. He asked me how did I know it, so I told him that I peeked through the hole. He started to shout; he caught me by the hands, and told me that if I did it once again, he would chase me outside. There was no time to argue because we heard the shouts: *Aufmachen!*, but Sala left the front door open. They went into the house, started to shout hysterically that all had to leave the house and that if they found anyone in hiding, they would shoot them right away. I cannot even find right words to describe my feelings back then. I was certain that our last moment has arrived; daddy hugged me and started to kiss me. We all remained as if paralyzed. They climbed into the attic, where we were hidden, they started to knock on the walls and probe them with bayonets. At one point I heard the shouts, and one German said: "I think I heard something, there is someone hidden here!" They broke down the planks and they took our neighbours. Their screams were horrible. We had no idea that our neighbours had built their hideout so close to ours. I have seen them being tied up and marched to the square. When Germans left we started to breathe easier; we were all so upset. At 9 A.M., Rubin left the hideout and went to see [what was going on]. There were very few people left, only young people—they took [away] the old ones and the children.¹⁰

Samuel Feiner, originally from Kraków, went into hiding in July 1942, as soon as he heard about the upcoming *Aktion*. With eighty other people he locked himself in a bunker "which had been walled-in on three sides and [which] had been equipped with one small, concealed, entry. We had enough food and water to last for two weeks. We sat there for three days and, once the

situation calmed down and we heard no more shots being fired, one of us went outside and learned that the SS-men have left and that the *Aktion* was over.”¹¹ The final *Aktion* struck on September 18th, when eight hundred remaining inhabitants of the ghetto were loaded onto a death train, and twenty members of the Dąbrowa *Judenrat* were shot in the Jewish cemetery. Alter Millet recalled: “It was to be the [final] liquidation of the ghetto, but many fled to the forests, so that the Germans were only able to grab 500 people, and some wagons left the station empty. At this point [the Germans] shot ten people, among them the chief of the *Judenrat*, Dr. Neuberger, arguing that there were too few Jews, and that many were hidden in the building of the *Judenrat*.” After this action, at least a few hundred Jews remained hidden in the ghetto, sometimes in very elaborate and ingenious hideouts. They were successively discovered and pulled out from their bunkers. Some of them were sent to Bełżec, while others were shot on the spot: “The victims were brought to the cemetery, where they linked their arms, and sang *Hillel* [*Hallel*]. The German gendarmes threw them on the ground, and officer Bove stood on their bellies, and shot them through the mouth,” reported one of the survivors.¹² By that time, many Jews decided no longer to look for shelter in the bunkers, “because they knew that they were going to die in any case. So all of them said farewells to their cousins and friends, knowing that there was no way that they could avoid death”—noted the previously cited Samuel Feiner.

And that is how the Dąbrowa Tarnowska ghetto ceased to exist. The last remaining Jews—some thirty Jewish policemen and their families—remained locked up in one of the ghetto houses. They, too, were shot at the Jewish cemetery (on December 20, 1942) by Rudolf Landgraf and his gendarmes. Even Kalman Fenichel, the much hated chief of Jewish police, was unable to save his own life, and was executed, along with his ten-year-old son and the rest of his subordinates. And this despite the German promises of clemency and of a transfer to a similar function in the nearby Tarnów *Restghetto*.¹³ Stanisław Dorosz from Dąbrowa—possibly the only witness to this execution—watched the shooting hidden in a shed, some forty meters away from the place of the killings: “They [the gendarmes] marched them out of the house four by four, and led them to the Jewish cemetery. There, they told them to strip, and to jump into the pits which had been dug earlier. A Gestapo agent from Tarnów did the shooting. He shot all the Jews the same way.”¹⁴

The secret reports of the underground Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*; AK) also made reference to the extermination of Dąbrowa’s Jews.¹⁵ The reports were collated in Tarnów and sent to AK district command in Kraków:



German gendarmes Billert and Ludwig Bove (on the right) from Dąbrowa Tarnowska, 1942(?). *Yad Vashem Photo Archive, 4577/303.*

July 14, 1942, preparations to expel Jews from local villages are underway. July 22, 1942—the Jews living in Tarnów County are required to concentrate in Tuchów, Zakliczyn, Żabno, Dąbrowa and Ryglice. The deportation includes all towns and villages. Personally, I was able to see that Jews live twenty and thirty to one room, partly in the building of the *Sokół*,¹⁶ and the rest spend the nights under the open sky. They were allowed to take their belongings. August 19, 1942, the Jews of Bobowa and Ryglice have been deported. Despite many efforts, we still have no idea what happened to 14,000 Jews deported from Tarnów. During the night of 18–19 August a Pole named Szałko, together with his wife, children, and his stepmother, was taken out of his house and executed. The reason was alleged assistance in hiding his wife, who is a converted Jew, and his Jewish stepmother.

So much for the dry language of the AK reports. The same events were seen in a different light, and from a different vantage point, by Janina Starzyk, a Polish girl who, at the time of the extermination of the Jews of Dąbrowa, was barely nineteen:

During the Nazi occupation I lived with my parents in Dąbrowa Tarnowska.¹⁷ The Jewish population made up 50 percent of the population of the city. Before spring 1942 there were isolated instances of Jews, especially wealthy Jews, being shot in the streets. That is when they shot Finder and Matzner in the market.

Licht and Hollender died on Kościuszko Street, others died too, but I do not recall their names. In the spring, probably in May 1942, early in the morning, the city had been surrounded by Germans, who started to pull the Jews out of their houses, and to march them toward the main square. I could hear shots being fired. From behind the window, I could see Germans in uniforms. I have no idea whether there were local gendarmes. In front of my window I could see the body of a dead Jew and a Jewess, who was still moving. I looked through the window, and I could see Jews running away and Germans shooting in their direction. To me, it looked like a hunt. The shooting lasted until 2 P.M. I went to the main square as soon as the shooting tapered off. I saw the Jews on their knees, and holding their arms high in the air. They were arranged in groups, young people, old people, women with children. I was there for a very short while. Terrified, I fled. Later that day, I learned that the old Jews had been killed in the local cemetery, the young ones were taken to Mielec, to work, and women with children to the railway station, where they were put in wagons destined for Bełżec—as the people said at the time. The same day, around 10 A.M. the Jew Weiss, whom I knew very well (he was our neighbor) appeared in the door of the kitchen. He did not enter the kitchen, he was very frightened, and fled. A moment later a gendarme, whom I did not know, showed up looking for Weiss. The gendarme started to shout at my father and accuse him that because of him, a Jew escaped, and wanted to shoot my father. My father pointed to the two Jews lying on the street. The gendarme approached the Jews and then went away. After a moment I went closer to the lying Jews, and recognized Mr. Klausner, who was already dead, and Mr. Weiss, who lay next to him, covered in his blood. Weiss was alive, and told me that he had not been wounded. He refused to flee, because he had already lost his wife and children and he did not know the Polish language well enough. I saw them taking the bodies of dead Jews away to the cemetery. Nobody touched the bodies of Klausner, who was dead, and Weiss, who lay next to him. Around 3 P.M. I approached Weiss. Next to me, there were some children. I saw Gendarme Ketter (whom I knew very well), and he told me and the kids to get lost. I pretended to go away, but watched him all the time. I saw when he took out his revolver, and shot Weiss through the head. Then he went away.

While Janina Starzyk saw the deaths in the street, in front of her house, Adela Gold (resettled to Dąbrowa from her home in Rygllice just a few days before the July “action”) saw the liquidation of the ghetto from the perspective of a victim:¹⁸

We still had no time to unpack, all the things were lying around, when the real tragedy struck. The next day, around 4 A.M. when we finally fell asleep, an unexpected action started. My baby was two months old at that time, so my sleep

was very shallow. I had just come back from the baby when I heard a shot—I woke up all the others to find out what was going on. Then the owner of the house told us that it had started. We had no idea what to do or where to hide. Together with my husband we ran to the cellar, and I left the kids in their beds, covered. The people told me that the children could start crying and give away our hideout, in which there were some 15 people. We heard shots coming from all directions. We sat, shivering in fear. Finally, it was our turn. They found no one in the house other than my poor child. I heard them saying *Kinder, Kinder* but I had no idea that they were talking about my baby. I was paralyzed and barely conscious. I have no idea how we survived the search—we were hidden only behind some mattresses. They wandered around flashing their flashlights. They searched the ghetto from 4 A.M. to 11 A.M. We had no idea that it was all over, but first we stopped hearing the shooting, and then a woman told us that they were packing and leaving, that the action was over and that there were dead bodies all over the streets. We calmed down and left the cellar. I ran to the apartment hoping for a miracle, to see my child. I came to the crib, and all I saw were the clothes. They must have taken [the baby] only in the underwear. My husband was still in the cellar when I told him the tragic news. Once the action was over, men had to go and gather the bodies of the dead. In the afternoon, the Germans sent in a commission which counted the surviving Jews and forced us to pay a levy. There were very few people left. It was July 1942, on a Friday. On Monday everybody had to register, men were sent off to work in a labor camp in Mielec, only women and some old people were left. They never left us alone, they either forced us to lay stone pavement on the market square, or they used us to load hay in the fields. We were happy if only they left us for a moment alone. If one of us women could not work anymore, or was late for work, they would torture and beat us. It lasted for two months, and then they started to talk about a final resettlement, and that the whole area would be *Judenfrei*.¹⁹

The events above describe the Dąbrowa *Liquidierungsaktion* of July 22, 1942. In the course of this action several hundred people were shot (either in the streets or in the Jewish cemetery) and others were shipped off to Bełżec. Cyla Braw was only seven years old when the Jews of Dąbrowa met their end. Two years after the war she left her testimony in the Kraków office of the Jewish Historical Commission. These were the words with which she described her last moments in the liquidated ghetto:

A German saw us and started shouting “Halt! Stop!” Then he started shooting and a bullet hit me in the back and in the hand. I felt nothing when the bullets pierced my body, but I fell to the ground. I cried out “Mama! Save me!” but my mother did not look back; so I stood up and started running. The German shot

two more times, and he caught my uncle and his sons. I and my mother hid in the Jewish cemetery, behind a tombstone. One of my uncle's sons ran in our direction, but the German saw him, and killed him. The uncle and the other son were taken to the market square and then they were sent away with the transport [to Belzec]. The shooting all around us was horrible. Once it calmed down, my mama helped me and my little cousin to climb over the fence and we fled into the fields. When we crossed the street, we saw a Polish policeman, but he did nothing to us. We ran through a field and we found a peasant, whom we knew well. He asked what had happened to me—my face was all bloody. I asked him to let us hide in his barn, but he said “no, because they will slaughter my children,” so we could not even cross his backyard. I ran around, and my little cousin followed behind. He was only five, but he was such a brave boy. We sat in the barley, on a log, and soon my mama found us. It was quiet again, it was all over in the city. The entire town had been murdered. The only ones who survived were those who went into hiding. Then we ran towards the woods. A peasant saw us and started shouting “catch the Jews!” so we ran and fled into the forest.²⁰

Fela Fischbein lived close to Krosno, some fifty miles southeast of Tarnów. The news about the horrors of liquidation *Aktionen* in the Tarnów area spread fast. In her diary (which she had kept throughout the war, while in hiding) she noted:

Mrs. Trzyniowa, my Christian neighbor with whom we have a good rapport, came to me and said: “The daughter of my tenant works at the Krosno airport and the chief engineer told her that he was in Tarnów during the Jewish *Aktion*. Do you know that they have special police units to do it, called *Grojl police*, or something like that. Horrible orgies took place, these henchmen took drugs, and they behaved as if they were crazy, they foamed at the mouth, semi-conscious, drunk, absolute horror. If, God forbid, they were to show up here, remember that you have our little cellar. You can get there without my knowledge; you can enter from the garden and the cellar can make for a good hideout.”²¹

And what did the Germans have to say about an *Aktion*? Although we have no direct German accounts from Dąbrowa, there is a wealth of data from nearby Tarnów, where the liquidation “action” followed, as it seems, the same pattern. One German engineer described it in the following terms:

The next day, on my way to work, I heard shots being fired throughout the city, although, obviously, most shots were fired in the area where the Jews were living. I could see the bodies of dead Jews everywhere—in the streets, in the backyards, in the gardens. It was simply a terrible sight [*ein einfaches furchtbares*

Bild]. I decided against going to the market square, because that's where the worst shooting was going on. The bodies strewn around carried a risk of an epidemic, so I went straight to the *Kreishauptmann*,²² to prevent this menace. Dr. Kipke and Dr. Pernutz decided that the bodies had to be taken to the cemetery. So I went to the cemetery and what I saw there was truly frightening. Already on my way to the cemetery, I was overtaken by many horse-drawn carriages filled with bodies. That early afternoon I saw carriages filled with old Jews, who were still alive. As I learned later, old Jews who could not walk were taken to the cemetery and shot.²³

The above-mentioned Dr. Karl Pernutz (from March 1942 vice-chief of the civil administration and the chief of the Department of Internal Affairs in Tarnów) recalled that on the day of the *Aktion* some SS officers showed up in his offices in the *Kreishauptmannschaft* building, and informed the staff about the upcoming operation.²⁴ His superior, Dr. Kipke, issued an order prohibiting all German civilian personnel from entering the ghetto, and strongly advised against venturing into the city. Dr. Kipke seems to have had a rather intimate knowledge of the situation, since at least one of the local *Schupos* (German city police) saw him during this *Aktion*, strolling the city with a *Reitpeitsche*—a riding whip.²⁵ Kipke's orders were not to be taken lightly, as some of the German civilians wandering that day through Tarnów found out that the members of the "shooting commandos" (*Erschiessungskommandos*) looked as if they were intoxicated.²⁶ Ernst August Wedekind, working in the mayor's office, in the department of supplies and human resources (*Abteilung Fürsorge u. Personalwesen*), lived not far away from his office, on Mozartstrasse. The *Kreishauptmannschaft* was located nearby, in the former bishop's palace. During the *Judenaktion*, Wedekind took his wife and another German family for a stroll. The Wedekinds and their friends were stopped by a drunken *Obersturmführer*, who requested some identification. In the course of a heated exchange, the soldier drew a weapon and threatened the Germans with immediate execution.²⁷ Given the conditions in the Tarnów area, the threat of execution was very real. Suffice it to say, Hermann Blache, one of the Gestapo officers responsible for the Tarnów *Aktion*, had been described by his own associates as "a dangerous man who, carried away by passion, could kill even a German."²⁸ Friedrich Eder, a Tarnów-born son of a German father and a Polish mother, recalled the "action" in the following words:

One day I went home from work. On Banderowski Street, across from the gas works, I saw a woman lying on the sidewalk. It was a Jewess, wearing an

armband [with the Star of David]. Perhaps she had escaped a column of Jews being marched from the ghetto to the train? An SS-man in field uniform approached her, wanting to help her up on her feet. The woman pushed him away, as if to say “leave me alone.” That’s when the SS-man pointed his weapon at her head, and shot her.²⁹

We also have the testimonies of German rank-and-file soldiers involved (directly and indirectly) in the “Jewish actions.” The letters cited below were written by soldiers, sent home to Germany through the military postal service and—on the way—intercepted by the Polish resistance. For the Poles, the letters constituted an important source of information about the deployment of German troops and about the German morale. For us, they are rare, first-hand, and contemporaneous accounts of *Judenaktionen*, seen through the eyes of perpetrators. In a letter dated September 25–26, 1942, Corporal H. Hirschnik wrote:

In Sokolno the Jews were loaded into two trains, later they were gassed and burned. There are no more Jews in Sokolno; all of this is done by the Polish police and by the [German] gendarmerie. You have no idea what kind of shit we have to deal with here. Whole families were lying [dead] along the streets and roads, the cattle were taken away and slaughtered. The Poles were told that all trespassers in the ghetto would be shot; and the Jews still have a lot of riches [hidden]. The army takes no part in any of it. Anyhow, we wouldn’t be able to finish such a job; we would have to call for support. We had hoped that all this would be soon over, because we are all fed up with it.³⁰

Soldier Hans Lustig wrote to his cousin in Frankfurt (Oder):³¹ “Today, in Janów, we were driving the Jews out. There were 5,000 people living in Janow, 3,000 of them were Jews. But the *Generalgouvernement* has to be cleansed of the Jews. First, three open wagons of narrow-gauge railway were loaded [with Jews], then there was a long column of marching [people], with horse-drawn wagons full of garbage, beds and so on, women with children, old women, men, all of that accompanied by spasms of whining and shouting. During the march two women breast-fed their babies, later people were thrown into railway cars upside down, in heaps, one meter high, one pushed on the other, terrible screams, a horrible scene. Tomorrow, the next part—but they [Jews] will already know that in two weeks all of them will be dead. Then the Poles will have more food and prices will go down.

Willy Schneider, from a *Schutzkommando*, was able to combine *Judenaktion* with some modest personal gains. On November 12, 1942 he wrote: “For

a couple of weeks we have been sending the Jews to the bosom of Abraham. I visited the ghetto on a few occasions and, as you can imagine, it was not in vain. I took a basketful of lingerie and clothing which I will either take [home] with me, or send to you.” SS-Unterscharführer P. Teith used a distinctly harsh tone in a letter sent to his associate in Saarbrücken: “I wish every colleague to have an opportunity to clear out a ghetto. One cannot describe well enough these experiences, these figures which once soiled our cities. This work gave me—and don’t think I am a sadist—a lot of joy!” Otto Heid saw the *Aktionen* in a different light: “Here all is over with the Jews, who were murdered in an inhuman way. [Our] heroes killing defenseless women and children. All this is inhuman. The Jewish quarter is deserted and looks like a battlefield. Culture of the 20th century.”³²

Back in Dąbrowa Tarnowska, Abraham Braw, expelled from Luszowice (a small village east of Dąbrowa), found himself in the ghetto on the day of the *Aktion*. His is one of the rare accounts of the “action” and the only account (which I have been able to locate) from the inside of a death train going from Dąbrowa to Bełżec:

I saw the gendarmerie guarding the Jews on the market square in Dąbrowa. Later, together with the Polish police, they marched them to the station. There, the gendarmes whipped the Jews, rushing them into the wagons. They packed us like herrings, so that we could not move. Mothers, trying to save their children from being crushed, raised them above their heads. We were squeezed so tight that the children had nowhere to fall. I had a knife with me, so I was able to free myself, and to jump from the train. The transport went to the extermination camp.³³

In the end, Braw turned his attention to the role of the Polish police in the extermination of Dąbrowa Jews: “I personally knew some of the policemen. They were from Dąbrowa and from the area. I also know that the Polish policemen had to follow the orders of the gendarmes and they worked well together.” One of the Polish policemen involved in the *Aktion* was an officer from Radgoszcz, and Braw’s good friend: “He told me that I must have been an idiot to allow myself to get caught like this!”³⁴ Another “blue” policeman caught Mrs. Witkowska, mother of two, who begged for mercy. The woman argued that she was a convert, that she had a Polish husband; she even asked for a priest. It was of no use, and Witkowska also went to the train.³⁵ Another Polish policeman—according to his own account—called in sick, and stayed away from the “Jewish

actions.” He did this despite assurances from the regional command of the Home Army “that involvement [taking part in liquidating the ghettos] would not stain our honor.”³⁶

The Jews who survived the July *Aktion*, and who had the necessary contacts and resources, took advantage of the few weeks of relative calm to seek shelter on the “Aryan” side. One of them was twelve-year-old Melania Weissenberg, who fled the ghetto and hid (with her elder cousin) at the farm of Wiktor Wójcik and Emilia Kułaga, on the outskirts of Dąbrowa. While in hiding, Melania managed to keep a diary, where she noted important events that marked her daily existence.³⁷ On Thursday, September 10, 1942, she noted:

I am now at one peasant woman’s place, where I went hiding with my family in order to flee the storm, which has to pass over the city. Oh, how much I fear about my love [Melania’s friend Sabina Goldman], who stayed behind in this awful city [Dąbrowa Tarnowska]! Now, I have all the time I want, so I keep thinking a lot. And I shiver at the thought that Binieczka might not leave the town in time!

Indeed, Melania’s fears were soon to be confirmed. In a last letter to her friend, written on September 11, 1942, Sabina Goldman wrote from Dąbrowa to her young friend:

My beloved child! I really have nothing to say because anything I will write will be banal, empty, and stupid but I know you will accept even that little. What can one write at time like this? We have already been in many dire straits but in such a situation as we are now, we have never been before. And we are completely powerless. Whether we hide or flee, will it change anything?? No, never! We have to reconcile ourselves with the thought that our lives are nearly over. We can say to ourselves that we are already 70 years old and that we leave this world to other people. Unfortunately, we are not leaving this world to make room for our children or our grandchildren! But what can we do? The N. [an unknown couple] say that if one encounters a Jew after the war, they will have to salute him from afar. I hope that the N. are wrong. But let’s not think about it. These are perhaps the last hours of our lives, so why should we poison them? I have no idea, perhaps some of us will survive? Perhaps someone will live through all of this? Be well and pray to the Lord that we see each other once again, yours loving Sabina.³⁸

A few days later, on September 18, 1942, the final *Aktion* struck the ghetto. Sabina was arrested by the Polish “blue” police and later delivered into the hands of the Germans. The news of her friend’s death reached Melania on September 28, 1942. She wrote in her diary:



From the left: Sara, Melania, and Zygmunt Weissenberg,
1937(?). *Applebaum family archives*.



Sabina ("Bineczka") Goldman, Dąbrowa Tarnowska,
1941. *Applebaum family archives.*

So all my fears, unfortunately, were proven right! I wish this day never came when I learned from my father's letter that my dearest, most beloved creature had been deported to a certain death! And after they kill her with electricity they will suck off her fat for soap! Oh, it's horrible, incomprehensible! To cut down this beautiful flower! If I survive, horrible will be my vengeance! It's for that vengeance that I lead this horrible life. This is the only thing which keeps me alive. When can I settle the score?

Shortly after the deportations, local Polish institutions started to finalize the "Jewish issues." In November 1942, the municipal court (Sąd Grodzki) decided to close the files on unpaid fines owed by the Jews "because the guilty individual, being a Jew, has been deported from Dąbrowa in an unknown direction"—wrote the judges in one of the many decisions.³⁹ The office of the mayor and local public services soon followed the example set by the court.

The unprecedented violence and brutality of "actions" in Dąbrowa and Tarnów seem to have even made an impression on German administrators from the area. Alfred Koch, *Landkommissar* from Gorlice (east of Dąbrowa), later stated, "We heard that horrible things were happening in Tarnów. They smashed children's heads against the walls and killed them in such a way. Until this very day [the interrogation took place on July 9, 1965] I recall that the most terrible conditions reigned in Tarnów."⁴⁰ And in such a way—after the final *Aktion*—four centuries of Jewish history in Dąbrowa Tarnowska came to an end.

The news about the impending "actions" persuaded many Jews to jump the fence and flee to the "Aryan side." The ghetto, as has already been mentioned, was surrounded with barbed wire and a wooden fence. Escape was not difficult, and Jews who were determined and, more importantly, who could hope for some assistance among the gentiles, could leave without much trouble. Rivka Schenker, previously cited, was one of them. In early October, she and a small group of friends decided to flee:

There was a fellow, his name was Lasota, and this Lasota knew well how to reach the Dulcza forest. He even had friends among the policemen. It must have cost a lot of money to get us over, each of us had to pay 50 zlotys, and we were 5 people—2 women and 3 men. I will never forget that day, it was October 5 [1942], it kept raining, it was pitch black, very windy, and very dangerous but Janek made up his mind, and decided that we had to leave at 4 A.M. We were ready, we crossed the electric fence and all went well. Lasota waited on the other side with a strong rope which we had to hold onto, so that we wouldn't get lost on the way. We ran so fast that I can hardly believe that one can be so strong. . . . At 6:30 A.M. we reached Dulcza forest and we were so glad that we could finally rest.⁴¹



Israel Izaak and his droshky, Tarnów, 1939(?). *Izaak family archive.*

The others, however, were doomed because, according to many, surviving among the Poles was next to impossible. Estera Landau was resettled to Dąbrowa from Nowy Sącz in 1941. In the spring of 1942 she “dressed up as an Aryan” and jumped the fence. Unfortunately, her stay among the gentiles did not last long: “I was unable to pretend I was an Aryan, I felt completely alienated and abandoned”—she wrote later.⁴² Soon enough, Landau returned to the ghetto and went on to survive the war in various concentration camps. Alter Milet from Dąbrowa put the Jewish dilemma in plain terms: “Perhaps the Jews should have fled, but, for the most part, they came from other areas, had no chance to find shelter anywhere, and they had no moral support of the local [Polish] population”⁴³ Izaak Izrael, a cabby from Tarnów, had a similar appreciation of the tragic choices: “There was only a handful of Poles who helped the Jews. The Poles were afraid, because the German mayor plastered the city walls with posters, threatening all those who helped the Jews [*Judenhelfer*] with death. It happened sometime after the second ‘action.’ After those posters went up, even decent Poles threw the Jews out of their apartments, and they were caught by the Gestapo.”⁴⁴

The situation of Jews who had been resettled into the Dąbrowa ghetto from nearby villages, shortly before the liquidation, was different. Throughout the

war, until the final days, they maintained good (or at least frequent) contacts with their “Aryan” neighbors, and remained part of the village community. Now, in the summer and fall of 1942, the quality of these contacts was subject to the most difficult of tests, and the outcome decided whether someone lived or died. Other Jews, particularly those who had no friends among the locals, sought safety in the forests—especially in a large wooded area extending from Radgoszcz to Radomyśl and straddling the border between Dąbrowa Tarnowska County and Mielec County. This was the opening of the last phase of destruction of the Dąbrowa Jews, a phase the Germans called the *Judenjagd*: the hunt for the Jews.

5

JUDENJAGD—*HUNT FOR THE JEWS*

*“In the year 1942, in the month of September,
we started hiding from the Germans, because
there was a strong deportation.”¹*

One should start with the numbers: from among 5,500–6,000 Jews who lived in Dąbrowa County prior to the “liquidation actions,” only 150–200 survived the war. The largest group (less than 100 people) survived in the Soviet Union; some of them returned to Poland after 1945, and registered in the Tarnów or Kraków offices of the Central Committee of Polish Jews. Others came back, stayed for a while, and fled westward, leaving neither a trace in the local documentation nor an imprint in the memory of the local people. Estimates regarding the number of Jews who survived the war hiding in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County vary. According to the most optimistic scenarios, which stress the universality of the “helping-hand” phenomenon among the Poles, more than 100 Jews survived the war in hiding, on the territory of the county. More prudent assessments talk about 50–60 survivors, hidden in more than thirty hideouts spread throughout the area. Shortly after the war, the Dąbrowa Tarnowska chapter of the Central Committee of Polish Jews (CKŻP) created several lists of survivors who arrived in the city. The lists (see table 9 annexed at the end of this book) include 110 names of people who survived the war either in concentration camps, in bunkers and hideouts, or in the Soviet Union. Although useful, these lists also

raise several doubts: they include people who came to Dąbrowa after the war, but who originally hailed from other areas; they fail to specify where the Jewish hideouts and bunkers were located; and they seriously underestimate the number of Dąbrowa Jews who survived in the Soviet Union and returned to Poland only after the lists had been drawn up. It is therefore doubtful whether one can simply accept, or reject, any of the scenarios and numbers above (the margin of error and the dearth of sources being simply too great an obstacle), but the evidence gathered for this study will allow us to place the data on a firm footing and to build on previous findings.

The most prolific author to write about the Poles who saved Jews in the Dąbrowa area was, no doubt, Józef Kozaczka, an amateur historian and head of the Dąbrowa chapter of the Polish Veterans' Association (ZBOWiD).² There is also no doubt that during the war Kozaczka helped Jews. In September 1942, Hinda and Fejga Birnbaum-Windheil, daughters of the local blacksmith, knocked on his door, pleading for help. Kozaczka helped them to get a set of "Aryan" documents that enabled the two young women to go to Germany, where they survived the war disguised as Polish "voluntary laborers." While one can appreciate Kozaczka's noteworthy wartime deed, the later writings of this amateur historian, full of factual errors and often based on hearsay, are an altogether different story. Nevertheless, Kozaczka's publications deserve scrutiny because his conclusions, without verification, have been accepted by other historians and later entered the academic mainstream.³ Kozaczka's preoccupation with the issue of Poles helping Jews coincided with the vicious antisemitic campaign initiated by the Communist Party of Poland in March 1968. The first of his articles, titled "This Is What We Get in Return! Poles Helping the Jews," appeared in the daily newspaper *Zielony Sztandar*⁴ (Green Standard). In the article, Kozaczka tackled the complex issue head-on:

It is with disgust and astonishment that I read about the slanders and smear campaigns orchestrated by various foreign Jewish circles, accusing us Poles of helping the Nazis to murder the Jews. It is difficult to imagine something more disgusting, and more untrue about our society. Of course, I am not going to discuss this nonsense, but I want to mention some facts and events from the territory of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County. We, former soldiers of the Resistance, are appalled at the slanders raised against us in Israel and elsewhere. So this is the payback for all the help given to the Jews? For all the sacrifice? Where are those whose lives we have saved? Why these Jews, who today live in Israel, the U.S.A., in Germany and elsewhere, why do they remain silent?

Another article by Kozaczka ("They Paid with Their Lives for Helping the Jews") appeared in *Słowo Powszechne* (Universal Voice), a weekly that spearheaded the antisemitic campaigns in 1968. However, the most detailed text of the amateur historian from Dąbrowa appeared later in the book *Poles and Jews, 1939–1945*.⁵ Here, Kozaczka listed more than one hundred cases of Jews saved by the Poles in Dąbrowa County. "There are one hundred villages in our county," wrote Kozaczka, "and in every one of them there were Jews in hiding . . . there were fifty-six Poles killed for having offered help to the Jews, twenty-seven killed on the spot, and twenty-eight murdered later in camps, and one person who died after a beating."⁶ Unfortunately, Kozaczka's numbers are uncorroborated; there are no indications of any research, no references to credible archival sources. Moreover, the phenomenon of "help" is defined in a very liberal way: liberal to such an extent that the long list of good people who helped the Jews during the war also includes one Polish "blue" policeman who could have shot a fleeing Jew, but took pity on the miserable man and decided not to squeeze the trigger. This situation resembles an exchange of opinions written down by a Jewish survivor from Tarnów: "There was a cabbie, one Staszek, who boasted how he had helped me during the war. One day I ran into him and asked him where did these lies come from? He was very surprised: 'How come? Don't you remember how many times I saw you in the city, already after the deportations, when there were no more Jews in Tarnów, and I never denounced you to the Germans!' So this was the help which he was boasting so much about."⁷ Much worse, Kozaczka's list of "helpful Poles" includes even one Michał Kozik who—according to the Dąbrowa historian—was said to have saved ten Jews. In fact, Kozik sheltered three Jews, whom he killed with an axe, in the late fall of 1944, when they ran out of money to pay for their shelter. Kozaczka's publications tell us nothing about the types of help: one based on selfless sacrifice, another, partially based on profit, or still another, based entirely on greed. We have no idea whether the Poles were punished for helping the Jews, for breaking any other German regulations, or because of their involvement in underground activities. Concluding his remarks, the chief of the local chapter of the Veterans' Union wrote about 150 Jews who after the war returned to Dąbrowa: "Many more could have returned, but for the bandits from the Jewish police, who tracked down their fellow Jews."⁸ This last statement has little foundation in fact, because Jewish policemen from the *Ordnungsdienst* never left the ghetto and, as mentioned, were murdered in December 1942, at the time when the hunt for the Jews had just begun.

One would hope that registers and lists of Nazi crimes and executions compiled over the decades by the Polish Main Commission of Investigations into Nazi Crimes would provide a wealth of evidence about the fate of Jews hidden in the area of our interest. Unfortunately, the findings of the commission are less than incomplete and, what is more disturbing, are blatantly skewed and unreliable. First of all, the registers report only three cases of Jews executed in the post-liquidation period. Second, in the case of crimes committed by Poles, the commission tends to ascribe the deed to Germans. For instance, in a List of Nazi Crimes in the Tarnów Area we read: “The Nazis murdered three people. The dead: Hereśniak; Owca Tadeusz; Polanicer Estera.” This is not true. Estera Polanicer had been delivered into the hands of the authorities by the local peasants, and the execution was carried out by Polish “blue” policemen from the Otfinów detachment. The Nazis had nothing to do with this particular killing.⁹ The same applies to Lejb Herszfeld and his family killed in Luszowice—he also figures on the list as a victim of the Nazis. According to witnesses, however, the Herszfelds were killed by their own gentile neighbors. In the commission’s reports we find no more information about the executions of other Jews hiding in the area. To make things worse, the reports of the Main Commission fail to follow the trail of archival evidence and to ask the question: how did the Germans know where to look for the Jews? Therefore, the identity of Polish informers and collaborators—directly responsible for the Jewish deaths—remained outside the scope of any inquiry. The pattern of half-truths or outright lies in the case of cited “Reports” is widespread. For instance, in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, in February 1943, several Poles (members of the Home Army), motivated by greed, murdered twelve Jews who had tried to join a partisan unit. In the local “Register” of the Main Commission we find a brief note: “The Nazis killed, in unspecified circumstances, twelve persons of Jewish nationality. No information about their identity.”¹⁰ In this case, the authors of the “Register” brazenly lied (or hinted to fellow specialists to read “between the lines”) because they provided the quotation above with a reference to archival documents that revealed the names of the Polish perpetrators and explained, in gruesome detail, the circumstances of this massacre. The reports of the Main Commission can hardly, therefore, be called a reliable and informed source about the fate of the Jews who, after the deportations of 1942, sought shelter in the area of our interest. Fortunately, other sources—created both during and immediately after the war—help us understand the dramatic choices facing the “non-Aryan” refugees.

FIRST PHASE OF THE *JUDENJAGD*

One can distinguish two phases of the hunt for the Jews: the actions of the Germans and their local helpers during and immediately after the liquidation of the ghettos, followed by the activities associated with the later period. The dynamics of these phases, and the strategy employed by the Germans, differed greatly. During the first phase, the leading role in the hunt went to the so-called “evacuation commandos” (*Evakuierungskommandos*), still present in the area. The other participants in the *Judenjagd* included the Polish “blue” police, youths from the construction service (*Baudienst*), the Jewish police, and local helpers and volunteers of various stripes. In order to weed out Jews, the Germans encouraged the local Polish population to take an active part in the hunt. The first hours of the *Judenjagd* resulted in finding the highest numbers of victims. That was when the hunters crisscrossed the ghetto, pulling out the Jews hidden in bunkers, attics, and false walls. Other fleeing Jews were apprehended in nearby woods and forests. Those hidden in the ghettos had the most to fear from agents of the Jewish police, who knew the hideouts better than anyone. One survivor of the Tarnów ghetto testified after the war, during the trial of Wilhelm Lerner, an OD agent: “I know the accused from before the war. The accused was not a bad OD man, but he wasn’t a good one either. I didn’t see him beating people up, but he carried around a riding whip. During one of the ‘actions’ in the ghetto I decided to seek (together with my wife and my son) a shelter in a bunker. The bunker was discovered by OD men; Lerner was among them. When I begged him, ‘Lerner, have mercy!’ the accused told me, ‘There is nothing I can do.’”¹¹ While some hunters pursued the victims hidden in the ghetto, others tracked down Jews who had fled to the “Aryan” side. The policemen and gendarmes combed local woods with the help of peasants, who marched as beaters, driving the Jews toward the uniformed hunters. It is hard to evaluate the number of victims killed during this early stage of the *Judenjagd*. Some Jews were executed on the spot, immediately. Others were taken to the local execution site—usually the nearest Jewish cemetery. In both cases, the data are sketchy, fragmentary, and unreliable. Sometimes—when the death train was still waiting in the station—the apprehended Jews were simply added to the transport to Bełżec. Once again, it is hard to pinpoint the number of victims. Stanisław Żemiński, a rural teacher from Łuków, observed this manhunt and noted in his diary:

For me, the situation was even more tragic because the orgy of murders was not only the deed of the Germans, and their Ukrainian and Latvian helpers. It was clear that our dear policemen would take part in the slaughter (one knows that they are like animals) but it turned out that normal Poles, accidental volunteers, took part as well. On Monday, in Trzebieszów, some kind of “citizens’ militia,” local peasants guarding the villages against bandits, were instructed to catch all local Jews, and to deliver them to Łuków. They surrounded the village and the hunt began. They pulled out the Jews from the houses; they caught them in the fields, in the meadows. The shots are still ringing, but our hyenas already set their sights on the Jewish riches. The [Jewish] bodies are still warm, but people already start to write letters, asking for Jewish houses, Jewish stores, workshops, or parcels of land. On November 5 [1942] I drive through the village of Siedliska. I enter the local community store. The peasants are buying scythes. The sales lady tells us “the scythes will come handy for today’s hunt.” “What hunt?” I ask. “The Jew hunt,” they tell me. “And how much do they pay you for each captured Jew?” Embarrassed silence is the answer.”¹² The hunters followed the fugitives into the forests, hoping for prizes offered by the Germans: vodka, sugar, potatoes, oil, but also personal items taken off the victims. People volunteered for this hunt willingly, without any coercion.

In Dąbrowa the situation was no different: local inhabitants were actively involved in pulling out Jews from the bunkers in the ghetto. In one of the larger hideouts, on Nabrzeżna Street, one Józef Kucharski found eighteen people—and promptly sold them to the Germans.¹³ In Szczepieszyn, a small town close to Zamość, the Polish doctor Zygmunt Klukowski reported in his diary:

The whole day, until dusk, horrible things kept happening. Gendarmes, SS, and the “blue” policemen cruised the city tracking the Jews. They pulled them from various hideouts, they knocked down the door, smashed the windows, sometimes they threw hand-grenades into the cellars . . . I am unable to describe what was going on . . . they are still hunting down the Jews. The “unknown” gendarmes and the SS-men left yesterday. Today it is the turn of “our” gendarmes and our “blue” policemen, who were told to kill every Jew on the spot. They follow these orders with great joy. Throughout the day they pulled the Jews from various hideouts. The victims were either immediately shot, or led away and killed in the Jewish cemetery . . . robbery is in full swing. Overall, the Polish population did not behave well. Some people were actively involved in tracking down and finding the Jews. They pointed out where the Jews were hiding; young boys chased after small Jewish children, and Polish policemen finished them off in plain sight of everybody.¹⁴

Jewish and Polish descriptions of this initial phase of the *Judenjagd* testify to the incredible level of violence, which evolved into an orgy of murder. For the local population it was also a lesson of obedience: the Germans were the masters of life and death, and Jewish life had no value at all. The day- and week-long hunts for Jews became so common that—in the areas close to the liquidated ghettos—“even dogs got used to the sound of gunfire, and stopped yapping,” noted one young Jewish woman from Radomyśl Wielki.¹⁵ Radomyśl Wielki is a small town located some fifteen miles east of Dąbrowa. In the summer of 1942, when the Germans liquidated the local Jewish community, some 250 Jews fled “to the Aryan side.” In this case, the “Aryan side” meant nearby forests and hideouts in the farms of peasants, who had previously been paid for their trouble. The hunt for the fugitives began immediately, the very day of the deportation.

What happened to the Jews who hid in peasants’ huts in the area? For the most part, they were chased away already on the day of the *Aktion*. At the same time the peasants robbed them clean, sometimes even taking away their clothing. The peasants had one excuse: that they were afraid of denunciation—which was a lie. During these tragic days we could once again see the animal-like instinct of the Polish peasants. It was not enough [for them] to kick the Jews out; they even went after those who hid in the woods, and in the fields, taking away their last possessions. Even if they did not kill them themselves, they denounced them to the police, and the police finished them off. The majority of the Jews, who started hiding on the day of the deportation, were either killed the same evening, or during the next ten days.¹⁶

So much for the testimony of one of the inhabitants of Radomyśl, given shortly after the war.

For the Jews who survived the initial period after the liquidation of the ghettos, the choices of strategies of survival became more and more limited. Some were able to secure shelters in Polish houses. Sometimes they used false documents and tried to live “on the surface,” among the gentiles, usually far away from their prewar residences. Both of these options required, however, substantial financial resources. As far as the Jews “moving on the surface” are concerned, I was able to find only three such examples in Dąbrowa County. Fejga Kryształ spent the war teaching Polish children, and later married her Polish host.¹⁷ Hersz Buch and his companion, Cesia Heller, fled the liquidated Tarnów ghetto in the winter of 1944. They were able to survive the next few months in villages close to Dąbrowa, passing for Poles. Both had good (credibly

falsified) IDs (*Kennkarte*); he had “good” (“Aryan”) looks, and she thought she was well-versed in local customs. Unfortunately, she was wrong. One day, in church, instead of kneeling on one, and later on the other knee, she knelt on both knees at the same time, and people started to whisper that something was wrong.¹⁸ The couple had to immediately look for a safe hideout. As we see, in the walled-off, self-governing rural society, attempts to survive “on the surface” were rare, short-lived, and—usually—doomed to fail. For the Jews who had run out of money, the choices were very limited: they could build bunkers in the nearby forests, they could return to the local *Restghettos* (in this case, to the *Restghetto* in Tarnów), they could join one of the *Julags* (*Judenlager*), or go to another labor camp that still used a Jewish work force. And only a very few (as will be shown later) fortunate people could rely on the selfless help of their “Aryan” neighbors.

SECOND PHASE OF THE JUDENJAGD

The first phase of the Jew hunt came to an end as soon as the Jews hidden in bunkers in the ghetto, or those wandering in the nearby woods, had been discovered and killed.¹⁹ In order to find the rest, the Germans needed new methods and a new strategy. From the German standpoint, this phase (which was to last until the end of the war) required significant involvement of the local Polish population. To achieve their goal, the Germans developed a system of prizes and penalties, and combined it with a constant barrage of propaganda, making the Poles even more sensitive to the “Jewish threat.” The system of penalties for hiding Jews has been discussed at length in the historical literature.²⁰ First and foremost was the penalty of death, introduced by the “3rd Regulation Concerning the Restrictions on Residence in the Generalgouvernement” (*Verordnung über Aufenthaltbeschränkungen im Generalgouvernement*), issued by Governor General Hans Frank on October 15, 1941. Incidentally, similar regulations were also issued in other German-occupied territories east of Poland. Capital punishment could thereafter be applied against Jews who had left the ghettos without proper authorization, and against all people who came to their aid (the legal language talked about *Judenbegünstigung*, or aiding and abetting the Jews). During the first months following the publication of this regulation, the death sentence was applied sporadically, without a clear “penal” policy, and only against the Jews.²¹ Poles involved in *Judenbegünstigung* faced—at least until the summer of 1942—fines and prison terms. The situation took a dra-

matic turn at the time of the “liquidation actions.” From then on, the Germans started to ruthlessly punish those caught breaking the spirit and letter of the 3rd Regulation. Jews were executed immediately; for Poles the penalty of death became a distinct possibility. The preserved files of the German Special court from Lemberg, the records of the Zichenau Gestapo, and postwar investigations conducted by Polish and German authorities show that some Poles were sentenced to death, others went to prison, and some were fined, or simply let go. After several decades of research, the Main Commission (and more recently its heir, the Institute of National Remembrance; IPN) has been able to identify slightly more than seven hundred cases of Poles executed for helping Jews in hiding.²² At the same time, thousands of Jews were caught hiding in Polish houses, on the “Aryan” side. Some of these Poles, as mentioned above, were sent to camps, or sentenced to prison terms. Frequently, however, the only victims of such a “discovery” were the betrayed Jews, who usually were executed on the spot. This was related to the “amnesties” periodically issued by the Germans, and intended for Poles who informed the authorities about Jews hidden in their own houses. In these cases, the gendarmes executed the Jews, and informers received a prize, usually clothes of the victims. This practice was well known in the Tarnów area—so well known, in fact, that the peasants testifying in the late 1940s very frequently made reference to it. Of course, the amnesties went hand in hand with the policy of brutal repression of those who dared to keep Jews. The Poles involved in *Judenbegünstigung* had no guarantee whether—in case of arrest—they would face prison terms, or be executed together with their families, but they had to assume the worst. And several cases of helpers being executed occurred in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County—they will be discussed at length in later chapters.

In February 1940, Jan Karski, one of the early envoys of the Polish resistance to the West, alerted the Polish government-in-exile that “dislike of the Jews created a narrow bridge on which the [German] occupier and a significant part of the Polish society could meet.” In later years the Germans, using all the propaganda tools at their disposal, worked hard to widen this bridge. The Germans targeted all segments of Polish society, especially the peasants, who made up to 70 percent of the total population of the *Generalgouvernement*.²³ The authorities provided each village with a hate-filled wall-newspaper, “News” (*Nowiny*), which the village elders were ordered to put up in public spaces. In the summer and fall of 1942, a “wandering exhibition” entitled “Jews and Typhus” toured

the Kraków District. The exhibition made a clear link between the Jews wandering from place to place and the outbreaks of deadly disease. The lesson was obvious: giving shelter to Jews carried not only the threat of official sanctions; it also meant danger of an epidemic. In July 1942, when the “liquidation actions” were being conducted in the Tarnów area, the authorities intensified campaigns against typhus. One of the most important regulations sent out of the offices of Tarnów *Kreishauptmann* was a general ban on admitting strangers and putting them up for the night. In principle, the regulation was dressed up as a hygienic and sanitary measure. In reality, however, the regulation of *Kreishauptmann* of July 9, 1942 targeted Jewish refugees looking for shelter outside the liquidated ghettos. In August 1942, in Tarnów, the Traveling Theater of the *Generalgouvernement* began presenting the play *Quarantine* written by the Polish actress and screenwriter Halina Rapacka. The play’s message was similar to that of the traveling exhibition: avoid Jews, who bring spiritual and physical corruption and who infect Poles with typhus.²⁴ To make this message more attractive, the Germans introduced a system of prizes and rewards for those who decided to take an active part in anti-Jewish actions. A system of small rewards—mentioned earlier by Ringelblum—was known throughout occupied Poland. In Dąbrowa Tarnowska, Landrat, the chief of the local German administration offered 2 kilograms of sugar for each denounced Jew. This was the prize claimed by one Bronisław Przędział from Bagienica, a hamlet close to the city, who regularly prowled local woods looking for Jews.²⁵ Of course, sugar was not the only prize; it was rather offered as a “sweetener” of the deal. Next door to Dąbrowa, in Mielec County, the authorities offered up to 500 zlotys for each surrendered Jew.²⁶ Other bounties included clothing taken off the executed victims and customarily given to informers and hunters. Sometimes the compensation was clearly insufficient, as in the case of a peasant from Gorzyce who was ordered to bury the bodies of executed Jews. After the burial, the peasant took the dress, shoes, and a head scarf “left behind by [Polish policemen], but only afterwards did I found out that there was a bullet hole in the back of the dress,” he complained later.²⁷ In some cases, the rewards were more generous. One of the Jew killers even received a case of vodka.²⁸ There were times when peasants would negotiate the prize directly with the Germans. One of the people sentenced after the war to eight years in prison for having helped murder two Jews said, “So, Hamann,²⁹ from the Gestapo, asked us what was it that we wanted for having killed these Jews.” “Whatever you see fit, although I,

personally, would be happy with some clothes,” replied Koza.³⁰ Hamann agreed with Koza and the whole “hunting team” left with a case full of Jewish-owned clothes.³¹ Some hunters, less willing to trust German generosity, claimed their prizes in advance. Michał Witkowski from Luszowice, having caught a Jewish girl in his barn (we know only that she was the daughter of a local Jew named Lejb), decided to deliver her personally to the nearest gendarmerie station, in Radgoszcz. On the way, he took away from the child a little packet which she held in her hands, and hid it under the bridge. On his way back home (the girl having been executed by the policemen), Witkowski retrieved the packet and found inside “two sweaters, and a little box containing needles and thread.”³²

It needs to be noted that denouncing and murdering Jews did not carry the social stigma associated with murder or denunciation of fellow Poles. In certain circles, helping Jews was even considered an activity directly opposed to the vital interests of the Polish nation. This was the opinion held by an underground newspaper published by the National Armed Forces (*Narodowe Siły Zbrojne*; NSZ): “We have to punish those who want to hide Jews and declare them traitors to the common Polish cause. Because every true Pole knows that in a reborn Poland there will be room neither for a German nor for a Jew.”³³ In January 1943 another underground publication warned its readers that “each Jew now in hiding is one hundred times more dangerous than one hundred Jews before the war.”³⁴ The opinions expressed by the Polish underground left little doubt as to the wartime sympathies and convictions. In 1943, a newsletter reported: “Thousands of ‘Macabees’ hunker down in the forests and, together with Soviet saboteurs and other bandits, rob and murder the Polish population, and the Jews excel at these cruelties. How many Jews are still being sheltered by Poles who forget that their charges will denounce them without slightest hesitation and, should the [Soviet] butchers from the GPU show up in Poland, they would betray them, too. Jewry still has significant power in Poland.”³⁵ This sentiment was echoed by one Józef Miceusz, a Gestapo agent assigned to Tarnów and Kraków, who, at his trial after the war, defended himself: “I denounced some people, but I was hunting down only Jews.” One Pączek, a voluntary firefighter from Raclawice, who caught a Jewish family in hiding, expressed himself even more bluntly: “You bloody Jewish aunt!” he called the Polish woman who offered them shelter. “How dare you keep Jews!”³⁶

By late 1942, the strategy of the long-term Jew hunt had finally been codified and unified into a coherent system of regulations, which had been elaborated and established in the course of several meetings held by the chiefs of police

and heads of civil administration. This system remained in place until the end of the war. In one of the “working memoranda” we read:

Der SS- und Polizeiführer, Date: March 13, 1943, Concerns: Arrest and liquidation of Jews who remain in hiding. Re: Meeting of the Chiefs of the Regions [*Kreishauptmänner*] in Łowicz, held on March 11, 1943. In accordance with the decisions taken on March 11, I order immediate and most energetic action to apprehend the Jews, who have to be transferred to the gendarmerie, for liquidation. More specifically, we are dealing here with Jews who roam the cities and the countryside without an armband [a Star of David], who were able to flee the earlier Deportation Actions. In order to succeed, one has to involve the *Sonderdienst*, the Polish Police and the informers (*V-Männer*). It is also necessary to involve the broad masses of Polish society. After the arrest of the Jews, their property (movables, cash, and other items) is to be deposited in a specially created holding area for Jewish goods [*Werterfassung*]. Local commanders of the gendarmerie have to produce itemized lists of seized property, and hold [this property] until further instructions from my office. Persons who have helped to apprehend the Jews can receive up to 1/3 of the seized property. Signed: Der SS-u. Polizeiführer im Distrikt Warschau; SS-Oberführer.³⁷

Now, having presented the background of the *Judenjagd*, we can move forward to analyze the data concerning the arrests of Jews who tried to survive on the “Aryan side,” in the villages and forests of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County. How successful was the described system in helping to locate the Jews? Our first step is to place the events in chronological order.

Setting the discussed events on a time axis is a challenge. In peasants’ accounts (but also in the testimonies of survivors), the years of occupation blend into one amorphous mass that is, to an extent, organized by the sequence of seasons and associated field activities. Only rarely do the historical events enable us to connect peasants’ narrative with precise dates. Such events include the coming of the Eastern Front; liquidation of a local ghetto (although even here the dates are imprecise, especially when the ghetto was liquidated in stages); the well-documented exploits of Kosieniak, the local bandit;³⁸ or mass executions, such as the murder of Gypsies, in Szczurowa, in July 1943. In other cases, and certainly in the case of murders of individual Jews, precise dates are hard to establish. Peasants testifying after the war said: “I do not recall the precise date, but I know that it was under the German occupation”; “under the German occupation in a day and year which I cannot recall, but it was during the fall . . .”; “in a year which I cannot recall, I and six other peasants were called

Table 5.1. Chronology of Murders

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Fall–Winter 1942 | 53 |
| 1943 | 117 |
| 1944–January 1945 | 57 |
| No precise date | 59 |
| Total: | 286 |

Note: The data included in the table are based on the information from the Kraków Appellate Court (SAKr), the Kraków Office of the Prosecutor, the German investigations, the Jewish accounts from ŻIH (collections 301, 302), and Yad Vashem accounts, collection 03. For the complete full list of dossiers and testimonies used in this study, see the bibliography.

to serve as night watchmen”; “sometime in the fall, when we dug the potatoes, there came a Jew-boy to my house.” The chronology improves with the level of education of witnesses—clerks, teachers, and pharmacists seem to be better at pinpointing the dates.

According to the data above, in more than 20 percent of cases it is impossible to precisely determine the dates of murders of Jews in hiding. It is also striking how many murders have been reported for the 1943–1944 period. The reports of German gendarmerie paint, however, a different picture: the greatest “successes” of the *Judenjagd* seem to have happened during the fall–winter of 1942. It is during that period that inexperienced refugees wandered between villages and were caught by the hundreds. That is when the soldiers from 101 Reserve Police Battalion, operating in the Lublin District, north of Dąbrowa, pulled hundreds of Jews from their primitive bunkers in the forests. Of course, with the flow of time (and in the context of quasi-total anonymity of the victims), the memory of these events started to pale in the minds of Polish witnesses. The tragedy of Jews who were apprehended much later, ones who were hiding in the area for a long time, those who received—for months or even years—some assistance from the locals, was etched deeper in the collective memory than the fate of the “early” victims of the *Judenjagd*. The Jews who were betrayed and killed in 1943 or later were much more likely to be known to the locals; they had names and—not infrequently—their families had lived in the area for generations. It is particularly striking how many murders were reported for 1944, the time when the *Judenjagd*—the Jewish survivors from rural areas state it unequivocally—was no longer the major preoccupation. Most of the Jews in hiding had already been killed, and the Germans were increasingly concerned with the Soviet threat approaching from the east. Nevertheless, these “late

Table 5.2. Circumstances of Death of Jews in Hiding, Dąbrowa Tarnowska County

| | |
|---|-----|
| Killed by the German police (gendarmerie)—own action | 7 |
| Killed by the German police (gendarmerie)—denounced by the locals | 98 |
| Killed by the locals | 7 |
| Killed by the “blue” Polish police—own action | 13 |
| Killed by the “blue” Polish police—denounced by the locals | 102 |
| Unknown circumstances | 59 |
| Victims (total) | 286 |

murders” from the last period of the *Judenjagd* were, unsurprisingly, so vivid in the memory of the locals. This is clearly reflected in the data from table 5.1.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 are based on historical sources that, due to their very nature, offer an incomplete image of the phenomenon of betrayals and murders. First of all, court and police documents can only reveal a part of the criminal activity. Other events, which never came to the attention of the authorities, remain absent from the presented data. Moreover, the murders committed against the Jews came to the attention of the police in rather extraordinary circumstances, usually as a result of neighbors’ quarrels that resulted in denunciations. Public murders, those committed in the presence of many witnesses, were therefore most likely to be reported.³⁹ The murders committed “individually,” usually by the very people who had until one point kept the Jews, remain unknown and unpunished.

These kinds of tragedies saw the light of day only in most unusual circumstances: usually when a deep conflict divided the family, and one of the spouses decided to inform on the other. Sometimes, other Jews learned about a murder. In one of the Jewish testimonies we read that “in 1942, Rywka Glückmann and her two sons found shelter in the house of one Michał Kozik from Dąbrowa Tarnowska (Ruda Zazamcze). He kept them from 1942 until 1944 (three months before the Russians arrived), as long as they paid him. Once the money was gone, Kozik murdered all three of them with an axe. Jews hiding across the street (Chaskiel Gruszow with his mother, Berker’s sister and Aron Berker) heard the howls of the murdered, and the next day learned that the Glückmanns were dead.”⁴⁰ A more detailed account of a similar murder was described in a letter written by a Jewish refugee who, after the Kielce pogrom of 1946, fled Poland and sought refuge in Germany. He wrote to his friend, a Polish peasant, describing in detail the murder of his brother by the fellow who had until then helped them.⁴¹ A few similar horrors can be found in the

files of the German war-time Special Courts (*Sondergerichte*). In one case, a Jew who had learned about the murder of his entire family at the hands of local peasants, and having lost his reason and will to live, went to the German police and reported the murderers. In another case, a rejected mistress went to the “blue” police, and reported her ex-lover, who had killed three Jewish women and stole rings and gold found hidden in their underwear.⁴² But these were extraordinarily rare circumstances. We can safely assume that the vast majority of murders committed by treacherous rescuers on their “own” Jews will remain hidden and unreported forever.

6

RURAL SOCIETY AND THE JEWS IN HIDING

The desperate struggle for survival undertaken in 1942 by the Jews of Dąbrowa County collided with a complicated, but deadly efficient, system based in part on old, prewar traditions, and in part on mechanisms, structures, and institutions introduced by the Germans. There is no doubt that the great majority of Jews in hiding perished as a consequence of betrayal. They were denounced, or simply seized, tied up, and delivered by the locals to the nearest station of the Polish police, or to the German gendarmerie. In this context, an important role was performed by the structures of local self-government and rural self-defense, which coordinated the collective activities of these rural communities. At the level of a commune (*gmina*)¹ the authority usually resided in the office of a *voit* (*wójt*), an official appointed by the head of the district (*starosta*). After the September 1939 collapse of the Polish state, some of the *voits* were removed by the Germans and replaced with people (often local ethnic Germans—the *Volksdeutsche*) seen as loyal to the new occupation authorities. Nevertheless, as late as January 1944 more than one half of all *voits* in the Kraków District were Poles.² From the German standpoint, the *voits*' main task was to mobilize Polish agriculture and Polish peasants for the wartime needs of the economy of the Reich. First, each village had its fixed quota of products, grains, and livestock that had to be delivered to the state, or sold at regulated (i.e., derisory) prices. Second, the *voits* were responsible for finding volunteers to go to work in Germany. After 1940, volunteers became scarce, and people were taken to Germany by force. The *voits* were also required to inform the population about

all new German regulations, and regularly held meetings with *Kreishauptmänner* (chiefs of regions), who communicated directives coming from Kraków, the capital of the *Generalgouvernement*. There was even a bilingual Polish–German “Bulletin” that carried detailed instructions for the *voits*. The *voits* later conveyed these orders to the village elders (*sołtysi*), who headed the lower level of rural self-government. In prewar Poland, the elders were chosen under public scrutiny and, most often, the elected individuals commanded respect among their peers. In some cases, elders were chosen in general village elections; elsewhere, the commune representatives cast the ballots.³ During the war, elders were told by the Germans to continue their mandates; attempts to quit the job were considered acts of sabotage.⁴ According to Jan T. Gross, “except when they wanted to promote ambitious new *Volksdeutsche*, the Germans would usually leave the old *sołtys* in his post, and he was smart enough to become aware that many candidates were eager to take his place. Therefore, he made sure that his performance satisfied the Germans.”⁵ At the same time, the elders received new powers, raising concerns among the peasants. A resident of the village of Kozłów noted in his memoir: “Occupation. The worst plague is our degenerated Poles, if one can call them Poles at all. . . . Once the Germans introduced the death penalty for insulting or assaulting an elder, the latter lost contact with their constituents. . . . When this regulation was announced from the church pulpits, the elders became virtual dictators.”⁶ The elders were thus placed in a very difficult situation, and their loyalties were clearly divided between their own community and the German masters. “First, local government officials were totally visible to the Germans and fully replaceable, as no special skills were needed to run a rural hamlet. They could not disappear and hide, except in the forests, leaving behind family and possessions. They were therefore totally dependent on the mercy of the local German gendarmerie and administration officials. Second, the only tasks assigned to local administrators involved exploiting the local population rather than rendering any service. They were only the last tool in the German system of imposing and collecting quotas of various articles from the Poles”—wrote Gross.⁷

Whenever a position of an elder became vacant, the *voits* (with the accord of the Germans) appointed a new candidate. While the *voits* met the *Kreishauptmänner* on a regular basis, the village elders were called in, from time to time, to listen to the local *Landkommissars*. In some areas of the Kraków District the meetings were convened very frequently, sometimes as often as each week. Local gendarmes had a role to play as well. In Dąbrowa Tarnowska, *wachmeister*



German police officer searches a peasant's hut. February 1942. *Narodowe Archwum Cyfrowe (NAC) National Digital Archive, Warsaw, NAC-2-4614.*

Richard Ketter—a well-known killer of Jews—often took part in these meetings.⁸ During these sessions, German officials discussed the quotas, numbers of laborers to be sent to the Reich and, in the summer 1942, the transfer of local Jews to the secondary ghettos (in our case, to Tarnów and Dąbrowa), or directly to death transports to Bełżec. The elders were told to secure a sufficient number of wagons and carts, and to mobilize the village guards. Later, after the deportations, the elders were charged with disposing of Jewish movable and immovable property. Although this issue extends beyond the scope of this study, it is worthwhile to note the existence of this intriguing (and practically unexplored) question. With time, especially after the outbreak of war with Russia, and with the simultaneous growth of underground organizations, the village elders were ordered to organize community-based self-defense structures. This self-defense force was primarily dependent on night watches (guards) and voluntary firefighters, with assistance provided by village “couriers,” deputy elders, and elders themselves. In the Bolesław commune (north of Dąbrowa,

close to the Vistula River), the night watch was thirty-men strong, and drew peasants from twelve nearby villages. In order to secure the military depots that had been built in this village, the Germans joined the villages in a so-called "Integrated Commune" (*Sammelgemeinde*) and were thus able to mobilize a more significant force for the night watch.⁹ The watch started in a guardhouse (sometimes it was a guardhouse only by name, since any large room in a peasant's house would do). There was also a "village prison," normally a safely locked potato cellar, or other secure area, transformed, whenever required, into a holding pen. In the village of Tomczyce, the elder locked fifteen Jews who had been caught by the members of the local "sanitation brigade" into his pigsty.¹⁰

The members of the watch (designated beforehand by the elder, by the *gendarmes*, or by the Polish "blue" police) received their orders from the commander of the watch, and left the guardhouse to reach the designated areas in and around the village. In addition to regular watchmen, who were required to serve from time to time, following the local rotation, there were also "section leaders" (*dziesiątnicy*). They were more frequently on duty, received modest compensation for their efforts, and had seniority over other members of the watch (excluding the commander, of course).¹¹ In addition to their regular guard duties, section leaders had to inform the authorities about the situations in their communities: "Since I was the section leader in my village, I was required to know what was going on; these were my orders from the higher authority. I was told to report everything to the community office."¹²

Although the watchmen were armed mostly with pitchforks, clubs, and other blunt instruments, the Germans made sure that at least one peasant per watch carried a firearm, too. In order to put more pressure on the guards, and to improve their zeal, every village had to designate a number of "hostages," or people who were held personally responsible by the Germans for any actions which—in the parlance of the times—could "threaten the vital interests of the German Nation." The hostages were appointed, for limited periods of time, by the police or by the elders. They were kept on a tight leash, and had to keep in touch with the local "blue" police and report about the "state of security in their village"—not unlike the section leaders mentioned above. Hostages who refused to inform were threatened with terms of hard labor in forced labor camp (*Arbeitserziehungslager*; AEL) Szebnie, Mielec, or Pustków.¹³ Thus, the police secured the cooperation of many peasants and gained a steady flow of information about situations in rural areas. Incidentally, the "hostage" phenomenon was known not only in rural areas; in nearby Sanok, German authorities also

“appointed” chosen individuals to these positions of unwanted responsibility. Antoni Wilk, a local businessman, was twice selected by the German mayor as a hostage. In both cases, the businessman’s “term of appointment” was limited to two weeks.¹⁴ The night watch was subject to periodical police controls. In Lubaszowa, in the spring of 1943, “blue” policemen from Tuchów descended on the village to inspect the “state of preparedness” of the guards. Finding no peasants on duty, they fined the slackers 50 zlotys each.¹⁵ In Książ Wielki, inspections of the night watch were carried out by members of the local fire-fighting brigade. One delinquent watchman (instead of patrolling his area, he went to his sister’s wedding) was caught and delivered to the police station. After the war he testified: “I was beaten with rubber whips so badly that I had open wounds, and could not walk. All policemen took part in the beating.”¹⁶

What exactly were the duties of the night watch? In the first place, the watchmen had to secure the villages from “bandits, partisans, and other unwanted elements.” In late 1942 and in 1943, with the increased presence of partisan units, the security conditions in rural areas (especially in eastern parts of occupied Poland) deteriorated quickly. Since it was obvious that peasants were unable to stop the partisans, the instructions sent from Kraków advised particular vigilance when dealing with fugitive Soviet POWs, and with the Jews who had fled the liquidated ghettos. The village guards were ordered to stop all suspicious individuals—and most of all Jews who wandered from one village to another, looking for help.

From the German standpoint it was essential to get the peasants involved in the hunt, even if the latter were not always adequately trained. On September 28, 1943 an underground newsletter *Informacja Bieżąca* (Current Information) published a note under the title “Peasants Murder Polish Engineers”:

On Sunday, September 18, 1943, two Polish engineers from Myślenice [a small town south of Kraków] went for a ride in the countryside. In the village of Stróża they were stopped by peasants who asked to see their papers. The engineers presented identity cards but the peasants claimed that the papers were fake and that both men were, in fact, Jews hiding from German justice. All attempts to explain themselves failed, and the two engineers were massacred, their ribs cracked, their limbs—broken—and their heads smashed in. Nearly half of the village joined in the beating of the alleged Jews. At the same time, the peasants alerted the German gendarmerie in Myślenice. The Germans arrived and took both victims away. One of them died on the way; the other one was executed in Kraków. It soon became clear that the victims were not Jews, so they have been

made into communists instead. A few days later, the village received its reward from the Germans: additional rations of vodka and ration coupons for fabrics.¹⁷

The underground newsletter provided no further information about the circumstances surrounding the event. Were the peasants additionally motivated by previous German reprisals? Were they simply following the regular procedure elaborated by their own village watch? Had they been recently victimized by bandits or robbers? It seems, in any case, that peasants-guardsmen of Stróža, when confronted with unknown travelers, preferred to stray on the side of caution. And occasional mistakes, such as the one described above, must have served as powerful deterrent to all those who contemplated “roaming the countryside” without, or indeed, even with proper documentation.

Once they had a Jew in their custody, and before matters were referred to higher instances, members of the village watch conducted their own investigations. One Polish witness described the arrest of a Jew from Mędrzechów in these words: “As he sat in the locked cellar, I heard him crying and asking for mercy. [The members of the watch] took him from the cellar, and led him to his house, so he would show them where he had buried his stuff and his gold. When he refused, they beat him up and tortured him.”¹⁸ In 1943, in the village of Smarżowa (in neighboring Dębica County), peasants caught a local Jew. They bound Josek Leinmann’s legs with a chain, then threw the chain through a pulley attached to the ceiling, and “lifted the Jew off the ground, feet first, so that he fell off the bed and lay on his back, with his legs up, in the air. The Jew begged [us] to let him go, but Antoni Bułat was furious [with Josek] and beat him all over with a wooden log.”¹⁹

For the Jews who waited for death in a village prison, the time before the police arrived was filled with pleas for mercy. Occasionally the doomed tried to appeal to their captors’ compassion, some begged to be released, and others wanted simply to say a few final words before dying. The drama of the captured Jews was even greater when they personally knew their oppressors: “The captured [Jew] stood in the corner and prayed aloud: ‘God, why do you test us so severely! Why are these people so cruel to us. I am so young, and I want to live so badly!’” Haskiel Rand, caught together with his nine-year-old son Izaak in December 1943, in Wojnicz commune, was beaten so badly “that his face was bloody, so that initially I was unable to recognize him,” testified a “blue” policeman after the war. “Rand turned to me, and said, ‘Chief, see what they have done to me, look how they beat me up.’ Stanisław Kuk, one of

the locals [who had brought Rand to the police station] said: 'We beat you up because you kept struggling, you son of a bitch!'"²⁰ In May 1944, in Sutków (near Radgoszcz), members of the local night watch arrested eighteen-year-old Chaim Knie. One of the peasants called to the commander of the watch: "Francis, we have got ourselves a Jew!" Knie, known to the locals simply as "little Chaim," begged for mercy. To no avail. Some time later, the commander of Sutków watch testified that "when Chaim saw me, he said, 'What did I do to them? Why did they tie me up like this?' Then Chaim sat on a bench and started to pray. I want to add that everybody knew Chaim well because he had stayed in our area from the beginning of the war." Soon the victim, with hands tied with barbed wire behind his back, was delivered to the Radgoszcz police station, where he was murdered the same day.²¹ The Jew Marian Haba had been beaten by peasants so badly that the "blue" policeman who arrived some time later "fired one shot, to put Haba out of his misery." One witness recalled the words of the policeman: "I have worked for fifteen years in the police, but I have never seen anything like it. The Jew has been literally butchered by the peasants."²² Another witness added, "We found one horrible mass of meat. The Jew had been massacred, all bloodied, his face was covered with foam. He did not move; he was all black."²³ As one can see, the arrested Jews were treated brutally by the guards—sometimes very brutally. Following the arrest of a Jew, guards summoned their village elder, or *voit*, who would then decide the course of action. Rarely (and until no later than mid-1942, as long as some ghettos still existed in the area) could the elder simply release the prisoner. In practically all cases, however, the arrested Jews were eventually transferred into the hands of the authorities. At that point, the elder appointed one or more peasants to transport the apprehended fugitive to the nearest police station, or to gendarmes. In the absence of an elder, the matter could be settled by his deputy, or by the commander of the watch. Sometimes, in the absence of the people above, the issue was decided by one of the section leaders.²⁴ There were times, however, when, for one reason or another, it was impossible to deliver the Jews to the police. Since most of the villages had no telephone links, a courier of the commune would be dispatched to fetch the agents. The commune couriers had an official standing and, according to the law, had to assist the police in searching the houses of people suspected of aiding Jews.²⁵ Village couriers and cart drivers ordered by their elders to deliver Jews to the police faced a difficult dilemma: refusal could mean punitive quotas of grains, arrest, or even death. To set the transported Jews free on the way to the police station could result in

severe penalties from the Germans. Reprisals could affect other people as well. The principle of collective responsibility was applied universally, and the appointment of the earlier mentioned “hostages” was an excellent way to enforce obedience among the peasants. After the war, some of the village couriers and cart drivers unfortunately had to face the courts (and several were sentenced to years in prison) as accessories to the murder of Jews whom they had helped to bring to the execution sites. The *Judenjagd* made the elders face disturbing challenges, and they had to make choices for which they were ill-prepared. After the war, before the court, they defended their good name and tried to explain themselves in naive and unsophisticated language.

Franciszek Olbrycht, the elder from Bieniaszowice, described how one day in his house, in March 1944, he found “two people of Mosaic faith, a woman called Pearl Kapelner and a man with the nickname ‘Black,’ who hailed from Opatowiec, on the other side of the Vistula River. There were also some other people who guarded the Jews. Pearl sat on the bench, and softly cried. The man sat next to her,” added Olbrycht.²⁶ Before the war, Pearl Kapelner had lived in nearby Siedliszowice, and was well known to the people of Bieniaszowice. But the peasants who caught and delivered the Jews to the elder’s house were not yet done. The hunters requested that Olbrycht call the police from the nearest station, in Gręboszewo. At first the elder hesitated, but when one of the peasants threatened him—“What, do you pity the Jews?”—he ordered someone to prepare a cart. Later that day, Pearl Kapelner and “Black” from Opatowiec were handed over to the police, and shot. An elder from Kłyż, sentenced to six years in prison for having called in the “blue” policemen who executed the local Jewish woman, tried to justify his actions: “My only fault was that one Julian Żelazny showed up in my office and requested that I summon the ‘blue’ police. The Jewess was said to have also asked for the police, or so I was told, and I had to follow this request.”²⁷ Władysław Nagórzański, a village elder from Siedliszowice, who had organized a manhunt that netted a local Jewish merchant, also referred to orders coming from above: “The [‘blue’] policeman told me to send out, as an elder, a few peasants and to catch the Jew-boy.”²⁸ Indeed, the elders were caught in a potentially deadly trap. On the one hand, in the event of inaction, the authorities could take a very dim view of an elder’s role and performance. On the other hand, elders had to contend with the mood of their own people—some of whom were actively persecuting, denouncing, and robbing Jews. Very often these neighbors were the ones who insisted that

apprehended “citizens of Jewish nationality”²⁹ be immediately executed, or at least surrendered to the authorities. One of the peasant hunters told the reluctant elder, “If the elder does not know what to do with the Jew, perhaps the Germans will know what to do with the elder.”³⁰ Noncompliant elders were often threatened with denunciation. The letters sent to the police, although usually written in very poor, halting Polish, could easily doom a village official and his family. In one of these letters we read: “I sketch these few words to the German power and straight to the commander of the gendarmerie himself, because here, in our village of Gutkowo, horrible things are happening and all because of our elder who plays in politics, and who should have been removed a long time ago.”³¹ The Germans translated these letters and investigated the accusations, and the subsequent fate of a denounced elder depended only on the mood of the local chief of gendarmes.

The transfer of Jews into police custody did not, however, end the involvement of the night watch. Once the police arrived, the village guards had to support and reinforce the officers, take them to the local prison, or to the farm where the Jews had been detected. There, the peasants were expected to surround the premises and make sure that no one fled during the search. One peasant from Łęki Dolne testified after the war:

One of the men was told to push the straw chopper out of the way, and once he saw the door leading to the hideout, the Gestapo agent [a gendarme] called the Jews to come out. When no one emerged, the Gestapo agent threw two hand grenades inside and then sprayed the hideout with his machine-gun. As I was small, the Gestapo man gave me a chain, and told me to climb into the tunnel, and to pull out the bodies of the Jews. So I went into the tunnel, I placed the chain on the wrists of dead Jews, and other peasants pulled them out to the surface. Once all [the bodies] were outside, it became clear that one Jewess was still alive. When the Gestapo agent threw water in her face, the Jewess opened her eyes. She said nothing, so the Gestapo man shot her.³²

Members of the watch had to be ready to assist and reinforce the Germans as long as needed. Another example of such cooperation comes from Grochowiska, a hamlet close to Radgoszcz. In the fall of 1942, Władysław Okoński, the commander of the local night watch, went to Radgoszcz to deliver one kilogram of butter and two chickens to the local police station, a usual “token of appreciation” offered from time to time by villagers to the officers.³³ On his way to the village Okoński encountered one Frass, a former butcher from

Radgoszcz, someone rather well known in the area. In 1950, interrogated about these events, Okoński said:

Commander Szypulski Andrzej asked me where he could find this Jew, and I told him that I had no idea. So then Szypulski warned me that if I refused to help catch this Jew, he would deliver me to the German gendarmes. Fearing for my life, I told commander Szypulski that the aforementioned Jew and another one whose name I didn't know quite often took the road next to my house. I told him that if he wanted to catch them, he would have to prepare an ambush somewhere close [to my house]. I pledged my help in catching the Jews and I told him that I would be on the lookout, to see whether they took this route, or a different one. Four or five days later German gendarme Guzdek, commander Szypulski Andrzej, several other "blue" policemen, and one Pawlina, a *Volksdeutscher* and a commander of the night watch (who also had a pistol) showed at my place. It took place during the night, somewhere around 10 PM. They set the ambush in the bushes, close to my house. The only one to enter my house was Pawlina, who ordered me to get out, on the road. Once I saw the approaching Jews, I was to alert Pawlina, who would wait hidden in the cornfield, next to the road. I waited thirty minutes when I saw the Jew Frass and the other Jew coming my way. Once I was certain, I shouted: "Pawlina, the Jews are coming!" Pawlina jumped out of the cornfield with a pistol in his hand and cried out: "Hands up!" Then he blew his whistle two times and the policemen hidden in the bushes came running. The captured Jews were later brought to my house. The policemen told me to get some light, and then they conducted a thorough search of the Jews. At which point commander Szypulski took out the handcuffs, cuffed the Jews, and led them away, in the direction of the police station. I saw that Commander Szypulski caught one of the Jews by the throat and, shaking him, said: "I've got you, you Jewish son of a whore!"³⁴

I heard that the Jews were taken to the Radgoszcz police station, and then shot. Of course, it is highly improbable that Frass and his companion would just happen to wander into this ambush. According to another testimony, Okoński gained trust of the Jewish refugees, and promised to deliver them food during the night. And then he called in the police.

In larger villages, such as Bolesław, the night watch was reinforced by voluntary firefighters whose brigades were better coordinated than those of the night watches. Firefighters drilled together, were more disciplined than ordinary peasants, and were experienced with well-synchronized group pursuits. In addition, the chief of the local voluntary firefighters was, not unlike an elder, elected under public scrutiny by all the inhabitants of the village and thus enjoyed the respect of his peers. His decisions were therefore binding for

many, and involved issues beyond fires. Under the occupation, the chiefs of firefighters, like the elders, also had to continue in their functions. The curfew, for obvious reasons, did not apply to firefighters, who had more freedom of movement than ordinary members of the village community.

Firefighters' drills could be used as an excuse to conduct various exercises, for instance searches for Jews. The actions of firefighters from Raclawice (a village between Miechów and Olkusz) is one example. In June 1944, local firemen were called in and told to search the farm of one Wawrzyniec Pomierły, who, according to many, was hiding Jews.³⁵

Indeed, while searching through the suspect's barn, the firemen came across six Jews: "the Lewkowicz couple, and four Krotzer children." One of the women tried to flee, but was quickly caught by other firemen, who guarded the farm on the outside. "The Lewkowicz woman tried to hide in the wheat, and [fireman] Koziół cut her off, running through the potato field, right next to the wheat. When Lewkowicz tried to resist, he hit her."³⁶ The operation was conducted with a certain discipline, the firemen splitting into two groups, each made up of six people. One of them later said that they "looked in the houses and in the barns, but left the attics and the cellars pretty much alone."³⁷ Later, the village elder provided horse-drawn carts, and "firefighter Pączek tied the Lewkowicz couple with a rope." The elder heard that "the Jews cried and begged the peasants not to send them to the police, but later he felt dizzy, and went home."³⁸ Before he felt dizzy, however, he had selected a few peasants to be cart drivers, and ordered them to deliver the Jews to the nearest Polish "blue" police station, in Sułoszowa. Lewkowicz and the children were later delivered to Wolbrom, to the gendarmes, where they were executed.³⁹ The actions of the Raclawice firefighting brigade were by no means an exception. The firemen and other witnesses recalled numerous searches and hunts for Jews conducted by local voluntary firefighters. In the spring of 1944 several such actions took place, but the results were disappointing because no Jews were found. Another time, however (the witnesses were unable to agree on a date), the hunters were more successful and caught several Jews. The captives were later shot in the fields by a Polish policeman who had been called into the village specifically for this reason.⁴⁰

It is quite possible that not all firemen from Raclawice were antisemites, but a few "who were known for their hostile attitude toward the Jews" were enough to ensure that the others obediently participated in such "actions." To some extent they were afraid of the Germans, but to a larger extent they were concerned about the attitudes of their own colleagues. The conformism and

hostility toward the Jews were motivated by greed and fueled by tales of “Jewish gold.” This universal conviction about Jewish riches just waiting for new owners is a phenomenon reported by many witnesses. Associating Jews with gold was, finally, one of the most common antisemitic clichés. Franciszek Głąb, a firefighter from Lipnica, testified after the war:

Following the orders of our [firefighting brigade] leader Paweł Zieleń, we went looking for the hidden Jews. Although we had information that they were hiding in Lipnica, we found no one. Later, one Gąda told us that there were some Jews in [the village of] Falkowa. We went to Falkowa and there we found one Jewess in the house of Kurzawa and another Jew at Fryda’s place. We roughed up the Jews real good and the same day we brought them to the Polish police in Korzenna. A few days later all of us were called in to report to the Gestapo in Nowy Sącz, where we received two ex-Jewish coats each, as a reward for our diligent work.⁴¹

Finding Jews was not as easy as the firefighter would like to make it sound. The Polish host, Jan Kurzawa, at first refused to surrender the Jewish woman hidden in his farm, and—according to Kurzawa’s wife—it took “a tap of an axe to his head to make him talk.”⁴²

Hunts similar to those conducted by the Raławice and Lipnica firefighters were also reported in all other administrative districts of the *Generalgouvernement*. On October 22, 1942, an underground newspaper, published by the central command of the Home Army, reported on the liquidation of Warsaw-area ghettos: “The Jews are being murdered and deported from Wołomin, Stoczek, Węgrów, Radzymin, Jadów, and Siedlce. From many sources we hear about mass killings of Jews, but nothing as awful as the news coming from Wołomin and Stoczek. Firefighters in Wołomin and the riff-raff from Stoczek, who actively took part in the extermination of the Jews, and who searched and robbed those in hiding, covered themselves with shame.”⁴³ Another underground publication wrote about the events in Stoczek: “On October 24 [1942] the [Polish] firemen participated in the liquidation of the ghetto. They pulled the people out of their homes, and robbed them. The [German] butchers’ lackeys even received expressions of gratitude from the local *Stadthauptmann*.”⁴⁴ Of course, the main difference between the firemen in Stoczek and those in Raławice is that while the former took part in an officially sanctioned “liquidation action,” the latter set their own agenda, without German involvement. Even the “blue” policemen were summoned only after the fact, once the manhunt had been finished. Quite obviously, as far as the *Judenjagd* was concerned, Polish

firefighters were not only able to support the police, but were even willing to replace them. In 1943, Polish “blue” police agents in Mszana Dolna learned about two Jews, brothers Jumeck and Jusek Grybel, who had been hiding in the nearby village of Skrzydlina.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, the same day the police had been put on alert, and the agents were told not to leave their stations. In light of this emergency, the firemen in Skrzydlina were told to arrest the fugitive Jews. Voluntary firefighters left their guardhouse, surrounded the indicated farm, and took the Jews into custody. Firefighters were also used by the Germans in other capacities; sometimes they had to surround execution sites, and in Szczurowa, after the massacre of local Gypsies, they were ordered to bury the victims of the shooting. According to one witness, “[Gendarme Engelbert] Guzdek ordered the elder to immediately call the firefighters. Trumpets sounded and in five minutes twenty-one firemen reported. This, for the time being, was enough. Guzdek took them to the cemetery and soon we heard the sound of spades.”⁴⁶ Despite their discipline (combined with good knowledge of local conditions), the firefighters’ watches were also known to sometimes miss their targets. Paweł Nogieć, the chief of firefighters in Zagorzyce, once caught a fellow “who looked very Jewish and who spoke with an accent” and delivered him straight to the German policemen, who just happened to be passing through the village. The same day the locals learned that the man was, in fact, not a Jew, but Jan Byczek, a Pole who was a thread-and-cloth salesman. The Germans, unmoved by these extenuating circumstances, took Byczek to the nearest police station and shot him the next day.⁴⁷ As with the previously discussed case of two Polish engineers intercepted in village of Stróża (who were mistakenly taken for Jews, beaten up, and delivered into the hands of the Germans), Byczek’s execution served its purpose, demonstrating the extent of German power in the countryside.

Night watches, firefighting brigades, and hostile local officials represented only some of the dangers facing the Jewish refugees looking for safety in rural areas of occupied Poland. From the point of view of the victims, however, the most insidious and deadly threat was the active involvement of large masses of peasants in the *Judenjagd*. The time has come now to turn to manhunts—one of the most feared and the most successful strategy used by the hunters. Manhunts were usually organized on the basis of the previously described self-defense structures. In the case of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County, at least forty-seven Jews were found and killed during one of the manhunts. In actuality, the number of victims must have been much higher, because postwar investigations only

rarely dealt with these manhunts. The manhunts were generally considered a German enterprise, and the responsibility for Jewish deaths—according to the courts—belonged to the occupation authorities alone. Consequently, only a few “August” investigations⁴⁸ involved themselves with these matters. The manhunts were potentially more deadly than the searches that were conducted in peasants’ huts. The bunkers and hideouts built in the forests required collective effort, and usually (although there were exceptions, of course) were built by a number of Jewish refugees, sometimes by several families. Consequently, detection could mean death for a large number of people. Not surprisingly, reports from Dąbrowa County describe several manhunts that ended in killings of up to fourteen Jews surrounded in one bunker.

From the point of view of their efficiency and sheer scope, the manhunts can be categorized into two groups: the early ones, directly related to the liquidation of the local ghettos, and the ones organized later that also targeted Jews, though not exclusively.⁴⁹ The hunts for Jews fleeing the liquidated ghettos were well organized and involved significant forces of German and Polish police. Peasants also took part in these expeditions—some driven by fear of the Germans, while others were motivated by promised spoils, usually clothes, which were taken from the victims. The effects of these early manhunts were particularly bloody; during the first hours and days of the *Judenjagd*, Jews still moved in large groups and often lacked good knowledge of the area. Those who managed to live through the first manhunts perfected their strategies of survival, investing time and energy in more permanent and more sophisticated hideouts, which gave them some degree of security and protection against the elements. The orders to initiate manhunts usually originated with the German police and reached village elders through the offices of the local *voit*. One such order has been preserved in the dossiers of the Kraków Appellate Court. On August 28, 1942, Franciszek Rusina, the *voit* from Kośmice Wielkie, sent a letter to the elder in Janowice (a village east of Miechów, northwest of Dąbrowa Tarnowska). In his message the *voit* wrote:

Regarding the Regulation issued by the County Authorities on August 14, 1942 and concerning the deportation of the Jews from our area, I hasten to inform you that the matter is very serious. You are to make absolutely sure that not even one single Jew, Jewess, or Jewish child is left on the territory of your commune. You have to immediately order the hostages to search the entire area, back alleys, bushes, and so on, in order to make certain that no [Jews] are left. Whenever caught, Jews are to be delivered to the nearest station of the Polish Police. I repeat

that the penalty for hiding Jews is death. Village elders are also responsible for Jews hidden on the territory of their commune, and—in case of negligence—can face the death penalty. I remind you to make certain that these orders are being followed; you are responsible under the penalty of death.—Kośmice Wielkie, August 28, 1942.⁵⁰

The liquidation of the ghettos started in the summer of 1942, but the German authorities continued to pressure the elders for results during the later period as well. In June 1943, Andrzej Wojtowicz, an elder from the village of Markuszowa, was summoned to the German mayor (*Stadthauptmann*) of Jasło.⁵¹ The meeting, with several elders in attendance, revolved around the issue of *Judenbegünstigung*, or aiding and abetting Jews. The German mayor was very displeased with the situation in the villages, and berated the Poles. According to reports filed by informers, some Jews still survived in hiding, and the situation called for punitive measures. The elders were told to communicate this last warning to their people, to surrender the Jews or otherwise face collective reprisals that included possible retaliatory executions of five peasants per village. It is hard to say whether the same letters and warnings were given to all the elders, but it is quite obvious that the local leaders were sufficiently motivated.

The search for fugitives started when the elder received information about Jews in hiding. Not infrequently this information came from the very people who had—until then—sheltered the Jews, and who later decided that they no longer wanted the problematic guests. At this point, the elder had to mobilize the village guards and, at the same time, alert the police. One of the village elders from Dąbrowa County recalled a situation when “one Ludwik Kosoń reported to me that there was a Jew hidden in his barn. I went to the estate (they had a telephone receiver over there) and called the police in Otfinów. The police told me to secure the barn. I ordered the village courier to mobilize the people for the manhunt, and in no time, I saw a mass of peasants dragging a captive.”⁵² Members of night watches became an essential element of the manhunts. From the point of view of the desperate Jews, the increased risk concerned two areas. First, the introduction of a quasi-military organization into the village life meant increased risk of searches and gave the hunters an official blessing and legitimacy. Second, it allowed for much more efficient and deadly manhunts in the nearby forests, where many Jews sought refuge. The members of night watches were likely to organize independent manhunts, without direct police orders, and without police knowledge. In Brnik commune, peasants

organized a manhunt to preempt any potential action by the authorities. One of the participants summed it up: “because the Germans knew that many Jews were hiding in Brink and that a catastrophe could strike our community.”⁵³ A similar preventive and large-scale manhunt was organized in March 1943 in the Mędrzechów area.⁵⁴ Mieczysław Soja, on his way from Radwan to Wólka Mędrzechowska, “observed five citizens of Jewish nationality hiding in the bushes, in the fields. It was a mother with three sons and a citizen of Jewish nationality, named Fałek.” Soja quickly brought his findings to the attention of the elder of Wólka, and the latter ordered an immediate arrest of the Jews. Shortly after, Soja rushed to Mędrzechów, to the nearest gendarmerie station. The manhunt started before the gendarmes had a chance to arrive. According to witnesses, about three hundred people—or practically all adult inhabitants of the village—took part in the hunt. “Some went because Trzepaczek [the village elder] went from house to house and told them to go, others went out of curiosity.”⁵⁵ In cases of manhunts organized by peasants, the elders rallied people to action. In other cases, members of the village community were mobilized by the local “hostages”—earlier appointed by the police, or by the elder—who were personally responsible for the massive participation and for the success of the hunt.⁵⁶ In the case described above, the manhunt was indeed successful and all five badly beaten Jews were delivered to the Mędrzechów gendarmes, for prompt execution. Another testimony describes a manhunt in the Tonia commune, in the north of Dąbrowa County. Here too, the commune hostages mobilized the peasants:

In the spring of 1943, on Good Saturday, around 10 in the morning, Piotr Czupryna, the village hostage, showed at my door and told me that the Germans and the elder ordered me to take part in hunting down the Jews. I said “no,” so Czupryna went to other houses, but soon came back and told me that I had to go, or the Germans would take me away. In this situation, I had to go and I went to the bushes along the bank of the Vistula River, where I knew that the Jews were hiding. I found no one, so I hid in these bushes, and soon two other [peasants], Roman Wawrzynek and Jan Wójcik, joined me, and we hunkered down, all three of us. I heard some voices from nearby clusters of trees, and I saw people moving, but all was blurred, because the bushes were dense and taller than a man. I saw neither the gendarmes, nor the Polish police. I stayed in the bushes for two hours, and then made my way slowly back home. Only later I was told that six persons of Jewish nationality were caught during this manhunt and that they were later executed. I took no part in this hunt.⁵⁷

One of the “blue” policemen described the same manhunt in the following words:

Around Easter 1943 two Jewish families sought shelter in the commune of Tonia, on the bank of the Vistula, in the so-called “wicker.” There, they had built a hideout, a bunker. The German gendarmes, and more precisely [Engelbert] Guzdek, their commander, scheduled a hunt for these Jews on Good Saturday. In order to ensure success, Guzdek appointed ten hostages, and personally warned them that they had to make sure that all men from Tonia took part in the hunt. The hostages then started to knock on all the doors and inform people about Guzdek’s order, and threaten all those who refused with possible consequences.⁵⁸

The manhunt seen through the eyes of the victim (in this case a ten-year-old boy hiding close to Dąbrowa Tarnowska) looked altogether different:

Later, when my aunt had to go to the village, to buy food, the peasants found out where we were hidden, and brought the police. It happened on February 10th [1944]. It was freezing cold outside, but in our bunker it was so hot that we all were half-naked, and my sister was barefoot. Suddenly the policemen broke inside. We fled as we were; from our bunker all survived, and we managed to flee to another forest. In the bunker next to ours, however, eight people were killed, among them a mother who did not want to leave her limping daughter behind, and her husband.⁵⁹

The security of the new location was short-lived and the location of the new bunker was also discovered during another manhunt. This time, a local forest ranger alerted the Polish police and the Germans. “They kept shooting after us, and that’s when my two sisters and some other people were killed,” said ten-year-old Dawid Wasserstrum in his deposition.

Some manhunts were organized by the peasants, some were organized directly by the Germans, others were ordered by the gendarmes, and in some cases the initiative belonged to the Polish “blue” police. One of these “blue” police-inspired hunts conducted in Dąbrowa County started when

the guard from Karsy reported that the Jews were hiding on the bank of the Vistula, between Karsy and Borusowa. Mądry [the commander of a ‘blue’ police detachment from Otfinów] ordered immediate departure to this area. Lewandowicz led the expedition . . . once we reached the Vistula, he told us to surround the hideout, and then, together with Niechciał [another policeman from Otfinów], he entered the bunker. Probably he wanted to find cash and

jewelry, and did not want to share the loot with the rest of us. Our role was to stop the Jews if they tried to flee. After a moment I heard shots, and then I saw some people running through the bushes; they quickly disappeared from sight. . . . Niechciał and Lewandowicz killed two Jews in this hideout. When we joined them, the bodies and the bunker had already been searched. Niechciał was unhappy, he only shook his head and said "they had nothing" . . . just as we left the bushes, an informer arrived with news that in Karsy, at the ferry, he had seen a Jewess, probably one of the people who managed to escape from the ambush. Lewandowicz and Niechciał started to run and after a moment I heard a woman shouting, then some shots, and everything went quiet. According to Niechciał, Lewandowicz shot the Jewish woman, and the elder from Karsy was ordered to bury the bodies of the dead.⁶⁰

Sometime later, also in 1943, the local Polish police learned about another Jewish hideout. This time the number of victims was much larger. "The next day," wrote one of the few survivors of this manhunt, "the blue policemen surrounded our bunker. Inside was a family of thirteen, and some other people who normally stayed elsewhere. That's when my father was killed. The policemen called people one by one and shot them [as they came out]. Blue police came together with peasants. Other Jews escaped."⁶¹ Another police-led hunt swept through the woods around the village of Skrzynka. This time, the police searched many houses close to the edge of the forest. It is quite clear that the phenomenon of "houses close to the edge of the forest" had, from the point of view of the Jews looking for shelter, a fundamental importance. We shall look at this issue more closely while discussing the problem of help and rescue in Dąbrowa County. The "blues" from the detachment in Radomyśl Wielki conducted hunts for Jews as late as the spring of 1944. Two months before the arrival of Soviet troops, Officer Jan Pielach mobilized his men for action in the area of Żarówka village.⁶² Pielach led the hunt, which involved policemen from the Radomyśl detachment and a large number of peasants, who were ordered to join.⁶³ According to Aron and Ida Szwarc, who survived this ordeal, three Jews were detected in the woods, and were shot by the zealous officer.

There were also cases of manhunts organized ad hoc, without an earlier mobilization of night watches and guards. If not enough men were available, women were also told to join. One of these impromptu hunts took place close to Szczucin (north of Dąbrowa) in April 1943. One of the women who took part in the operation later recalled:

The policemen wanted to send Andrzej Łabuz, who stood with them, to get some men, but he told them that there was a market in the town nearby and that all the men had gone to the market. He also said that some boys were working in the forest, and perhaps they could go [and hunt for the Jews]. So, on the way, they took three boys who were planting trees. First went the Germans, the Polish policemen followed them, and we civilians marched at the back. In the place where the Szczucin and Słupsk forests come together they split us into two groups, and told us to meet on the other side [of the forest]. In my group, there was one German gendarme and one “blue” policeman. We marched in a line, but we village people went behind the Germans and behind the [Polish] police. I didn’t go through the woods, I chose to go along the path. When our groups came together, I heard shots being fired.⁶⁴

In yet another case, a Jewish witness described a hunt for Jews organized by two members of the local *Sonderdienst*, who asked for help from some village youngsters from the Dulcza area. The boys “jumped on their horses, and rushed into the woods, to hunt for the Jews.”⁶⁵ The woods in question were situated just on the eastern border of Dąbrowa County.

Finally, some of the manhunts organized by the village community, under the auspices of an elder, did not necessarily and not always target Jews. In Dąbrówka Szczepanowska commune (a few miles southwest of Tarnów), Andrzej Gawron, the local elder, decided to fill the quota of people requested for work in Germany with local Gypsies. “The community meeting decided, therefore, to capture these Gypsies. The members of the watch were sent to Kępa, where they seized twelve Gypsies (only older people) and they locked them up in our school.” Sometime later, policemen from Pleśna arrived: “One of the Gypsies had been killed by the ‘blue’ policemen while resisting arrest, and the rest were delivered to the Germans.”⁶⁶ The Germans, in the meantime, also organized their own hunts—for Poles who failed to report for work in Germany, or those who had fled from Germany back home. Jan Szewczyk, a “blue” policeman from the Otfinów detachment, testified as follows: “In 1942 I took part in a hunt for Poles who were scheduled for work in Germany. The action took place in the village of Kłyż (in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County) and was organized by the German gendarmerie, with the assistance of Polish police from Otfinów. Several Polish policemen were involved. Having caught the wanted individuals, we took them to the German Office of Labor (*Arbeitsamt*) in Dąbrowa Tarnowska, from where these people were later sent to Germany.”

And starting in the winter of 1943, the train from Szczucin to Tarnów was often stopped at the station in Dąbrowa. During these so-called “train hunts,” the gendarmes looked for smugglers and—once again—for people avoiding work in Germany.

A review of preserved testimonies and trial dossiers indicates that all it took to start a manhunt was someone with the initiative and with at least some authority. The hunts were led by elders, forest rangers, wealthy peasants or simply by anyone who could inspire, threaten, or otherwise mobilize the village collective. The hunts for the Jews did not provoke negative emotions, or moral dilemmas—although some peasants were, quite understandably, upset at wasting a day of work for a basically unfruitful pursuit. In 1943, in the village of Skrzynka, a local *Volksdeutscher* summoned the people “to go and look for Jews in the forest.”⁶⁷ One peasant (according to the Jewish survivor, a good man, and a next-door neighbor), unhappy with the idea of a day-long hunt, and resenting the waste of time associated with this pursuit, said, “Why do we have to go to the forest to look for Jews? Szyjowa [the survivor’s mother] is hiding in Mostek’s house, in the attic!” The hunt was called off, and the Jewish woman was shot the same day. Her body was buried in the backyard of the house in which she had been hidden, as a form of punishment for her helpers. The execution of Szyjowa put such fear into five members of the Fogel family (Jews from Kraków also hiding in Skrzynka) that they left their hideout and tried to flee. Once out in the open, they were quickly apprehended by the locals, “rendered” to the German gendarmerie, and shot.

Peasants, firefighters, elders, and Polish rural youth were forcibly made parts of the German system and were subject to brutal German reprisals and equally brutal discipline. But the deadly efficiency of this system depended on the zeal and the willingness of its participants, which cannot be explained by fear of reprisals alone. In any case, the successes of the *Judenjagd* were much more impressive than any other “hunting” activity during the war. Here, the historical evidence is convincing and horrifying: some elements of Polish society, various organizations, and social structures were actively and consciously involved in the liquidations of the ghettos and in hunting down desperate Jewish refugees who sought shelter “on the ‘Aryan’ side.” Human fear and greed—can they be considered a sufficient explanation for the deadly efficiency of these manhunts? These two feelings, strong, but rather universal and common—are they a good enough reason to explain why the chances of survival of Jews hiding in rural areas of occupied Poland were so slim? Jewish and Polish postwar testimonies

suggest something else. Jewish life, which had steadily lost its value from the beginning of the occupation, became virtually worthless after the liquidations of the ghettos. In the eyes of many Poles, the Jewish refugees wandering from one village to another, hiding in primitive bunkers in the forests, or wasting away in underground shelters under the barns, were simply no longer human. Instead, they became a problem, or a threat that needed to be dealt with. Sometime in 1942, and it is impossible to determine exactly when, it became acceptable, in the eyes of many, that the taking of Jewish life was no longer considered a crime, or a sin. Some took an active part in hunting down Jews and delivering their victims to the Polish “blue” police, or the German gendarmes. Others, forced by the hostages, or by their elder, joined the hunts in the woods, marching behind the gendarmes and the Polish police. Still others watched from the roadside, or from behind window curtains, and saw how peasants herded the tied Jews to the police station for slaughter. But no one, in these circumstances, could remain a neutral, emotionally detached witness, often described by historians as a “bystander to the Holocaust.” The complicated, multilayered system invented for the needs of the *Judenjagd* ensured that each rural inhabitant—each man, woman, and child—had a role to play in this horrible theater of death.

And what, one might ask, was the role of the Catholic Church in this tragic situation? In the absence of an official line emanating from the Pope in Vatican and from the archbishop in Kraków, lower clergy had to decide for themselves. On the basis of the available shreds of evidence, one can only conclude that the attitudes of local clergy depended on individual character traits of priests involved. They acted, therefore, according to their own convictions, guided, on the one hand, by principles and courage and, on the other hand, by fear and prejudice. Some, such as the priest from Radomyśl Wielki, first incited peasants against the Jews and later refused to return the “Jewish items” that they had previously been entrusted with, to their rightful owners. Others, like a priest from Wietrzychowice, put their lives on the line to provide Jews with shelter.⁶⁸ An exhausting analysis of this topic has to wait, however, until such time when the Catholic Church decides to open its archives to independent historians. For the time being, the Church archives in Poland remain shut tight, making further inquiries impossible and putative conclusions dubious and open to reinterpretation.⁶⁹ And what about their parishioners, the local peasants? How could they reconcile actions undertaken against the Jews by their neighbors (or by themselves) with the teachings of the Church? The answer, according to

a Polish philosopher, can be related to the specific understanding of religion among the peasants:

The priest stands at the doorstep [of the church] and watches the carnival of death. This behavior is untouched by Christianity, at the core you one can see the pagan past. Indeed, in Poland, there is no concept of sin, because morality and faith have been pushed into the church, into that narrow and shielded space inside the temple. There, you have to be good, righteous and clean. Once you step outside the church, however, everything is allowed, and you can forget about your faith. God does not exist in the social, moral and intellectual sphere.⁷⁰

Who were the perpetrators recruited from among the local Polish community, who through their direct or indirect involvement caused the Jewish tragedy? Informers, hunters, and murderers: were they in any way different, distinct, from the “rural average”? Perhaps they were recruited from among prewar criminals, and belonged to the village riffraff? This argument is not new. Some historians, with a conviction matched only by the lack of historical evidence, claim that the *szmalcowniki* (Polish blackmailers who preyed on Jews hiding in the cities on the “Aryan” side) belonged to local criminals.⁷¹ This is not true. We well know today that the *szmalcowniki* came from all walks of life. Of course, although there were regular, professional criminals among them, the vast majority had no prewar criminal records.⁷² During the years 1940–1943 in Warsaw, among the 240 people who faced the German courts for having blackmailed Jews, only twenty had prewar criminal records.⁷³ There was even a count among the arrested blackmailers, a son of one of the best Polish families, caught red-handed by the Germans during an unsuccessful attempt to shake down two Jewish merchants.

One survivor recalled the “casual” character of the *Judenjagd* in the following words: “I have heard many times people speak of *polowanie na Żydów* [Jew-hunting]. This was a deliberate roaming of public places to unmask a Jew on false papers. My co-workers in the dental lab [in Kraków] invited me to join them in such an expedition.”⁷⁴ These ordinary artisans, sons of working-class parents, decided to hunt the Jews because it was a profitable and fairly safe activity that, at least in certain circles, did not carry a social stigma. Was the *Judenjagd* in rural areas perceived in a different way? Did any particular traits distinguish the informers, the thieves of the Jewish property, the tormentors of the hidden Jews and, finally, their murderers, from the rest of the village society? A look at the socioeconomic profiles of Poles who faced the courts after the war is revealing.

Table 6.1. Peasants Accused of Crimes against Jews, Kraków Appellate Court, 1947–1950

| | Younger than 20¹ | 20–30 years | 30–40 | More than 40 years of age | Total | Party affiliation |
|--|--|------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Poor peasants (0–2.5 hectares) | 3 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 17 | 1 PZPR (Polish United Workers' Party) ² |
| Average farmers (2.5–5 hectares) | 6 | 14 | 43 | 45 | 108 | 11 PPR/PZPR |
| Wealthy farmers (5 hectares and more) | — | — | 4 | 6 | 10 | 2 PZPR |
| Total | 9 | 18 | 55 | 53 | 135 | 14 PPR/PZPR |

Notes:

1. The age of the accused at the time of the investigated incident.

2. PPR—Polish Workers' Party, founded in 1942, was the political arm of the Polish communists. In 1948 the PPR and the socialist PPS (Polish Socialist Party) were blended into the Polish United Workers' Party—PZPR.

Table 6.1 excludes seventeen “blue” policemen and fourteen elders, deputy-elders, and chiefs of firefighters who, because of their very functions, were practically required to take part in the *Judenjagd*, and consequently, fell under the scrutiny of the courts after the war. At the same time, in order to have a more representative sample, the table includes the data from Miechów County and from other villages of Tarnów County. In all cases, we are dealing with typically rural areas. A cursory analysis of the table reveals, most of all, that the people taking part in manhunts were mature, married men in their thirties. The “usual suspects”—young men from the poorest families, most likely expected to be among those involved—are but a few. Most numerous are the farmers belonging to the village “average.” In Dąbrowa Tarnowska County, and especially in its western part, where the most fertile lands lay, someone who had more than 5 hectares of land was already considered wealthy. Most of the Jew hunters were not as rich, but they were not poor, either. Finally, there is the issue of political affiliation. The data from the table concern 1947–1950, when about 8 percent of adult Poles belonged to the Communist Party. In rural areas this percentage was much lower—in 1950 the peasants made up barely 13 percent of all party members.⁷⁵ It is, therefore, striking that the number of Communist Party members among the murderers of Jews is much higher than among the peasant masses. Among the fourteen party members we find some of the most cruel murderers, people responsible for organizing the manhunts, and those who personally executed the victims. Were these people driven by an “activist impulse” that, after the war, was best accommodated within the structures of the ruling Communist Party? Or perhaps it was the sense of impunity, usually associated at that time with a Communist Party card? It is hard to say—the small sample makes it difficult to reach any firm conclusions, but it definitely offers an opportunity for further study.

7

IN THE DULCZA FOREST

On the eastern border of Dąbrowa County, a few miles east of Radgoszcz, there is a large wooded area, called by the locals the *Dulcza forest*. The name derives from two nearby villages—Little and Large Dulcza. Both hamlets are located on the territory of Mielec County (Radomyśl Wielki commune), so the victims from this area have been excluded from the counts of Jews detected and killed in Dąbrowa County. It stands to reason, however, that we should take a closer look at the situations of Jews who sought shelter in this large forest, immediately adjacent to, and partially extending into, the county of our interest—especially since many of the Jews hidden in the Dulcza forest came from Dąbrowa or from Radgoszcz, and their strategies of survival differed greatly from the experiences of people hiding in villages or in the open. The unique conditions in the forest allowed the Jewish refugees to create something akin to a *family camp*, known from the territories further east (such as Belorussia or the Ukraine) but practically unknown anywhere else in central Poland. We have eight testimonies that describe the living conditions of Jews hidden in the Dulcza forest. These accounts were filed shortly after the war by survivors (two small children, one fourteen-year-old boy, and three women) with the regional Jewish Historical Commissions in Tarnów and Kraków, and two (given by the same people who testified after the war) were recorded during the 1990s for the Visual History Foundation.

According to these testimonies, Jews started to flock to the Dulcza forest during the summer of 1942. The number of refugees grew with the increasing

pace of liquidations of local Jewish communities in Dąbrowa and Tarnów, and especially after July 19, 1942, when Germans liquidated the ghetto in nearby Radomyśl Wielki. During the bloody *Aktion* in this shtetl, the Germans killed a large number of people on the spot, and sent most of the others to *Vernichtungslager* [extermination camp] Bełżec, and the rest to a forced-labor camp in Mielec. Even more Jews showed up in the forest in the fall, after the final liquidation of Dąbrowa. Fourteen-year-old Herman Amsterdam found himself in the forest in September, shortly after Yom Kippur.¹ A few days later there were already more than fifty Jews in the area, most of them sleeping in the open or seeking shelter from the elements under freshly cut branches.² It did not take long for the Germans to learn about the refugees, and the manhunts began. The first large-scale hunt took place in September, and was initiated by a forest ranger from Małec (a nearby village), who had alerted and led the gendarmes to the area where the Jews were hiding. About thirty people died on this occasion. The Jews who survived the first hunts started to build permanent, well-concealed bunkers, sometimes with two or three escape tunnels. One survivor of the Dulcza forest left a detailed description of her bunker:

With time our group of Jews grew larger. We, together with one more family, dug our bunker deep in the ground. The ceiling was low, so that once inside, one couldn't stand up. The roof was made of wood, covered with branches and sand. We also had a stove made of bricks, and a concealed door, and that's where we lived. We also had small hideouts—small pits, in which one could crouch—and they also had wooden covers, which were camouflaged with sand, needles and leaves. . . . These [emergency] foxholes were small. One of us covered all these pits from the outside and finally he had to hide in his own foxhole, sliding over his head a wooden cover with a shrub attached on the top.³

The bunkers, foxholes, and escape tunnels were needed to survive not only manhunts but also attacks of local bandits, who preyed on the hapless Jews.⁴ Among the Jews of the Dulcza forest were several soldiers from the Polish army, with combat experience, who acquired a few carbines and grenades and tried to organize the lives of the refugees along military lines, infusing the forest camps with a sense of discipline. In one of the testimonies we learn that “Jewish partisans divided us into groups of ten, all together fifty people. Each group had its own well-organized bunker, with separate sleeping quarters and kitchens. The discipline was like in the army.”⁵ The numbers of Jewish refugees

changed from one month to the next. According to a source, at various times there were anywhere between fifty and a few hundred Jews in the area.⁶ Some people fell victim to the *Judenjagd*, but others—most often those chased out by peasants who until then had sheltered them—arrived in their place. Other Jews who appeared in the Dulcza forest were escapees from the *Julags* (Judenlager) or the nearby labor camps for the Jews, such as Mielec and Dębica.

Helena Aussenberg, a previously cited Jewish woman from Radomyśl, joined other Jews seeking safe haven in the Dulcza forest.⁷ She had wandered (with a newborn baby in her arms) from one village to another since July, when the Radomyśl Jews were deported. At first, Aussenberg was able to find help in one of the still existing Jewish communities, but these were all liquidated in the autumn. The situation became more and more desperate and Aussenberg's mother and child were ultimately denounced and killed. The peasants were hostile, frightened of their neighbors and of the Germans, and the help, if offered at all, was very expensive and of short duration. At one point in September, Aussenberg found herself in the Dulcza area, and heard about the great manhunt that had taken place in the local forest two days earlier. This hunt claimed the lives of her uncle and nephew.⁸ It is quite likely that it was the same event that young Herman Amsterdam described above. Aussenberg and her sister managed to spend one night in Dulcza, under the roof of a peasant woman whom they knew well, but they fled in the morning "because people in the village knew that [this woman] helped the Jews."⁹ The Aussenberg sisters spent the next two months in the house of one Pawełczak, who kept them as long as the Jewish women gave her clothing in exchange for shelter. Once they had nothing left, they were asked to leave. The next stop on their road through misery was the house of one Pachołowa, a woman who (before the liquidation of Radomyśl) had received some of Aussenberg's *items* in trust, for safekeeping. The *items* so often referred to by the Jews in hiding usually meant clothing, silverware, or other household goods that were stored with trusted Polish neighbors. Pachołowa let the women stay with her for a month, but then requested that the Jews leave her house.

At some point during the winter of 1942–1943, the Aussenberg sisters, having given away all their possessions and having exhausted all chances of survival among the peasants, fled into the Dulcza forest. In the section of the forest known as "Wolves' Pits" they stumbled on other Jews. They were struck that the whole group (consisting of some thirty people) built fires in the open and

behaved with little caution. On more than one occasion, Jews were killed by bandits who invaded the camp looking for girls. Much more deadly, however, were the manhunts. Helena Aussenberg wrote:

The peasants were given arms, and surrounded the forest. I and my sister, we somehow managed to flee so that no one was killed. The next morning my sister went to look for wood [for the fire] and saw the peasants with weapons moving in. She ran back, warned me and we escaped. But twelve members of the Spatz family and our father didn't make it; they were caught by the peasants and shot one by one. We were running away, and they kept shooting after us.¹⁰

The Aussenberg sisters wandered the whole day, until they came across a well-hidden bunker, home of the Amsterdam family, previously from the village of Małec. Inside were a few other people, including one Koch, an elderly Jew from Radomyśl, who had been seriously wounded during one of the recent manhunts. He suffered greatly, and died of blood poisoning a few days later. One of the other inhabitants of the bunker was fourteen-year-old Herman Amsterdam, the author of a previously cited testimony.

Cyla Braw, a seven-year-old girl from Little Dulcza, found herself in the forest at the same time as the Aussenberg sisters. Cyla and her family had spent the first months after the deportations and liquidations with their "Aryan" neighbor, who had taken them under his roof in exchange for payment. In the winter of 1942, however, terrified of the risks, he threw them out and the Braw family had to flee to the forest, where they lived in a bunker. "We remained in the bunker all the time, and we had nothing to do. We had no candles, and my mummy and another man went out to buy food from the peasants," noted Cyla Braw.¹¹ In the winter of 1942–1943, bandits (probably members of the notorious Kosieniak gang; see chapter 5) killed Herman Amsterdam's father, aunt, and an uncle. According to Herman's testimony, his father was murdered by Kosieniak himself.¹² Ten-year-old Dawid Wasserstrum also spent most of his time in a bunker, with several other children. After the war, he described the conditions in the Amsterdam family bunker: "The kids were very brave, they never cried, even a year-old one never cried, as if he understood our situation. During the nights my aunt went out, to the fields, to dig potatoes or cut wheat, and that's how we lived. I can still remember the horrible hunger. We still had, in fact, some *items* left behind, with the Poles, but they refused to give anything back. And that's how we lived for a whole year."¹³

According to Amsterdam's testimony, in May 1943 the Dulcza forest was again home to sixty Jews. They lived on borrowed time since every few weeks the Germans, the Polish police, and the peasants organized manhunts. One victim was a Jewish fighter known to other Jews in the area only by his last name, Shahar.¹⁴ Shahar avoided other Jews, was armed, and made frequent use of his weapons. Sometime in 1943 his luck ran out, and he fell into the hands of the Germans. Guzdek, the notorious chief of gendarmes, interrogated him under torture, in order to learn the locations of other Jews hidden in the area. Unable to break his victim, he finally fed him to the dogs.¹⁵

The manhunts rarely ended without the killing of several Jewish refugees; consequently, there were perhaps just thirty Jews left in the forest in 1944. In July the war seemed practically over—the Soviet troops pushed the Germans back, deep onto the Vistula line. Freedom was within reach when the Red Army halted its advance. The line of the front reached Radomyśl Wielki, and stabilized barely two miles east of the Dulcza forest, leaving the area still under German control. And this stalemate was to last until the beginning of the Soviet offensive in mid-January 1945. Meanwhile, in the fall of 1944, the situation of the last remaining Jewish refugees had become dramatic. Having used up the last of their resources, they were forced to steal potatoes and poultry from the peasants. The forests were regularly patrolled by units of the *Wehrmacht*. Although the soldiers were securing the hinterland of the front and not looking specifically for Jews, chance encounters were nevertheless deadly. One survivor recalled: "On November 11, 1944 there was another manhunt. This time the Poles alerted the Germans and led them to our bunker. Close to the large bunker we had prepared small foxholes, precisely to save us in situations like this one."¹⁶ Unfortunately, the tracks on the freshly fallen snow were a dead giveaway, and the foxholes were discovered one by one by the hunters. Some of the Jews (among them the survivor's husband) were shot immediately, while the others were transferred into the custody of the Tarnów Gestapo. Rivka Shenker was a member of the same group. She recalled:

Suddenly we heard horrible shouts in German and we quickly went back to the hideout. I was barely able to cover our tracks, when the shooting started. My heart started to race, we looked one at another, and we kept quiet. We heard [a] terrifying cry: "Either you leave your bunker, or we throw in the grenades!" We were as if paralyzed, staring one at another. Then they started to shoot in the air, to scare us. Immediately I opened the doors which were so beautifully masked.

The Germans said: "Hands up!" and told us to surrender all the weapons. We all crawled out; we were as pale as if we were dead. I felt so miserable—I was hiding in the forest for such a long time, and now they managed to catch me. It was in [November] 1944.¹⁷

Regina Goldberg, with her future husband David and six other Jews, were hiding in another forest, a few miles to the south, close to the village of Jastrząbka. In the winter of 1944, they too had to leave their bunker and to move, day after day, from one area to another, staying one step ahead of the Germans and of the Poles who looked for them. Somewhere at that time Regina's mother, unable to cope with the terrible conditions, fell ill, died, and was buried in the woods.¹⁸

During the night of November 27, 1944, having nothing more to lose, the last group of Jews decided to rush the German lines in order to reach the Soviet trenches. Helena Aussenberg was among them. After the initial surprise, the Germans recovered and started shooting at the intruders. The Russians, persuaded that the Germans were rushing their lines, opened fire too: "The Jews, caught in the crossfire and trying to make an impression that we were many, and to frighten the Germans, started to shout 'Down with Hitler! Long live the Red Army!' The Germans were in their bunkers, we threw some hand grenades, and the Germans started shooting back. The Soviets joined the firefight as well . . . and then I stepped on a mine, and an explosion tore off my leg." Thus Helena Aussenberg finished her account. From among the few hundred Jews who, for more than two and a half years, fought for their lives in the Dulcza forest, no more than ten survived the war.

8

THE GERMAN POLICE

The Polish and Jewish accounts from Dąbrowa County very frequently refer to the fact that “the Gestapo arrived from Tarnów, and took the Jews away.”¹ This “arrival” was associated with arrests, beatings, executions, and other actions of individual and mass terror. It makes sense, therefore, to inquire into the identity of the officers of the Tarnów Gestapo, who visited Dąbrowa, terrorized the local population, and directly contributed to the deaths of many Jews hiding in the area.

The energetic expansion of police and security forces in Tarnów (described by Germans as a “city of many challenges”) started as early as late 1939. The local police forces were made of the Security Police (*Sicherheitspolizei*; SIPO), which included the Gestapo (*Geheime Staatspolizei*) or the secret state police, which dealt with “political” and Jewish issues (Jewish matters were in the hands of Department IVB4, usually referred to as the *Judenreferat*), and of the *Ordnungspolizei* (*Orpo*) or Order Police. The Tarnów Gestapo was located at 18 Urszulańska Street, in two neighboring houses. The Gestapo investigated Polish underground organizations, espionage, and all other activities that—in the eyes of the Germans—constituted a threat to the “vital interests of the German nation.”² The investigations, conducted in Germany in the 1960s, allow us to recreate a fairly complete list of the agents of the Tarnów SIPO (*Sicherheitspolizeiaussendienststelle*) detachment.³ The local Gestapo was headed by SS-*Untersturmführer* Josef Palten.⁴ Among the most important agents of the Tarnów *Judenreferat* one can list SS-*Oberscharführer* Gerhard Grunow, whose

job description was “specialist in Jewish issues” (*Judensachbearbeiter*), Walter Baach, Hubert Schachner, Karl Oppermann, Ernst Hufer, and Otto von Małotki, the latter known for his cruelty.⁵ Otto Jeck, Nowak, and Nicolaus Ilkiw worked as translators for the Tarnów Gestapo. Ilkiw was born in Borysław, Nowak came from the former Czechoslovak Republic, and Jeck hailed from nearby Mielec. All three translated and tortured their victims at the same time. Jeck (unsuccessfully sought by the Bochum police until the 1980s) and Nowak were later promoted from simple interpreters to regular Gestapo agents (*Kriminalangestellte*). Other agents deeply involved in “Jewish matters” included Josef Kastura, SS-Oberscharführer Hermann Blache, and the cruel murderer Wilhelm Rommelman.⁶ Blache, jokingly referred to by his friends as the “Jewish King” (*König der Juden*), would bring his seventeen-year-old son, to work, and would teach him how to shoot the Jewish captives.⁷ And Karl Oppermann (an avid hunter, who served after the war as a tax inspector in Karlsruhe) was often seen strolling the city in hunting attire, shooting Jews with his carbine.⁸ Later, under investigation in Germany, Oppermann claimed that he had had no time for any anti-Jewish activities because he was very busy fighting the Polish resistance. The court, however, gave little credence to his statements and, in 1969, sentenced him to life in prison. At one point, under investigation, Oppermann insisted that: “As a specialist in the struggle against espionage, which was primarily linked with sabotage, I had nothing to do with the shootings of Jews.” In response to the question: “Mr. Oppermann, and what were you doing in Tarnów, when you had some time on your hands?” he answered, “By and large I had very little free time, but whenever I had a moment, I was happy to go hunting.”⁹ One might add that the Jews also referred to their German tormentors as hunters. Chaja Rosenblatt described how “sometimes [before the liquidation of Radomyśl] a small group of Gestapo agents descended on the town, caught and executed several Jews, and then rushed back to Mielec, as if returning from a hunting expedition.”¹⁰ The Jewish witness described here the actions of the Mielec Gestapo, but the methods employed by the police authorities in these two bordering counties were very much alike.

The Criminal Police (*Kriminalpolizei*; Kripo) was another part of SIPO involved in the *Judenjagd*. Unlike the Polish “blue” police, which had never been directly incorporated into the German organizational structures, the Kripo was an essential part of the German police apparatus, which helped to control the conquered Polish population. Kripo agents worked in plainclothes, and most of them, before the war, had worked for the Polish police. In Kraków, for



German gendarmes from the Otfinów detachment, Otfinów, 1941(?). *Yad Vashem Photo Archive, 4577/260.*

instance, there were one hundred Kripo agents, but only ten among them were “pure” Germans sent from the Reich to the *Generalgouvernement* to perform the so-called Service in the East (*Osteinsatz*). All others had been regular Polish police before the war.¹¹ The presence of Polish Kripo agents enabled the Germans to gain valuable information about Polish society. In principle, the Kripo was responsible for fighting “ordinary” crime, but in reality, Polish agents were constantly used to solve “political” issues, including the investigations against the patriotic underground (the so called WBB actions, or *Widerstandsbewegungsbekämpfung*). The Tarnów Kripo was headed by one Karl Klee (from May 1940) and Herbert Köther, his deputy. Klee, while under investigation in Germany in the 1960s, not surprisingly tried to shift some responsibility for the crimes committed against the Jews onto his Polish underlings.¹² In addition to the Gestapo and Kripo, the SIPO was also made up of the Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*; SD). The activities of the SD in Tarnów (the local office was headed by an *Untersturmführer* named Schosstak) were performed in tandem with those of the Tarnów Gestapo. The regular police work was the domain of the German Order Police. From the perspective of the Jews in hiding, the greatest danger was associated with two essential parts of the Orpo: the gendar-

merie (which was responsible for the rural areas), and its urban equivalent, the Protective Police (*Schutzpolizei—Schupo*). Moreover, the Orpo also oversaw the activities of the Polish “blue” Police, one of the deadliest formations involved in the *Judenjagd*. Finally, the *Sonderdienst*, established in the *Generalgouvernement* in May 1940, was composed of ethnic Germans, the *Volksdeutsche*.¹³ We shall focus, however, on the gendarmerie, which played a key role in exterminating the Jews who went into hiding in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County.

The local structures of the German gendarmerie in the *Generalgouvernement* were based upon the regions (*Kreise*)—administrative units created in 1940 through the consolidation of former Polish counties.¹⁴ Each of its five (until July 1941, four) districts contained several gendarmerie commands (*Gendarmeriehauptmannschaften*), covering one or more regions. On a lower level, inside each region the policing authority lay in the hands of the local gendarmerie platoons (*Gendarmeriezüge*). These, in turn, were responsible for the gendarmerie guard stations (*Gendarmerie Aussenposten*), which had to oversee the local stations (*Gendarmerieposten*)—basic policing units spread out in the rural areas. The Tarnów *Gendarmeriezug* was subdivided into three such external detachments, one of which, in the summer of 1940, was located in Dąbrowa Tarnowska. A careful analysis of gendarmerie personnel rosters in the *Generalgouvernement* suggests strongly that linguistic skills must have been one of the selection criteria for the job. In Dąbrowa, in addition to Rudolf Landgraf, who headed the detachment, we see Engelbert Guzdek,¹⁵ his deputy, a gendarme from Silesia who was thus fluent in Polish.¹⁶ Guzdek was not alone—his colleagues Franciszek Boruszak (Boruschak), Artur Zimmermann, and Robert Jahn also spoke fluent Polish. Robert Jahn’s Polish was so good that it enabled him to “pass as a Pole” for nearly three decades, until 1973, when he was recognized on a Warsaw street, with fake identity papers.¹⁷ We have no information about the linguistic skills of other gendarmes, such as Richard Keter,¹⁸ Künstler, Billert, Kreiser, Plozek, Chanysz and Baumgarten, but it is worth noting that in the nearby Dębica detachment, among twelve local gendarmes only three came from the “Old Reich”; all the others hailed from the former Czechoslovak Republic.¹⁹

After the liquidations of the ghettos, further anti-Jewish actions of the gendarmerie were conducted with the assistance of local helpers, whose participation was a guarantee of success. The helpers, who most often were recruited from among the members of the night watch, hostages, or village couriers, provided the gendarmes with the necessary logistical support and intelligence.

Far more important, however, was the participation of the Polish “blue” police, without which the gendarmes, lacking ties to the area, were simply blind. This phenomenon has been studied in depth, in the case of the 101 Reserve Police Battalion, which, during 1942–1943, operated in Lublin District.²⁰ During that time, the *Judenjagd* became one of the main duties of the German policemen. The hunts usually started with confidential reports and denunciations from the local population, or from the Polish interpreters working for the police. Once the fugitives had been located, the commander dispatched a few of his people with orders to catch the Jews, and to interrogate Jews in order to find information about other hideouts. It was assumed (with some justification) that the Jews had some notion about where some other hideouts and bunkers were located. And then, without further formalities, the Jews were shot. The anti-Jewish actions of German gendarmerie in the Lublin District (from where we have more or less complete data) were very successful. Between May and October 1943, in this area alone, the German policemen reported nearly 1,700 executions of “hidden” Jews.²¹ And this, one has to remember, was the period when the majority of Jews had already been hunted down and killed. Similar (although fragmentary) statistics were prepared by the police operating in the *Warschau-Land*, the area around Warsaw.²² According to the reports filed with the Warsaw headquarters between March and October 1943 by several rural detachments, the units that took part in the *Judenjagd* killed more than six hundred Jews in hiding. The data—as noted above—are fragmentary, and the number of victims was, quite obviously, much higher. Although these counts concern other administrative districts, the pattern of anti-Jewish tactics of the Dąbrowa gendarmerie was very similar. In Dąbrowa, independent actions of the gendarmerie are practically unheard of. Quite often the Jews were brought directly to the police stations by peasants, usually members of the night watch. In Pilcza commune, for instance, sometime in 1942 or 1943 “unknown Jew-boys came during the night to the farm of Andrzej Łach, trying to steal some apples from the trees.”²³ The “unknown Jew-boys” actually proved to be two young Jewish girls, who were soon caught by the peasants. “Later the persons who were caught,” testified one of the witnesses, “asked to be let go,” but they asked in vain, and both were brought to the village elder. He, in turn, asked the village “section leader” and two other peasants to deliver the girls to the police detachment in Bolesław. Once in Bolesław, the peasants surrendered the Jewish girls into the custody of German gendarme Richard Keter, who—later that day—shot them in a nearby field.²⁴

In these and similar cases (of which we have at least a dozen examples in the court files from Dąbrowa) the role of the gendarmes was limited only to the execution of the Jews. The whole process of detection, arrest, and delivery to the police was shouldered by the locals. The situation looked different when the gendarmes left Dąbrowa and ventured into the outlying areas. These expeditions were always the result of informers' reports, and the gendarmes leaving for the *Judenjagd* made sure to involve the Polish "blue" police as a backup. German policemen usually executed the Jews themselves, in a routine manner, leaving a standard note in their daily reports: "*nach dem gegebenen Richtlinien verfahren*" (acted upon according to standing regulations).²⁵ They preferred, however, to leave the search for the victims to the "blue" policemen, who had a better idea of where the victims could be found. One of the "blue" policemen later testified: "Georg Grillenberger [commander of gendarmerie detachment in Sanok], who supervised the Polish police, ordered them to look for the remaining Jews and to bring them to the police station. Whenever the Polish or Ukrainian policemen delivered some Jews, Grillenberger immediately ordered his people to shoot them. Every week there were very many such executions."²⁶ The gendarmes were unwilling to lead their victims far away, so normally these executions took place next to the police stations. Only later were the bodies buried by designated peasants outside the village, in the fields, in the ditches, or—rarely—in a Jewish cemetery. Dąbrowa gendarmes, like their counterparts from Sanok, left town rarely and without enthusiasm, preferring to wait for their victims to be delivered to them. Michalina S. from Dąbrowa told the court after the war, "I told the lieutenant [Landgraf] that there were three Jewesses in my house." In such a way, Michalina "rendered" her Jewish charges into the hands of the police.²⁷ "So right then Landgraf sent two gendarmes, Zimmermann and Bove, who took them away," she concluded her testimony. These victims were hiding practically next door to the German police. In other cases, whenever the hunt required traveling further afield, the gendarmes took advantage of the know-how of the Polish "blue" policemen, who knew the local conditions very well.

One of the "blue" policemen described such an expedition in the following words: "All in all we were seven Polish policemen, and two German gendarmes. We went from village to village, and searched the houses, looking for aliens. The Germans never insisted on entering the houses, and I have to add that they actually wanted to avoid these searches, fearful of getting shot."²⁸ From time to time, and in addition to regular Polish and German police forces, the

authorities created mixed units (*Kommandos*) that were tasked with special duties.²⁹ At least two such units were created in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County. In the fall of 1942, one mixed Polish–German commando was established in Radgoszcz, and in the winter of 1943 another one was created in Otfinów/Siedliszowice. Both units were under the authority of Engelbert Guzdek, the previously mentioned gendarme from Dąbrowa, whose deputy was another German from the *Sonderdienst*. Both Germans, who hailed from the Silesia region, spoke fluent Polish. Guzdek had under his command a group of ten Polish “blue” policemen, detached from several Dąbrowa-area police stations. At first, the special units were made responsible for timely delivery of “quota” agricultural products to the State depots—in practical terms it meant threatening reluctant peasants and village elders with reprisals. However, in the fall of 1942 the mission changed, and the mixed units were instructed to—according to one of Guzdek’s Polish subordinates—“catch bandits, Jews and other individuals.”³⁰ The “special unit” operating in Dąbrowa County closely resembled the so-called “Rolling Units” (*Rollkommandos*), formed at the same time in Lublin District. A typical *Rollkommando* (charged with the killing of “bandits and Jews”) was usually made up of one German gendarme, his deputy, and ten–fifteen Polish “blue” policemen.³¹

In some areas, such as Miechów County, these special units were referred to as *Jagdkommandos*, and 80 percent of men involved were recruited from among the Polish police officers.³² In May 1943, the Otfinów special unit was reinforced by Wilhelm Rommelmann, a Gestapo agent from Tarnów. Rommelmann stayed in Otfinów and coordinated reprisals and acts of terror in the area.³³ Guzdek’s and Rommelmann’s *Jagdkommando* terrorized the local population until the end of August, when Guzdek was killed, probably by members of the Polish resistance.³⁴ Rommelmann, tried in 1949 in Tarnów for his crimes, made an attempt to convince the judges that his only role had been to “keep evidence of the former Jewish property, and most of all to prevent the theft of that property.”³⁵ He also said that his duties required him to “secure [Jewish] goods not only in Tarnów, but also in other locations in the area. I do not recall all these places,” said Rommelmann, “but I do recall that I traveled to various places, where I segregated and made stock of former Jewish goods. Later I sold these goods to the local population, and transferred the funds to the state treasury. Sometime during the summer of 1943 I was ordered to leave for Dąbrowa County, and I chose the Otfinów rectory for my quarters. I stayed there ten days, but I deny having had anything to do with the arrests

and executions of Poles. To the contrary, I was instrumental in setting free four Poles, who had been unjustly denounced and arrested for alleged anti-German activities. I remember only that [during my stay in Otfinów] two boys and a girl were shot on the banks of the Dunajec River, but I was not present at the scene and I gave no such orders. While I stayed in Otfinów, I also had other accommodation, in Żabno, in a notaries' house, but I only used it to stay there with my mistress."³⁶ Enough about Rommelmann. Apart from executing Jews, Guzdek's *Jagdkommando* had, in August 1943, killed all the Gypsy inhabitants of Szczurowa. The bloody harvest of Guzdek's actions is still remembered with horror in Dąbrowa and in the neighboring counties.

9

THE POLISH “BLUE” POLICE

*“So he told me to get him a glass of vodka,
because they had a Jew who needed to be shot,
and shooting without vodka is no good.”¹*

The table of murders (table 5.2) indicates that an important and, as it seems, largely unknown role in the hunting down and killing of Jewish refugees between 1942 and 1945 was performed by the Polish “blue” police. The only book that takes up the topic of the history of the “blue” police, surprising as it may seem, fails even to mention this problem.² Nevertheless, the deadly efficiency of the Polish “blue” police operating in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County at least matched that of their colleagues, the German gendarmes. Although our analysis concerns only one county, there is no reason to think that the activities of Polish policemen from Dąbrowa differed from the working habits of their counterparts from other rural areas of occupied Poland with similar ethnic composition. Detachments of Polish and German police were spread throughout the county. Some of them were closed after 1942 (when the security situation deteriorated considerably) but other, reinforced, stations lasted until the end of the occupation. As noted, police stations were located in all larger villages, and definitely in the administrative centers of the communes (*gminy*) of the county.

Who were the “blue” policemen stationed in Dąbrowa and in the area? Most of them were prewar Polish policemen, mobilized by the Germans in the fall of 1939. The rest were new officers recruited under the occupation and trained in the police school in Nowy Sącz (Neu-Sandetz). Some of the new wartime recruits failed to meet even the modest prewar police selection criteria, having completed less than the four classes of primary school normally required for future officers. Finally, there were many policemen from northern and western Poland.³ These areas had been incorporated directly into the Reich, and consequently the local police forces had been entirely replaced by the German authorities, with personnel brought in from the Reich. At this point, the former Polish policemen were offered a chance to continue to serve—but in the *Generalgouvernement*. According to numerous contemporary testimonies and to reports of the underground press, these “imported” policemen lacked ties to the local population, tended to be loyal to the occupation authorities, and were eager to fulfill German orders.

In the eyes of the Polish policemen, the Jews, or rather their goods, were a prized catch—not only during the *Judenjagd* stage of the “Final Solution,” but even before, from the early months of the occupation when new German regulations marked Jews as people without rights. In the period before the liquidation of Dąbrowa-area ghettos, the “blues” had perfected the methods of robbing the Jews who moved between the Jewish communities. The memoirs of a “blue” policeman from Dąbrowa provide a detailed description of this practice, which most often targeted Jewish village merchants.⁴ In the beginning the “blues,” unwilling to kill the goose which laid golden eggs, simply requested their “cut.” Jewish merchants were forced to hand over a part of their merchandise, or some of their cash. Those reluctant to follow the orders of bandits in blue uniforms were either arrested, severely beaten, or both. And in the end, they were always robbed. Chaja Rosenblatt observed the “officers in blue” in action from her home, in Radomyśl Wielki:

Until then [December 1941] some Radomyśl Jews drove their carts to Tarnów, to the market. Thanks to this trade they were able to keep their families alive. Theirs was a very difficult and very dangerous profession. The carts left before dawn, and the merchants hid their modest goods in their clothing, on their bodies, in the pockets of their overcoats. Meat and other foodstuffs were being hidden in special concealed compartments inside the carts. On the way back, they would bring cloth and fabric. Jews engaged in this trade risked the penalty of death, and the roads were often watched by the Polish Police. Hopefully, the Polish policemen could be bought with money.⁵

Later, when the ghettos had been liquidated, the Polish policemen continued to stop the Jews, but this time the price was life:

Kazimierz Ł. promised Mrs. Kupelman to guide her to a safe location. He went to Tarnów, to pick her up, and told her to take along all her valuables. He then asked a "blue" policeman, his partner, to wait in ambush. Close to Bolesław they raped the poor woman, and later brutally murdered her. It was not the only crime of this kind—Ł. frequently offered help to the Jews who tried to cross Vistula River and flee to the north. Then he robbed and killed them; none of them have ever been seen alive again.⁶

Given the potential profits, it is hardly surprising that "Jewish affairs" occupied an important place in the schedule of work of Polish "blue" police. The testimonies of policemen from Radgoszcz station are particularly revealing. The officers described in minute detail the successive steps of the hunt for Jews, the importance of local informers, and the cooperation with German gendarmerie. They also tried to shift some of the blame onto their German colleagues. Officer Stanisław Młynarczyk from the Radgoszcz police station testified as follows:

In the fall of 1942, together with officers Gordziejczyk and Heinberger, we went to the village of Żdźary where we caught four Jews (among them one Jewess), who were hiding in the house of one Szkotak. The Jews were later brought to Radgoszcz, and shot by the Germans. Gordziejczyk, who went on horseback to alert the police in Radgoszcz, returned with Gestapo agents, and they shot Szkotak and his wife for having kept the Jews. Also in the fall of 1942, in Radgoszcz, I caught one Jewess and her small child. They were hiding in the house of Władysław Odoki, and it was Odoki himself who informed us about the Jews in his house. I went along with Hajnberger from the *Sonderdienst*. When we were some 200 meters away from Odoki's farm, Hajnberger took them aside, and first shot the woman, and then her child. I took no part in the shooting. Sometime later the same Odoki betrayed other two Jews who were hidden at his farm. They also were shot by the German Gestapo agents.⁷

The deadly efficiency of the "blue" police in the process exterminating the Jews was linked, on the one hand, to their excellent knowledge of the area and, on the other, to the dense network of available informers. Unlike gendarmes, who appeared rarely, if ever, in remote areas, the "blues" were constantly present in rural communities. Dąbrowa County was not only their place of work, but they often hailed from this area, and had spouses and children in the villages nearby. The existence of intimate links between the rural population and



Polish “blue” policeman fines a Jew for jaywalking,
Kraków, April 1940. NAC, 2-4675.

hunters in police uniforms often had fatal consequences for the Jews in hiding. One survivor from the Mielec area made following observation: “Normally, Poles who betrayed Jews notified the Blue Police, who either shot the Jews or handed them over to the Germans, claiming that they had been caught in the fields. Such stories were unlikely to be challenged, since the Gestapo wanted to make it easier for Poles to get rid of any Jewish families they were sheltering.”⁸



Polish "blue" policeman talking to pedestrians,
Main Square, Kraków, 1940. NAC 2-4691.

The police action was usually triggered by "confidential information" communicated personally or sent anonymously through the mail. The scale of denunciation has been discussed before in the historical literature.⁹ Although the studies looked at the urban side of this phenomenon, there is nothing to indicate that in the rural context the informers were any less dangerous. Władysław Reiter, a Kripo agent from Mielec and, at the same time, an intelligence officer for the underground Home Army (AK), testified that he "had helped Poles who had been denounced for sheltering Jews. He warned these Poles of impending danger."¹⁰ Sometimes, fear of official reprisals pushed people to inform on their neighbors. In Miroszów (close to the town of Miechów), a group of Polish policemen on the so-called "quota patrol" (looking for "unlicensed" cattle, or for peasants who failed to fulfill their quotas of deliveries to the state) entered the house of one Piotr Jaworski. Jaworski "brought forth half a liter of vodka, and told the officers that there were Jews hiding in Bielawski's house."¹¹ This information was intended to draw the officers' attention away from unfulfilled quotas and possible penalties and toward a more inviting target. Indeed, a quick search of Bielawski's house revealed the presence of four Jews. The Jews

were searched, and all their valuables were seized by the policemen. Finally, the officers took the Jews outside the village and executed all of them with shots to the back of the head. "Consider yourself lucky," said Officer Krawczyk to Bielawski. "Had we taken them to the police station, the Germans would have shot you, and your family."¹² Indeed, although the locals from time to time delivered Jews into the hands of the Germans, they did it much more willingly if the "blue" policemen were involved. The reason was simple: the officers of the Polish police did not inspire such fear as the dreaded German gendarmes. The "blues" belonged, after all, to the same "universe of moral obligation."¹³ Unlike Germans, they were predictable (at least they seemed predictable to the peasants) and, as far as the "Jewish cases" were concerned, one could hope for their leniency and a sense of national, ethnic, or racial (depending on the circumstances) solidarity. Furthermore, the "blue" policemen in many cases were officers remembered from the better, prewar times, representing continuity of familiar authority. In Kaszowice, in the spring of 1943, a group of local boys, shepherds tending the cattle, caught Józef Goldfeier (or Goldfinger—the peasants were not sure of his name) and brought him to the village elder.¹⁴ The elder sent for the "blue" policemen from the nearby Liszki detachment. Some time later the peasants met in front of the elder's house to discuss the situation. The people who at one point or another had given assistance to the unfortunate Jewish captive were most upset. Now, should he talk, their own lives would be at risk. A tumultuous debate ensued in order to decide whether the captured Jew should die or be set free. The first option carried the day and Goldfeier (or Goldfinger) was soon executed by Officer Kożuch, on the orders of his superior, Lieutenant Stanisław Habdas. "Despite repeated warnings, the Jew tried to flee," said Habdas during his interrogation in 1949.

In other cases, peasants would try to reach an understanding with the "blues," in order to solve—with the assistance of the police—their "Jewish problem." Icek Mendel before fleeing his native village of Dulcza Wielka left a considerable amount of money for safekeeping with Jan J., his gentile neighbor. In the winter of 1942–1943, Mendel reappeared in the village and requested his money back. Jan J., unwilling to hand over the 30,000 zlotys which he had, in the meantime, started to consider his own, contacted the local "blue" policemen.¹⁵ We have no information as to the precise nature of the deal reached between the two parties, but its results were dramatic, and immediate. Józef Kozub, whose house was situated on the outskirts of Dulcza, close to the forest, testified after the war:

There were three Jewboys and a Jewess in my house. They came in to dry their shoes and to warm up by the oven. One of them was Icek Mendel from Radomyśl, whom I knew well. In the afternoon, around 3 PM, the Polish Police surrounded my house and found inside all these four Jews. There were three police officers, although I do not recall their names because they beat me up like savages. My wife told me that one of them was officer Strzępka but she didn't know the two others. They shot the Jews and later told me to bury them.¹⁶

There were better policemen and there were worse policemen. Some of them wanted to have nothing to do with the implementation of the "Final Solution." One P. who (together with his wife) performed something akin to "citizens' arrest" and delivered two Jewish women to the police, encountered hostility instead of gratitude. One witness said,

I have heard with my own ears how the Jewesses begged P. to let them go. But P.'s wife said, "you deserve it, and now you will suffer, and there is nothing that you can do about it!" So the pleas and begging were for nothing, and the women were brought to the police. Later P. came to me, and said that he hoped for an award: "But instead I received a reprimand. Gromala, one of the 'blue' policemen, asked me why I had delivered the Jewesses to his station. He even said to me, 'Well, if you have already brought them here, you can just as well shoot them yourself!'"¹⁷

Another "blue" policeman, one Stanisław, offered to help Rivka Shenker, who had been caught hiding in the forest, in November 1944:

He came up to me and asked: "What is your name? It seems to me that I know you from somewhere." . . . So I gave him my name, and he went pale and said: 'Do you know who I am?' So I said: "You look very much like Stanisław, the policeman I used to know." He was silent for a moment, and then said: "Because I am this Stanisław. What do you do here? Where did they catch you? Dear Lord, I want to help you, I knew your grandmother very well. She was always so good to me, so now I want to pay it back. I hope you don't hold it against me that I work with the Germans; I had no other choice."¹⁸

Distrustful and suspecting treason, Goldfinger rejected the offer of help. "I was sure that if I accepted his offer, I would be doomed because I was young and attractive and he would first take advantage of me and later he would shoot me."¹⁹ Only much later, after the war, did Shenker learn that, indeed, Stanisław the "blue" policeman had sheltered another Jewish woman under his roof. In the first case, Gromala's decision could have had serious implications (from the point of view of the Germans, setting Jews free was tantamount to sabotage)

and could result in various disciplinary measures. Officer Stanisław, who decided to shelter Jews, was quite obviously ready to put his own life on the line.

Unfortunately, much more numerous were officers who arrested and killed Jews without a second thought. In the case of Dąbrowa, many names come to mind: Lewandowicz, Niechciał, Mądry, Szewczyk or policeman Piotr Bińczycki who served in the Ujście Jezuickie detachment, to name but a few. Aleksander Kampf, a Jewish survivor, wrote a brief note after the war: "On April 12, 1943, Bińczycki, with two other Polish officers, barged into the barn and pulled out my wife and children. He shot my wife on the spot, and took the children to the police station. He tortured them the whole day and night, and killed them the next day."²⁰ Bińczycki continued his career after the war, under communism, as an agent of the State Security in Kraków.²¹ These policemen seem to have been average representatives of their profession; rather well liked by the locals and, in many cases fine-tuned to the needs of their community. Once under investigation, the "blue" policemen, murderers of the Jews, received massive support from the peasants, who petitioned the Kraków Appellate Court to set the accused free, or at least to show them leniency. Some of these open letters, itself a rare phenomenon in postwar Stalinist times, bear hundreds of signatures!

Once a "confidential report" indicated the location of the Jews, the chief of the "blue" police station ordered two or three officers to apprehend the fugitives. The gendarmes were rarely asked to assist; assistance was mostly required when the "blues" anticipated armed resistance or when the German liaison officers themselves expressed interest in taking part in the expedition. On quite exceptional occasions, the Tarnów Gestapo also appeared on the scene. Once in the village, the "blues" summoned the elder, his deputy, village courier, hostages, or the local informer and surrounded the house (or farm) where they expected to find their victims. Then they started the search. The searches were brutal and intimidating. The officers often used physical violence, beating up the peasants and taking apart the houses. In Gorzyce (Otfinów commune), the "blues" searched a number of dwellings because their information was incomplete and there were many peasants with the same surname as the suspect. One of them woke up hearing shouts: "Police, open up!" The peasant, expecting nothing good, pulled on his pants and jumped through the window, trying to flee. He did not get far, because one of the officers was already waiting for him outside: "One of them pulled out his revolver," testified the peasant shortly after the war, "pointed it at me, and said 'stand still, you son of a bitch, hands

up, in the air!' The same individual ordered me to climb back home, through the window; I did as I had been told." Once inside, the policemen pulled off his pants and applied seventy strikes with a baton to his bare buttocks. "When I fainted, they threw water in my face"—he finished his deposition.²² In another house, policemen from Otfinów looked for Jews with such zeal that they tore out the planks from the floor.²³ The arrested Jews were usually interrogated in the village holding pen, or in the house of the informer. The point was to quickly extract information about the fabled Jewish gold. According to the deep conviction of peasants in the Tarnów area, Jews had gold. All Jews. From today's perspective, the strength of this conviction may seem surprising. After all, before the war the local Jews were often just as poor as their Aryan neighbors. The victims of the *Judenjagd* came from the same villages as their hunters, and there was no doubt that they had no fortunes to speak of. Berl Fischman, who survived the war in Auschwitz and returned to Dąbrowa in 1945, found his house occupied by a Polish family, and the area around the house dug up by the new owners who searched in vain for the "Jewish treasures."²⁴ The absolute conviction and deep belief about the universality of "Jewish gold" is, therefore, a powerful tribute to the influence of prewar nationalist and Church-led antisemitic propaganda and the German efforts in the same direction.

The interrogation of victims sometimes allowed hidden valuables to be retrieved, but much more often it enabled officers to establish a list of peasants who had accepted "Jewish items" for safekeeping. The sought "items" usually meant linens, bed covers, duvets, cutlery, furniture, or even cattle.²⁵ One witness left a description of a "search for Jewish things" carried out by peasants in Gniewczyna, a village close to Łańcut. In 1942, shortly after the Germans initiated deportations of Jews in the area, a group of inhabitants seized three local Jewish families and locked all of them in one of the houses. Over several days, the women were gang-raped and the men were tortured and questioned. The tormentors wanted to learn where the "Jewish items" were hidden. Afterwards, they

knocked from door to door and took back Jewish winter clothes which had been left for safekeeping. If someone refused [to give back the clothes] they were threatened with the Gestapo. So it was in the case of good Mary Kulp: "Blessed be Jesus, is John at home?" "Lord be praised, he will soon be back." "Oh, well, I am in a rush." "And what do you want?" "Nothing much, just these Jewish rags." "What rags? We have nothing," "Mary, Mary, think real well, these rags, you have

them. . . .” “I swear, we have nothing!” “Lejba admitted that you have them.” “So let Lejba come, and pick them up himself!” “Give back this winter coat and hat!” “You have no conscience!”²⁶

The peasants, while highly motivated, were not as experienced as “blue” police officers. Kubala, a policeman from the village of Skrzydlina, made fun of the peasants who a day earlier had killed two Jews but left behind, in the pocket of one of their victims, a valuable watch. One of the peasants, questioned later about the murders, said, “We should have taken the watch, it was worth at least a good cow, and now the police have taken it.”²⁷ The officers were very thorough. Having shot two young Jewish girls close to Radgoszcz, they left the bodies practically naked.²⁸ The reason why the bodies of the executed Jews were left naked was simple: some of the victims tried to hide their last valuables in body cavities, or in their underwear. In the case of Szmulek Brewerman, delivered to the police by peasants from village of Walizka, the “blues” went even further. After some time the elder received a list of names of peasants who, during the last few months, offered assistance to Brewerman. The peasants were ordered to report to the police, were lectured about their irresponsible behavior, and were fined 500 zlotys each. Szmulek, after a thorough interrogation, was shot behind the police station.²⁹

After the searches and interrogations, the “blues” could follow several courses of action. First, they could transfer the Jews for execution to the nearest German police station. This option, however, was fraught with risks: once in German hands, and before the execution, the Jews could talk and reveal the names of their Polish helpers. They could also accuse the “blue” policemen of theft—in the eyes of the Germans and according to the German laws, stealing from Jews was equivalent to stealing from the Reich, the sole owner of the “former Jewish property.” The policemen had also to think about other administrative hurdles: one had to deliver the Jews into the hands of the Germans (and this sometimes meant a night-long journey) and to prepare a written report for the authorities. In these circumstances, in the eyes of the “blue” policemen, shooting the Jews often appeared to be the easiest solution. In order to better understand this area of “blue” policemen’s work, one can take advantage of an extraordinary book—the recently published memoirs of Tadeusz Krasnodębski, an officer attached to the Otfinów detachment of the “blue” police from 1940 to 1944. This is the only, as far as I know, published memoir of a Polish “blue” policeman. Krasnodębski’s book is self-serving and full of vicious antisemitic remarks but, with several reservations, it can still be considered a

useful tool to study the role of the Polish police in the implementation of the "Final Solution." One can look, for instance, at the description of the capture and the murder of Kalm Wilk, a Jewish policeman from Żabno, who went into hiding after the liquidation of the ghetto. According to Krasnodębski, "Wilk was hiding for some time in the village of Diament, where he met the fiancée of Niechciał [a policeman from Otfinów], and she told her boyfriend about the meeting. Niechciał and Lewandowicz went to Diament and caught Wilk, who promised to show them where he had buried his valuables. It didn't help him one bit, because the policemen took away the valuables, and shot the Jew all the same."³⁰ Albin B., one of the witnesses testifying just after the war in a Kraków court, had a slightly different recollection of the same event: "When the Jew Wilk came to my house, one of the five local boys [who saw him] went to report him to the police. A short while later I saw four officers on bicycles: Tadeusz Krasnodębski, Lewandowicz, Lesiński, and Mądry. They took the Jew straight from my house, and they led him to the police station. The Jew asked them to let him go, and promised them to show where he had hidden the gold and cash. So the policemen took him to Żabno, where he had hidden his gold and money, and then they shot the Jew, and split the gold and money between themselves, these four policemen." Perhaps Krasnodębski was less than forthcoming about his own involvement in the murder, but he certainly had first-hand knowledge of the described events. Krasnodębski also gave an account of the death of Mendel Kapelner:³¹ "The Jew showed up one day in our police station. He looked hardly human, he had been hiding since the fall of last year and now was completely exhausted, both physically and mentally. He stood in the door and said, 'Please, shoot me, I can't stand it anymore.'" The author, if we are to believe him, found an excuse but his colleague obliged Kapelner, and shot him in front of the station. Józef Dybała, who testified a few years after the war had, however, a very different recollection of Mendel Kapelner's death. "Władysław Nagórzański, the village elder, told us, 'Let's go and catch this Jew-boy Mendel Kapelner, who's hiding in Władysław Migala's barn. I said, 'I didn't give him life, so I won't take it away.' But we had to go to the barn, and the elder told us that Migala had already reported the Jew to the German police in Otfinów, and the police ordered him to hold the Jew. So the elder told us to catch the Jew-boy, and we all went into the barn."³² Józef Migala said, "In 1943, in the month of May, the people caught the Jew-boy Mendel Kapelner, and brought him to the Polish police officers, who shot him."³³ Indeed, it is true (however horrible it might sound) that some Jews, having lost all hope, asked the police for a speedy execution, but it seems that Mendel Kapelner from Siedliszowice was not one



“Blue” policeman Eugeniusz Niechciał, from the Otfinów police detachment, checks identity papers. In the background: Officer T. Krasnodębski, Żabno, 1942. *With permission of Julia Krasnodebski.*

of them. One can add that similar fate befell Mendel's cousin, Pejka (Pearl) Kapelner. Pejka was hiding in Bieniaszowice, a village nearby. Together with one Jacob "Black," a Jew from Opatowiec, she stayed in the barn of an "Aryan" friend. Unfortunately, Karol Motyka, one of the neighbors, found out about them, and—with the help of a few others—delivered the Jews to the police in Gręboszów, where they were executed.³⁴

We know little about what happened to "hidden" Jews once they had been brought to the nearest police station; very few lived to tell the story. In the fall of 1942, Krasnodębski's colleagues from the nearby Wietrzychowice detachment arrested Rozalia Polanecka, a Jewish woman who had been hiding in the village of Wola Przemykowska. Held in police custody in Wietrzychowice, she managed to smuggle a short note from her cell. The letter survived the war:

Wietrzychowice, 18 September 1942.³⁵ This letter is written by Rozalia Polanecka (nee Berl) from Ujście Jezuickie, parish Gręboszów, who has been sentenced to death. I leave this world grateful to people who dared to act decently. I thank you, reverend father, for all the good you have done. Perhaps, by chance, one of the Polaneckis will survive? Please, let them have this last whisper of mine. And don't worry about this life—one day we will [all] be reborn as spirits. Farewell, beloved people and beloved world, wonderful world! We need to love even those, who do not know what they do. My hideout was betrayed by one Szywała, a deportee from Kolbuszowa, now resident of Miechowice Wielkie. May Lord be with you. [May] all [have] a better future. Once the war is over, please write to America, to Jack Lippel, 94–96 Ave. C.D., N.Y. America, USA I say goodbye to those who wish other people well. (Signed) Rozalia Polanecka.

In Radgoszcz, the "blue" policemen worked under the authority of two German gendarmes attached to their unit. The holding cells at the station were often used to interrogate Jews who had been caught in the area. According to the testimony of a local "blue" policeman, a notorious and fear-inspiring gendarme named Engelbert Guzdek would torture the Jewish prisoners in order to force them to name the people who had given them food. The officer added: "Gendarme Guzdek, I and several other said 'blue' policemen, we brought the Jewboys to the police station in Radgoszcz. Once inside, Guzdek with another Gestapo-man from Tarnów interrogated these Jewboys, torturing and beating them. I and the other 'blue' policemen who captured these Jewboys, we went to sleep."³⁶

According to abundant and unequivocal historical evidence, the Polish 'blue' police from the Tarnów area murdered Jews often and routinely. It even



From the left: German gendarmes Richard Ketter, Ludwig Bove, Polish policemen Tadeusz Krasnodębski (standing above Bove), Waclaw Lewandowicz, Stefan Mądry, Tadeusz Matyka, Łaziński, Piotr Biś, Otfinów police station, spring 1943. *With permission of Julia Krasnodebski.*

seems that the executions were done in a matter-of-fact way. One day, local peasants brought a Jew to a police station, whom they had caught in a nearby forest. Marian Czerniewski, the officer on duty, led the anonymous Jew (whose hands had been tied with wire) 100 yards away from the station: "Then Officer Czerniewski said, 'I won't take him any further' and shot him through the head, killing him on the spot."³⁷ The execution of Jews also served as a form of initiation, an act of deeper friendship between officers, and a way to prove loyalty to the "blue" collective. Participation in the shootings reinforced professional and social bonds and, of course, guaranteed loyalty and silence in the future. Jan Szewczyk, another policeman from the Otfinów detachment, described the last moments of eighteen-year-old Salomea Süß and her twenty-year-old sister, who had earlier been betrayed by Jan A. from Gorzyce:

Commander [of our detachment] Lewandowicz said to me, and to the young Officer Stachowicz, "Since you have done nothing yet, now you have to fix them," which meant that I and Stachowicz had to kill the Jewesses. I told him that since



Officers of Polish “blue” police in front of the Otfinów police station. Standing from the left: Officer Eugeniusz Niechciał, Waclaw Lewandowicz, Tadeusz Krasnodębski, NN. *With permission of Julia Krasnodebski.*

I hadn't shot anyone yet, I didn't want to shoot the Jewesses now. So then he told me that I was an arse and not a policeman. Then he turned to the Jewesses and ordered them to get off the road, and to go to the bushes nearby. So at this point the young policeman Stachowicz fired off one round from his carbine. One of the girls fell to the ground, and the other cried out and rushed towards the lying Jewess. At this point I fired a shot and this second Jewess shouted even louder, and fell next to the other Jewess, who had been wounded before. Seeing this, Commander Lewandowicz said with irony, “What are you screwing around!?” It meant, why hadn't we finished the Jewesses off right away. So the commander approached the lying Jewesses, took out his pistol, and shot them twice, and they were still. I would also like to add that before the shooting, the commander told Dulka, one of the peasants, to dig a grave for the Jewesses.³⁸

Not surprisingly, the officers justified the murder of the Süß sisters in terms of protecting the peasants and shielding the village of Gorzyce from the vengeance of the Germans. Had both Jewish girls been caught by the Germans, all the inhabitants of this hamlet would have paid the price, argued the “blue” policemen.³⁹



Stefan Mądry, Engelbert Guzdek, and Eugeniusz Niechciał, at a wedding, in Nieciecza, July 1943. *With permission of Julia Krasnodebski.*



Exhumation of the remains of Hela and Salomea Süß, Dąbrowa area, December 1945. *Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, 301/1637a.*

The same patriotic argument was used by two “blue” policemen called by the elder to the village of Kłyż to “do something with a Jewess.” One of the witnesses later testified as follows: “The policemen arrived, and they took [the Jewish girl] 300 yards away from my house, and shot her behind a barn. She was later buried behind this barn, but I have no idea who took away her clothes, or what happened to them.”⁴⁰ A few days after the execution, the “blue” policemen appeared again in Kłyż and told the locals that “had the Jewess been caught by the Germans, they would have shot several families.”⁴¹

Józef Górski, an estate owner and a fervent nationalist from Podlasie, agreed:

Most of all, the Jews hated us. I saw many examples of it during the war. There was one Całka, a glassmaker in Sterdynia. He had been hiding in Ceranów but, finally, he was caught and a “blue” policeman led him to the police station in Kossowo. That’s when Całka shook his fists at Ceranów, and started making threats that he would give the Germans the names of all those who had helped him. The officer shot the Jew under the bridge, and later told [the Germans] that the prisoner had tried to escape. “I couldn’t allow the whole village to be turned to ashes just because of one scoundrel!” he explained to me in a later conversation.⁴²

This attitude and similar comments come across strongly in reports sent to Warsaw commanders of the Home Army by the regional intelligence officers. In 1943, one of them warned his superiors, “The Jews hiding in the forests are hated by the [local] population. They are at the root of many problems of the

Polish population, they steal, and they are usually communists. These 'forest Jews,' when caught by the gendarmes, practically always accuse innocent inhabitants of the nearby villages. It is either revenge for having received no assistance, or the principle 'since I have to die, you shall die too!'"⁴³ Another intelligence report from the same period stated flatly that "the attitudes towards Jews are hostile, often even hateful. There are many cases of liquidations of Jews who wander in the area. This month alone eight Jews were liquidated in such a way. Execution usually takes place right there where a Jew has been found. We have to note the cases when peasants who have already taken advantage of a Jew give him away to the gendarmes."⁴⁴

The murders and executions were usually done in a business-like, routine fashion. The arrested Jews were later marched toward the nearest forest, or to the bush, and executed. Officer Wesołowski from Raławice said, "Krawczyk, my commanding officer, ordered me to shoot, so I shot one Jew, and I wounded the other one in the neck. [Officer] Faryński finished that one off. Faryński also killed two other Jews, and finished off the third one. Those [killed] ones were two men, and one woman."⁴⁵ Sometimes the Jews, on their way to the execution, tried to beg for mercy, and in quite exceptional cases even tried to flee. "I saw these young Jewesses"—testified a "blue" policeman from Otfinów—"I remember how they asked us to set them free. They told us that the Germans would kill them, but the commanding officer refused to even listen to them."⁴⁶ Most often, however, they had already been so badly beaten that they had lost the will to struggle. Sometimes the executions did not follow the "impersonal" routine, but erupted in a spectacle of sadistic violence of murderers in dark blue uniforms. In the late fall of 1942, in Radgoszcz, the locals delivered a young Jewish woman and her infant child into the hands of the Polish police. Led to the place of the execution, the woman begged the "blue" policeman to show her mercy, and to shoot her first, so that she would not have to watch the death of her child. It did not happen that way, "because the officer did something quite the opposite: first he shot her child, and only then finished her off."⁴⁷

Before the killings, the "blue" policemen liked to fortify themselves with vodka. Officer Ryzek from Pilzno detachment, shortly before shooting a captive in Słotowa commune, requested "a quart of vodka, because they have a Jew who has to be shot, and shooting without vodka is no good."⁴⁸ Before the killings, the officers would raise a glass, or two. Another drinking session usually followed the executions, indicating a ritual, or a pattern of behavior of "blue" policemen from the Tarnów area. This is not to suggest that the officers of the

Polish "blue" police in other areas drank any less. The tradition was known in all other districts, and in some cases the officers facing the court after the war mentioned their intoxication as an extenuating circumstance. "I killed the person of Jewish nationality because I was drunk," argued an officer accused of killing Lejba Syjak, his Jewish neighbor from Stanisławów. "Had I been sober, I would have never done it."⁴⁹

The executions opened the way to the next stage of "police work"—to robbery and burial of the bodies. These stages need to be discussed in some detail. As already noted, the first robbery took place immediately after the arrest, with peasants or policemen torturing the Jews to extract information about the hidden "Jewish goods." After the execution it was time to search the bodies, seeking cash, gold coins, or jewelry that could have been sewn into the seams of underwear. "Together with Franciszek Owsiak we placed the two bodies in the grave and covered it with earth. The Jewess had some clothes on, and the Jew was in long johns only. I have no idea who took away the clothes of this Jew, but I remember that Owsiak took off the long johns too, so that we buried the Jew naked," testified Piotr Skrzyniarz from Brnik.⁵⁰ The bodies were usually buried at the site of the execution. Some time earlier, the police (or the village elder, depending on the circumstances) selected peasants responsible for digging graves. The grave-diggers received a small compensation for their trouble, most often some of the Jewish clothes. One of these peasants gave the following account: "So he tore all the clothes and underwear off the bodies, so that these two Jewesses were completely naked, and he buried them like that. Franciszek Wróbel told me that Dudek took off these clothes from their dead bodies."⁵¹ Another peasant assigned to a burial detail recalled that "the police officers were at the scene, they tore the clothes off the bodies and they searched them piece by piece. The bodies were left in underwear only. Lewandowicz put aside one skirt, one pair of shoes and a head scarf, and told me to take these items. The rest of the clothing was placed on the [police] cart. Later we buried them [Jews] in a pit."

In extreme cases, these unlucky rescuers were threatened with having "their" Jews buried next to or within the walls of their own houses. This was the plan of Stanisław Nawrocki, the village elder from Swiebodzin (south of Tarnów), who "instructed the people to bury [the Jews killed by the police] next to the house."⁵² The plan was aborted, however, when it became known that the rescuers were at the same time informers who "rendered" their Jews to the Germans. The treacherous rescuers turned the tables on the elder, threatened

him with possible German reprisals, and the Jewish victims were finally buried in the woods, nearby. This horrible kind of burial was known in other areas of the Kraków District too. A Jewish woman, hiding in the Miechów area, noted in her diary, "I happened to listen to one peasant, who told us that the Germans had found a Jew in the village of Kazimierza. The Jew had been shot, and the body was buried in the same room where he had been discovered. There were no wooden floors in the room, just an earth floor, so they buried the Jew in such a way that his legs, from the knees down, stuck out in the air."⁵³ It is hard to say how much these stories were products of horrified imagination, but they certainly instilled fear into the minds and hearts of people who were hiding Jews, and had a chilling effect on those who were contemplating such a move. Finally, the macabre rituals of murder and burial were not only a "Galician" phenomenon. Similar accounts were reported from other districts of the *Generalgouvernement*. In the night of November 1, 1943, in Rechta, a small village close to Lublin, local peasants committed mass murder of Jews who were hiding in their community. One Polish woman from Rechta recalled these events: "Michał Rymarz, our elder, came to our house and told my husband to take a spade, and to go and bury the bodies. . . . In the meantime I was in the house of Kułaga and his wife told me to take their axe and a bed cover, because her husband had been taken away by the Germans to Majdanek [concentration camp]. Then Józef Teter showed up and said that Kułaga's wife had to go and dig a grave for the killed [Jews] because she was guilty of keeping Jews. And then he ordered three bodies to be buried—next to Kułaga's window—and even wanted to bury them inside the house, but the neighbors protested, so the Jews were finally buried by the window."⁵⁴

10

THE BAUDIENST

German police, the “eastern allies” in German service, Polish “blue” police, and voluntary firefighters—all were involved in the liquidation of the Tarnów-area ghettos. Another organization that took part in this stage of the *Judenjagd* was the Construction Service (*Baudienst*). The *Baudienst*, a paramilitary organization for Polish youth, was created by the Germans in May 1940 and initially covered only the Kraków District. On December 1, 1940, their activities were extended to other districts of occupied Poland. From the very beginning, however, the *Baudienst* was most active in the Kraków District. Elsewhere it showed few signs of life, and in the Warsaw District the *Baudienst* was never formed at all. Specialists paid little attention to this organization and, consequently, references to the *Baudienst* are practically absent from the historical writing.¹ Before we move on to describe the role of the *Baudienst* youths (the “*yunaki*”) in the implementation of the “Final Solution,” at least some information about the Tarnów section of this organization is called for.

The first leader of the Tarnów *Baudienst* was one Oberfeldmeister Bartsch. In 1941, after his recall, and until the end of the war, the office was held by Alfred Eckmann, an engineer transferred from the Reich. The Tarnów section (*Kommandodienststelle des Baudienstes*) was subject to the orders of the High Leader of Work (*Generalarbeitsführer*) in Kraków.² The Polish *Baudienst* was made up of sections (*Abteilung*), which in turn consisted of troops (*Truppe*) or platoons (*Züge*). From the point of view of the administrative structure, the Tarnów *Baudiensthauptstelle* was incorporated into the office of the local

German civil authorities (*Kreishauptmann*). On the one hand, the chief of the local *Baudienst* followed the orders of his superiors from Kraków; however, he also had to obey the local German mayor.

The *Baudienst* in the *Generalgouvernement* was modeled after the Work Service of the Reich (*Reichsarbeitsdienst*; RAD), and its main duties involved building roads, levees, and flood dykes. Service in the *Baudienst* was mandatory for males who in any given year turned age twenty. The *yunaki* had to serve for one year, but, whenever necessary, the authorities could extend their term of service. And so, in Tarnów, at the end of March 1942, the authorities called for the registration of “men of Polish, Ukrainian, and Goral nationality born in 1922.”³ Registration was mandatory, and failure to comply was threatened with severe penalties. The future *yunaki* underwent medical examinations, at which they were usually accompanied by representatives of their villages or communes. The *Baudienst* was divided into three “national” sections: Poles reported to the *Baudienst*, Ukrainians to the Ukrainian State Service (*Ukrainische Heimatdienst*), and Gorals to the Goral State Service (*Goralische Heimatdienst*).⁴ The Tarnów *Baudienst* was further split into three sections (*Abschnitte*), located in, respectively, Tarnów, Lisia Góra, and Szczuczyn. While the section leaders were Germans, the lower ranks (*Unterführer*) were filled with specially selected and trained Polish *yunaki*. The young draftees received a modest stipend, just like their German counterparts working for the RAD.

In 1942, Tarnów *Baudienst* could mobilize some 1,400 Polish youths, working in three areas, and each area was serviced by 400–500 people. The Germans working for the *Baudienst* wore olive-green uniforms, which resembled the old uniforms of the Czechoslovak army, and the *yunaki* wore civilian clothes. Starting in 1942, Polish youths in the *Baudienst* were provided with a shirt with two pockets on the chest, long trousers, and shoes with wooden soles. According to the testimonies of German engineers and leaders of the Tarnów *Baudienst*, during the first years of war the *yunaki* mostly built roads and dug dykes and levees along the Vistula and Dunajec rivers. Later, the *Baudienst* was deployed in building railway tracks. Finally, between the summer of 1942 and the spring of 1943, the construction service was asked to help in the implementation of the Final Solution, and took part in the liquidation of the local ghettos. In this capacity, the *Baudienst* played a significant, and shameful, role during the initial phase of the *Judenjagd*. Nevertheless, the Holocaust-related



Baudienst Youths Loading wagons, 1941. NAC 2-5539.

activities of the *yunaki* were clearly not a priority; one can say that such actions occurred on the margins of their construction work.

Preparations for exterminating Jews from the Tarnów area gained momentum in the late spring of 1942. That is when the local *Baudienst* office received orders to send a number of *yunaki* to the local ghettos to assist the police. The choice was not accidental since the *Baudienst* had already acquired significant experience in earlier anti-Jewish actions. During one of the *razzias*⁵ conducted by the Germans in the summer of 1941 in the Tarnów ghetto, some three hundred Jews were herded onto the main square and told to kneel. First, the SS-men shot the kneeling Jews, and then youths from the *Baudienst* loaded the corpses onto trucks.⁶ The experience they gained in 1941 resulted in further cooperation with the SS one year later. According to one German commander of the *Baudienst*,

Our first experiences with the actions intended to exterminate the Jews [*Judenvernichtungsmassnahmen*] go back to June 1942. I remember well that one day I was in conversation with my superiors, Kreishauptmann Dr. Kippke and his deputy, Dr. Pernutz, about the “Jewish action” planned by the local SS



Baudienst, 4th anniversary parade. Governor General Hans Frank (right) and the chief of the *Baudienst*, Heinrich Hinkel, inspect the troops. Kraków, May 20, 1944. NAC, Warsaw, 2-5568.

for the next day. I was told that the Polish *Baudienst* would have to secure the property in the houses of the deported Jews, or to deliver those goods for storage, to the warehouses. Next day, in the morning a number of our youths reported for duty on the main square, in Tarnów. The members of the *Baudienst* were working all day, guarding the Jewish houses and securing the Jewish property.⁷

The involvement and the roles of the *yunaki* were not as modest, however, as would seem from the testimonies of German engineers given in the 1960s. Nonetheless, it is hard to blame the engineers. After all, German employees of the *Baudienst* were being questioned about the involvement of their organization in the extermination of the Jews, and the Polish *yunaki* were their direct subordinates. Both cities, Dąbrowa and Tarnów, were closed for the duration of the “*Aktionen*.” Not only the Poles but also Germans, personnel of the civil administration, and even soldiers not directly involved in the liquidation were all told to stay home.⁸ Those directly involved in the “liquidation action” included the SS, local Gestapo, gendarmerie, Polish “blue” police, the *Baudienst*, and a certain number of support troops from the East who were named *Beutegermanen* by the Germans from the Reich. Closing down the cities had two objectives: to limit the number of witnesses, and to prevent robberies of the empty houses of Jews. Although the first goal was impossible to achieve (Dąbrowa and Tarnów both resonated with gunfire and dead bodies littered

the streets), all attempts at robbery were punished ruthlessly. Piotr Chmura from Gruszów Mały described one execution of Poles involved in pillage of Jewish property: "In October 1942, Zofia, the wife of Józef Surowiec, together with Maria Surowiec, went to the so-called Jewish ghetto. She took one bed cover and a pillow, and Maria Surowiec stood [waiting] on the sidewalk. When Surowiec's wife was in the Jewish house, from where she took the items, two German gendarmes happened to come by and one of them, called Münhoff, shot Surowiec's wife in the head."⁹

The thefts of this so-called "post-Jewish property" in the Tarnów area (as well as elsewhere) occurred frequently and throughout occupied Poland, and the draconian regulations introduced by the Germans against the thieves had a very limited dissuading effect. Similar robberies took place in the summer of 1942 in the deserted ghetto in Żabno. Tadeusz Krasnodębski, the previously cited Polish "blue" policeman noted that

Lesiński [a "blue" policeman from the Otfinów detachment] frequently arrived in Żabno and stole everything he could from the ghetto. Krzciuk [another policeman from Żabno] considered it unwelcome competition and reported him to the Gestapo, which immediately put an end to the activities of the enterprising Lesiński. The mayor of Żabno, one Uramek, received orders from the Tarnów Gestapo to auction off the remaining Jewish property. Having learned about it, I allowed the most needy and the poorest inhabitants of Żabno to enter the ghetto and to take away whatever they needed, before it was sold to the highest bidder.¹⁰

One has to treat Krasnodębski's self-serving account with caution—the part about "letting the poor into the ghetto" was, most likely, invented by the author, but there is no doubt that the deserted ghetto in Żabno was, indeed, a place of pillage, theft and, finally, of an auction. In Radomyśl Wielki, fifteen miles to the east, 150 smaller Jewish houses were simply torn down, and the lumber was used for constructing "Aryan" households. The only Jewish houses left standing were the large brick houses in the center of the city, close to the market square. The "Jewish items" were sold at an auction, just like in Żabno. All items of interest were first stored in the local synagogue, for viewing, and later were sold by one Leonard Kwaśnikiewicz, "inspector of the Commune police."¹¹ Little is known about these "fire sales" ordered by the Germans and conducted by the local Polish administration, for the benefit of the local "Aryan" population, but this kind of fencing of property stolen from the murdered Jews happened in many other liquidated ghettos as well.¹²

The *Baudienst* *yunaki*, who (if one were to believe the German engineers) were charged with the “protection of the Jewish property,” quickly became involved in a variety of anti-Jewish activities throughout the Kraków District. One Jewish survivor from Działoszyce (west of Dąbrowa), observed that

Germans arrived in town like a hurricane, on motorcycles with side cars. Chaim-Lezer . . . saw the *yunaki* who had surrounded the city. The *yunaki*, armed with picks, spades, and bars, formed a cordon, standing 3–4 meters apart and creating a veritable wall. We were not surprised at all that the *yunaki* agreed to do the dirty work for the Germans.¹³ . . . Some time later the Jews were marched from Działoszyce, to Miechów, where they were forced to camp on a swampy meadow. The area was once again surrounded by the *Baudienst* youths, who made it impossible for the Jews to escape.”¹⁴

The *yunaki* from the *Baudienst* (together with the “blue” police and the *Sonderdienst*) displayed similar zeal during the liquidation of Jewish community in Książ Wielki. According to witnesses, the “*Baudiensts*” were most interested in looting, but—at the same time—they perpetrated heinous crimes against Jews.¹⁵

During the liquidation *Aktion* in Tarnów (just as in hundreds of other ghettos), some Jews decided to weather the storm, and sought shelter in more or less primitive bunkers and hideouts. Polish youths from the *Baudienst* excelled at locating these bunkers.¹⁶ Immediately after the war, ten-year-old Giza Beller used simple words to describe her experiences during the “liquidation action”:

We were told that it was a simple lockdown but my mother never believed them, and always kept us in hiding. In the morning we heard the shouts of the *Ordnungsdiensts* [Jewish policemen], and all had to go to the main square. We tried to get through to ghetto “B,” to our bunker, but it was already too late. We saw people kneeling in the square, with their faces down to the ground. We found a hideout in one of the cellars. It was a very poor place to hide, but somehow no one found us. The boys from the *Baudienst* conducted the search.¹⁷

Izaak Izrael, a droshky driver from Tarnów, noted in his horrifying account that “across from my apartment, there lived a tailor, Silberman, who lost this morning his wife and two children. He was hidden behind a closet. They pulled him out and started to beat him on the head. ‘You butchers!’ he shouted, ‘you hangmen! Your time shall come!’ Behind him, there was a *yunak* with an axe; he just swung it and chopped Silberman’s head off.”¹⁸ The same witness added elsewhere that “one SS-man came from the attic and the *Baudiensts* told him



Dora Izaak (b. Rodner) and Izrael Izaak, after the war. *Izaak Family archive*.

that the place was empty. They immediately rushed to the closets, to loot, but the Gestapo-man told them ‘you can take nothing from here!’ Later I had to take this Gestapo agent, with [Jewish] policeman Berkelhamer and with the *Baudienst*s. The *Baudienst*s went to each apartment and herded all the Jews out, into the streets.”¹⁹

Izaak Israel was not alone in taking note of the murders perpetrated by the Polish youths from the *Baudienst*. Lila Wider recalled the June 1942 *Aktion* in the Tarnów ghetto:

The Germans gave vodka to the Polish *yunaki* working in the *Baudienst* and ordered them to kill the Jews. All the Jews were kneeling [in the market square], and the Germans, with the assistance of the *yunaki*, murdered them. While the Germans shot their victims, the Polish youths murdered them with blunt instruments. The whole square was surrounded with SS-men with machine guns, so that no one could even move. My friend, Rachela Goldstein, told me that the entire square was awash in blood. The Germans later ordered the *Judenrat* to bring loads of sand, to cover the blood.²⁰

In June 1942, during the same *Aktion*, another survivor noted that “practically everyone lost someone dear and all were in such despair that no one thought anymore about saving themselves. People were howling in despair. . . .

Tuesday and Wednesday were rather calm, on Thursday the shootings started again, because the SS-men, together with youths from the *Baudienst* and *Sonderdienst* searched the houses, pulled people out, and shot them.”²¹

During the liquidation of Tarnów-area ghettos, the Jews were often shot in the local Jewish cemeteries. Before being shot, the victims were lined up over the open pits and told to disrobe. “Valuables and cash were being placed on the back seat of the Gestapo car. The *Baudienst* *yunaki* carried the clothes of the murdered, and placed them in heaps.”²² In other areas of the Kraków District, the activities of the *Baudienst* were no different from those in Tarnów. In October 1942, during the *Aktion* in the Kraków ghetto, “Polish *Baudienst* searched for people in hiding, and delivered them to the Germans, who paid [the *yunaki*] for each captured Jew.”²³ Once the liquidation was over, the *Baudiensts* “collected the bodies and loaded them on the cars, and later delivered their loads to the cemetery, to great pits which had been prepared in advance.”²⁴ The small ghetto in Wolbrom, north of Kraków and west of Tarnów, was liquidated on June 5, 1942. Young people were marched to the station, while old and infirm were offered places in horse-drawn buggies and carts. Instead of going to the station, however, the carts went to Olkuski forest, where “300 Jews were shot by the Germans, and the wounded were finished off with spades by youths from the *Baudienst*.”²⁵

Is it really necessary to draw on this long list of drastic descriptions and tragic testimonies in order to prove the murderous actions of Polish youths drafted into the *Baudienst*? Unfortunately, yes. Even today there are historians willing to defend the activities of Polish *yunaki*, seeking justification for the latter’s actions and trying to whitewash their direct involvement in the implementation of the Final Solution.²⁶ Historians are not alone—in April 2012, in Rzeszów, the Museum of History of Polish Peasants’ Movement and the foundation for “Polish–German Reconciliation” unveiled an exhibition entitled *Baudienst. The Polish Construction Service in the Generalgouvernement, 1940–1944*. Not even one word was devoted there to the issue of *yunakis*’ involvement in the extermination of Jews in occupied Poland. There is no doubt that Polish youth were forcibly drafted into the service, and that they were subjected to brutal German discipline. There is also no doubt that some of them (despite difficult conditions) remained decent and compassionate toward the Jewish victims of the Final Solution. Some, however, decided to “chop off the heads of the Jews,” while others “killed them with blunt instruments.” There can be no justification for their behavior, and the historical evidence is convinc-

ing and horrifying: the Polish youths from the *Baudienst* were actively involved in liquidating the ghettos. The brutality of their actions has been described in gruesome detail by the few Jews who managed to escape the slaughter. Moreover, in their zeal to plunder and kill, the youths from the *Baudienst* went above and beyond the “call of duty,” or that which they had been ordered and were expected to do by their German masters. The *yunaki* were not called in to “secure the Jewish property,” as the German engineers tried to argue, and their participation had a significant impact on the execution of the strategy to exterminate Jews in the Kraków District.

In wartime financial records, one even finds detailed accounts of money transfers made by the German civil administration to the accounts of the *Baudienst*. In the “income” column, accountants indicated the character of work for which the organization was being compensated. Some of the notes simply say *Judenaktion*, *Judenumsiedlung*, or “work in the Jewish quarter” (*Arbeiten im Judenbezirk*). The financial records for December 1942 indicate, for instance, an involvement of several troops of *Baudienst* youths in the liquidation of the Jews of Miechów and Nowy Sącz (Neu-Sandez). The former “deployment” took place on December 7–8, 1942 and resulted in a payment of more than 200.000 zlotys, while the *Neu-Sandez Judenumsiedlung* occurred on December 14, 1942. Before the end of the month (on December 16–18, to be precise) the *yunaki* returned to Miechów once again to take part in another “Jewish action.”²⁷ After adding up these (very incomplete) financial records, we can see that, between the fall of 1942 and the winter of 1943, Polish *yunaki* spent 12,502 “worker-days” assisting in the extermination of the Jews of the Kraków District.²⁸

Adam Stefan Sapieha, the archbishop of Kraków, was one person who recognized and acknowledged the contributions of *Baudienst* to the tragedy of the Jews of his diocese. On November 2, 1942, in a letter addressed to Hans Frank, the German governor-general of Poland, the archbishop expressed his indignation that the extermination of the Jews had a negative impact on the morale of young Poles. He wrote to the German ruler of occupied Poland: “I do not even want to dwell any more on such a horrible issue as using the youngsters from the *Baudienst* (who previously had been given alcohol) to liquidate the Jews.”²⁹ This was an important statement. It was also one of the very few statements made by the leaders of the Polish Catholic Church during the war referring to the extermination of Polish Jews.

11

THE LAST MONTHS OF WAR

In July 1944, the units of Marshall Koniev's 1st Ukrainian Front reached the borders of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County. And here they halted their advance—until the winter offensive that began on the night of January 12/13, 1945. The front stabilized on the Baranów–Radgoszcz–Jastrzębka line. Radomyśl Wielki was captured by the Red Army, but the Germans still held the Dulcza forest. The trench lines ran no further than a few hundred yards from the bunkers and hideouts of the last Jewish survivors. The 15th Soviet army corps dug in on one side of the Vistula, while the German units belonging to the 59th and 11th SS corps faced them from across the river.¹ For the few remaining Jews who had survived through two-and-a-half years of despair, these last months of war proved to be the final test of endurance. On the one hand, many wanted to leave the bunkers. Last reserves were gone or running out, the front was so close, and visible signs of panic among the Germans indicated the imminent end of the Nazi occupation. On the other hand, the Polish rescuers, who until now had sheltered Jews, were more and more afraid of the ever-increasing risks, and wanted their charges gone. Some of them, even the most courageous ones, decided that the every-day risk was simply more than they, and their families, could bear.

One day, in the fall of 1944, Stanisław Pagos, one of these selfless and noble people, saw units of the *Wehrmacht* entering the houses, seeking billets throughout the village.² He ordered the Weit brothers, who had been hiding in his barn for more than a year, to leave immediately. “That is how we lived until

October 1944,” wrote one of the brothers, “when suddenly we lost our home. The German army showed up in Gruszów Wielki, our village, and took over all the barns and stables for their horses. Pagos arrived breathless, [saying] that we had to flee, and that we had less than ten minutes to do it. Just before we left he gave us a cooking pot and a box of matches, and told us to run to the forest, three kilometers distant.”³

Fleeing to the forest carried with it new dangers. Lack of experience, new conditions, approaching winter, and frequent manhunts all conspired to doom the Jewish refugees. The first victims of the “stabilized” eastern front were Jews who had been hiding in the woods and forests of Dąbrowa County.⁴ The Jews, exhausted from two-and-a-half years of hiding, lacking resources, and often lacking further will to live, found themselves in the no-man’s land between the two fighting armies. “The front went through our forest,” remembered ten-year-old Dawid Wasserstrum. “All the time we heard the shooting, bombs were falling, and we were in constant danger.”⁵ The manhunts started again. This time the searches were coordinated with the officers of the *Wehrmacht*, who looked for partisans, and who tried to secure the front. At the end of 1944 the Germans decided to reinforce their defense lines and to dig a series of earthworks, forming three lines of defensive positions. This so-called Vistula Defensive Position was made up of the first line of defenses, right next to the Vistula River, and two other lines, called “the Eastern Wall.”⁶ According to Jewish survivors, the encounters with regular soldiers were not as deadly as the meetings with the Polish police or with gendarmes. The soldiers had, quite simply, no idea that civilians encountered in the forest were actually Jews; they often mistook them for “Aryan” civilians.

Together with the *Wehrmacht*, local forests saw the arrival of many Polish peasants, who fled their homes in order to avoid forced labor and digging trenches behind the front.⁷ From one day to another, the situation of the Jews deteriorated. Nine-year-old Cyla Braw, hidden in the bunkers with forty other people, recalled the growing hunger and horror: “When Russia moved closer, the Germans retreated and surrounded our forest on three sides.” Dawid Wasserstrum, hidden in another location, recalled, “At this point we could no longer leave the woods, and we ate our last potatoes. We were so hungry and so miserable that my uncle wanted to leave the forest, and to surrender to the Gestapo. People had no hope left, and they wanted to surrender to the Germans, but I and my sister wanted to live so badly that we stayed in the bunker.” In Cyla Braw’s group people were dying every day. The manhunts of the fall of

1944 claimed eighteen more lives. Finally, during the night of November 26, 1944, the desperate Jews decided to rush the three lines of German trenches and to break through to the Russian side.⁸ The desperate action proved to be fatal for most of the participants. "The Germans illuminated the entire forest, and when they saw that we were just a small group of Jews, they started to shoot at us from three sides, and the Russians shot from the fourth side, thinking they were shooting at the Germans. Many of us were killed, and some were torn apart by the mines. There were twenty-five of us who left the forest, and twenty died [trying to breach the front lines]."⁹ If the numbers reported by young Cyla Braw are accurate, twenty Jews who had survived the previous two years in the forests died when freedom was practically within their grasp, a few yards from the Soviet lines, and just days before the final January 1945 offensive.¹⁰ Regina Goldberg, hiding a few miles south of Dulcza, unable to continue in hiding, escaped the forests in December 1944. She fled in rags, her last clothes in tatters, but she remembered to wrap up her curly, dark hair—a dead giveaway among the "Aryans"—in a piece of cloth torn off a potato bag she had found in the field.¹¹ Later she went to Dąbrowa with her fiancé, where—after a few days—they witnessed the arrival of Soviet troops.

The last months of war were particularly trying for young Melania Weisenberg and her cousin Helena, who, from September 1942, had remained hidden under the barn of a Polish farmer and his sister (both later recognized as Righteous Among the Nations) on the outskirts of Dąbrowa Tarnowska. Melania's diary describes the horrors of the last days of war in detail:

December 1st [1944] . . . Ciuruniu [the Polish rescuer] came back and told us that he had to leave for ten days, to build trenches behind the front lines. Now we have learned what real misery means. Panka [Ciuruniu's sister] arrived every morning with watery milk and [once again] in the evening bringing the leftovers of soldiers' soup. We are constantly in fear that she will forget to bring us the food altogether. Often we are so exhausted that we have no more strength to climb upstairs, to beg Panka not to abandon us, or otherwise we will perish in misery. I begged her to keep us until Ciuruniu's return. I told her that Kitten [Helena, author's cousin] was very weak, I begged her and kissed her hands so that she would bring at least one more helping of something to eat for Kitten. But it didn't help. Nothing will help, she will never change her attitude toward us. She is disgusted with us and she hates us. We don't need her love, but we are so miserable, we will perish in these conditions. If things will not change fast, we won't last. . . . In the first hour of the new year [1945] the soldiers kept firing for half an hour and we were very afraid that they would shoot through the roof

[of the barn], because they were drunk. Finally, in the morning this bastard [Ciuruniu] came, and brought with him a flask of vodka, and Kitten begged him to take care of us, so that we would survive, so he told us that it was not worth our agony, and theirs, and that there was no point, that we would perish, and that he regrets all the previous sacrifices. Hearing all that, we had nothing more to say. And so it went until the memorable Sunday, January 14 [1945]. Early in morning Ciuruniu arrived and said: "Listen up, a lady came here and said that all men aged fourteen through sixty have to report for work, to dig trenches along Dunajec [River], and that Dąbrowa [Tarnowska] will be evacuated before 2 P.M. What am I supposed to do with you? I can hide in the barn—but what to do with you? They say that [the Germans] will search all farms because very few people will show up [for work], so the only way out is that I will bury you under the hay. You will be barely able to breathe, and you will have to make do with whatever food you have." Since we had nothing, Kitten asked him to bring us anything [to eat], so he threw something our way. Then, he buried us in hay and left. We lost any hope to survive. Our plan was that once we saw the neighbors leave, we would also sneak out through the pigsty. I made for Kitten a skirt made out of our blanket and—horribly nervous—we started waiting. Suddenly we saw [German] soldiers pack up and leave. We thought it was great, although we were convinced that there was no hope for us. Later, in the evening Ciuruniu showed up and said that the soldiers moved off to Żabno, and they took with them his horse and a cow. We heard explosions throughout the night. The bastard came in the morning and said that all was quiet, and that nothing had changed. Kitten was ill and she started to beg Ciuruniu to save us, because we were so weak. Ciuruniu, when he heard her begging, became very angry. He said horrible words, which we have never before heard from him. He said that he would not help us anymore, that he did too much for us already, and that he regrets all that he did and that there will be no advantage to be gained from it. He reproached us that we required too much [food] and that we have received so much yesterday and today we were again hungry. He said: "Bugger off!" and wanted to leave . . . I told Kitten to tell the bastard that I was pregnant, so perhaps he would take pity on me and wouldn't be so cruel. The planes circled all the time overhead, but we were even not afraid, we could not care anymore. Suddenly Ciuruniu shows up and says: "You can rest now, the Germans are gone, all of them have fled, the bridges have been blown up, and the [railway] station went up in flames." That's how we were liberated and how freedom came finally to us!¹²

Another problem facing the Jewish survivors were the "late" murders, which occurred either on the eve of the Soviet advance or just after the January offensive that liberated Dąbrowa and the rest of the county. These murders were intended to remove unwelcome Jewish witnesses and to secure the rights to

Jewish property that had been illegally gained during the war. Ann Shore, a survivor from Żabno, gave a dramatic account of her own experiences, including a description of a murder, in January 1945, of a Jewish boy who had managed to survive until the end of the war, hiding in the forests. Jankiel (family name unknown) was killed by the local peasants a few days after the liberation when he traveled back to his home in Żabno.¹³ Jakub Künstlich, who before the war had been a wealthy Jew from Jadowniki Mokre (Wietrzychowice commune) before he went into hiding in late 1942, transferred the title to his land to three peasants, his closest neighbors.¹⁴ He gave them the right to farm his land during his absence. The parties agreed that after the war the land would revert to Jakub, its lawful owner. Indeed, Jakub and his wife Dora survived the war—but not for long. According to their son, the lure of the land was too strong and the former neighbors killed Jakub Künstlich at a wedding, not far from Jadowniki. A few weeks later, in February 1946, Dora was also killed, shot dead in her apartment in Tarnów. Finally, their son (and heir) was targeted by the killers. There were several similar cases in the Dąbrowa area, but the phenomenon of “late murders” was observed elsewhere, too.¹⁵

12

DIFFERENT KINDS OF HELP

*“And a man knocked on my door and said,
‘Well grandma, give us your Jews.’”¹*

The available archival evidence suggests that there were at least fifty-one Jews who managed to survive the war in hiding on the territory of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County (see tables 8 and 9 in the appendix), while 286 others died in various circumstances described in earlier chapters. One striking observation, beyond noting the shocking proportion of those who lived compared to those who perished, is that until a certain moment most of the victims had received some form of help from Poles. This phenomenon is related to the largely unexplored, underreported, and numerically significant phenomenon of those who saved Jews for money.²

It is also worth noting that the studies about gentiles helping Jews have been dominated by sociologists and psychologists. Historians, scared away by the apparent lack of archival data, have given wide berth to this line of investigation.³ This, in turn, has had important methodological repercussions. While historians base their conclusions mostly on written evidence, sociologists and psychologists in the majority of cases have relied on interviews with gentile rescuers, or with Jewish survivors who had been saved by the Righteous. Naturally, this particular research method has helped to shed light on altruistic, selfless help. Consequently, people who helped for financial reasons

were largely left out of these accounts. According to Nechama Tec, author of one of the first and most interesting studies devoted to the wartime rescue of Jews, this profit-oriented help could account for no more than 16 percent of all registered cases.⁴ To stress further the uniqueness of this “help-for-profit” phenomenon, Tec placed these “unusual” cases in a separate chapter aptly titled “Exceptions: Paid and Anti-Semitic Helpers.” Other specialists and students of the subject either followed Tec’s lead, or arrived at similar conclusions in the course of their own research.⁵ Bob Moore, studying the issue of help in Western Europe, became aware of this methodological problem and wrote: “Instructive in their own right, these are nonetheless essentially individual narratives and inevitably reflect the testimonies of survivors rather than those who fell victim to Nazi persecution.”⁶ In the light of historical studies based on postwar court records, the estimates of rescue patterns have to be thoroughly reconsidered and revised. Rather than being a marginal phenomenon, paid help looms as an issue of fundamental importance for our understanding of the tragedy of Jews seeking help at the time of the Shoah. At the same time, altruistic motivations, so strongly stressed by the rescued and by their Righteous helpers, took a back seat to the most frequently offered and financially motivated assistance, the mainstay of the “help industry.”

The difference, of course, is linked to our perception of the help phenomenon. The books, articles, interviews, and exhibitions based on the testimonies of survivors and on the accounts of the Righteous increased the relative importance and weight of selfless helpers. The methodological problems and inconsistencies of this approach are obvious: the Jews who were hosted and sheltered by altruistic helpers had a much better chance of surviving the war and of leaving a written account of their ordeal. Paid helpers, by contrast, had little motivation to share their experiences with researchers and academics in subsequent decades. These observations, although basic and fairly obvious, seem to have received little attention in the “rescue” writings of the past. This, however, marks only the beginning of the problems that come to light when we look at the “help industry” through the lens of more diverse historical evidence. Unlike interviews with survivors, postwar investigations highlight the plight of Jews who were sheltered for money. Dossiers are filled with descriptions of blackmail, threats, and outright torture. But even then, one still tends to look at survivors, people who beat the odds and gave their stories to the authorities. In order to fully grasp the complexity of the phenomenon of rescue, one has to

Table 12.1. Types of Help, Dąbrowa Tarnowska County, Fall 1942–January 1945

| | Number of people in hiding (county-wide) [% of the known cases of help] | % [number] of people who survived the war. |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Paid help | 112 [70%] | 9% [10] |
| Altruistic help ¹ | 48 [30%] | 56% [27] |
| No precise data | 177 | 8% [14] |
| Total | 337 | 15% [51] |

Note:

1. The category “altruistic help” also includes those helpers who initially offered shelter for money but once their “guests” ran out of financial resources, decided to keep the Jews for free.

agree that practically all Jews in hiding—both those who survived and those who lost their fight for life—at some point had to receive some kind of help. There is absolutely no reason why we should limit our study of the help and rescue phenomenon to survivors alone. The new archival evidence requires, therefore, a significant extension of the scope and scale of research.

Furthermore, one should not confuse the notion of altruistic help with the medals of Righteous awarded by Yad Vashem. The documents found in the files of the Righteous are geared toward one goal, toward showing why the awards were granted. “This is why,” wrote one scholar in a recent publication,

the testimonies of Poles and of Jews whom they saved are tailored to meet the expectations of Yad Vashem. They present a laudatory, uniformly bright picture of attitudes, deeds, and motivations of the helpers. There is no room for any ambiguity of behavior. All that needs to be done, however, is to look at other historical evidence, which was not produced for the needs of the Righteous award process and which was not included in Yad Vashem files. It then becomes obvious that the stories of the Righteous have another layer, a deeper dimension that blurs the black-and-white picture presented in the files of noble helpers.⁷

The new archival sources, postwar trials for the most part, enable us to study this “deeper dimension” of the help phenomenon and to extend our inquiry to survivors and victims alike. Only when these two groups have been included in the count can a more complete and reliable “rescue horizon” in occupied Poland emerge.

A look at table 12.1 suggests that, at least in the case of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County, in 70 percent of cases (excluding 177 cases for which we have no con-

crete information regarding the conditions of survival) the Jews received help in exchange for money. For their hosts, assisting Jewish refugees was a very dangerous, but also a very profitable profession. In reality, the percentage of those who had to rely on paid (and therefore qualitatively much worse and usually short-lived) help was much higher. We lack, however, data for the first days of the *Judenjagd*, when many terrified peasants threw “their” Jews out, or “rendered” them to the authorities. Other Jews were killed in the early sweeps of nearby forests. Seen from this perspective, the offers of help based on altruism and selfless sacrifice appear to have been a privilege of the few.

The numbers of survivors listed in the table have their own significance. Of the 6,000 Jews living before the deportations in Dąbrowa County, 90 percent were killed in Bełżec extermination camp, or during the preceding *Aktionen* in the ghettos. From among the remaining 10 percent who went into hiding on the “Aryan side,” 15 percent (and this is a very optimistic estimate) managed to stay alive until the liberation. In other words, the combined efforts of the German industrial killing machine and the later sweeps of the *Judenjagd* resulted in a 1–2 percent survival rate for the Jews of Dąbrowa. These numbers are in line with the data gathered from other rural areas of the *Generalgouvernement*. Once we remove from the equation the 15,000–17,000 Jews who survived in Warsaw and in the Warsaw area, the chances of survival for Jews hiding in rural areas were in the order of one or two in a hundred.

Christopher R. Browning, in his study of a Jewish forced-labor camp at Starachowice, wrote,

It was not particularly difficult to get out of these camps—many Jews left and re-entered repeatedly—but surviving on the outside for any length of time was extremely difficult and dangerous. Long-term hiding faced almost insuperable odds, so most of those who survived an early escape did so by virtue of working either in Germany or in another labor camp in Poland. Ultimately, not only did few prisoners attempt escape, but among those who did, few survived until liberation. . . . Fear of denunciation by hostile Poles was one of the great deterrents to escape.⁸

The most common offer of help was based on money. Unfortunately, the table indicates that, judging by the number of survivors, financially motivated assistance was usually of very low quality. Even so, during the war there was little more the Jews could hope for, so they welcomed this kind of assistance with gratitude. Antek Cukierman, one of the founders of the Jewish Fighting

Organization (ŻOB), and later, during the Warsaw ghetto uprising its link to “the Aryan side,” wrote in his memoirs:

Who found shelter on the Aryan side? On the one hand, Jews with money, rich Jews who could pay; and, on the other hand, intellectuals who had contacts with the good Polish intelligentsia. You can’t generalize about the Poles. There were decent and pure people among them as among other nations, people who risked their lives and sacrificed their safety fully conscious of why they were doing that. Also there were also Poles whose motive was money and who took large sums for sheltering Jews, there were also people who knew that their job was to rescue, that this was their human obligation. Some of them were simple folk who were content to receive pennies and saved Jews out of human kindness; and even when the Jews ran out of money, they went on supporting them. And there were others who kept Jews as long as they could pay, extorted their last cent, and then turned them over to the Germans. Some were in cahoots with the Polish police, others were blackmailers who sucked the marrow out of the Jews.⁹

What really mattered was whether the helpers kept their part of the initial bargain. A reliable paid helper did not suddenly raise the price of the shelter, provided the Jewish charges with tolerable living conditions, and—most of all—kept his or her word and did not decide one day to throw the guests into the street. One had to negotiate, and hope for the best. Dr. Jakub Glatsztern, a very resourceful dentist, recalled his own dealings with the paid helper:

Did I have the money? How could I have it? I was just out of prison, and had nothing. When the war started, I placed diamonds in the teeth of every member of my family, so that they could survive. I too, had one such diamond. But how to extract it? The diamond had been placed in a crown, so that in order to dig it out, one had to get to a dentist first. So I said to the husband [of my paid helper], “Mr. Karolak, give me the pliers, please!” He gave me old, rusty pliers. I had to remove the tooth together with the root, otherwise I risked breaking the diamond. So I removed the tooth with the root—without an injection, without a painkiller. I dug it out. The diamond was a *blauweiss*, two-and-a-half carats large. I took it and said to her, “Mrs. Karolak, here is the diamond. As long as I stay under your roof, you will feed me. You can take all the money, but I require half a kilo of dark bread per day, 100 grams of sugar, ten cigarettes and a nutritious soup, the same one that you will have yourself. Also, I want a scoop of marmalade and a piece of butter—so I can survive. And that’s all!” When she came back, and learned that it [the diamond] was not a piece of glass, she gave me some vodka right away, and a sandwich with pork, to start with.¹⁰

Not all were as lucky as Glatsztern. The drama of people paying for rescue has been described by Oskar Pinkus, who was hidden in Koszelówka:

[Our host] was made of tough peasant stock. He fought misery and difficulties with iron determination. The decision to take us in, although it could cost him his own life and the life of his family, fit well with his cold and calculating approach. He was motivated by money, and money alone. Once we showed up, he understood that there was a unique possibility to make some money. Originally, he asked for 300 zlotys a month, but later he became a master in cheating, breaking the agreements without scruple and second thoughts. Finally, we paid 1,000 zlotys instead of 300. . . . He took more money in a variety of ways. He baked our bread and, although flour cost 400 zlotys, he charged us twice as much. From one meter of flour one could bake 140 kilograms of bread, but he gave us only half of it. When we argued, he told us, laughing, that we could bake our own bread, if we did not like his. In his eyes we were only a source of money. There was nothing personal in his greed, and we could not blame him. Quite to the contrary, I often looked for signs of hate which could be deadly for us, but I could detect nothing of the kind.¹¹

Although most of the preserved testimonies of survivors concerned life and death in the city (Warsaw, Lwów, and Kraków, for the most part), other accounts suggest that the Jews hiding in rural areas faced altogether different challenges. The testimonies from Dąbrowa are a case in point. This phenomenon of “different challenges” can be seen through the eyes of Chaja Rosenblatt (b. Chaja Garn) who, from the summer of 1942, visited descending circles of hell. She started her ordeal in the liquidated ghetto in Radomyśl, from which she fled to the ghetto in Dąbrowa. When the time to die came for the Jews of Dąbrowa, she decided to flee to the larger ghetto in Tarnów. Once the “liquidation action” in Tarnów had started, she went back east, and sought refuge with the peasants in the area of her native Dulcza-Radomyśl. Finally, running out of resources and short of gentiles willing to take her in, she went into hiding in bunkers in the Dulcza forest. In 1942, just before the destruction of Radomyśl: “people who had money or other goods could stay with friendly farmers whom they knew in the area.” Unfortunately, as soon as deportations began, the peasants, terrified of their own neighbors and of the Germans, threw “their” Jews out, regardless of previous payments, promises, and arrangements. Chaja Rosenblatt was one of the “people who had money or other goods,” and, together with her family, she sought shelter in the house of Tomasz Szczurek. In return for his hospitality, Szczurek, well known to the Rosenblatt-Garn family



Garn family from Radomyśl Wielki. In the front: Chaja Garn (Rosenblatt), from the left: mother, Hinda Forstenzer, Chaim Leib Garn, Meshka, and Roza. 1936(?). *Rosenblatt-Lewi family archives*.



Chaja Rosenblatt (b. Garn), standing second from the right, with her friends from Ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir, Radomyśl Wielki, 1936(?). *Rosenblatt-Lewi family archives*.

from before the war, received “merchandise from our store, all our furniture and garments.” In addition to “Jewish things,” Szczurek also received a substantial amount of cash. Despite these favors and inducements, the Jews spent only one day in hiding—and then the Szczureks threw them out on the street. Szczurek’s wife went to the church (the destruction of Radomyśl happened to be on a Sunday), where she heard the local priest warning his flock of impending house searches and telling the faithful not to keep Jews.¹² “We tried to explain to our ‘dear friends,’” recalled Rosenblatt, “that we could not possibly leave their house during the day for fear of being immediately caught. They said, ‘There is no way, you can’t stay here even a moment longer!’ I started begging and pleading with them; finally, I told them that their God, Jesus Christ, would never pardon them their cruelty. . . .” Chaja’s and her elderly parents’ tears and pleas left the peasants unmoved, and the “paid help” terminated before the end of the day. Rosenblatt, her husband, and parents began a long journey, through the woods, to the liquidated ghetto in Dąbrowa and—later—to the Tarnów ghetto. Fleeing another liquidation in January 1943, she left Tarnów and returned to the village of Small Dulcza, close to Radomyśl.

Later on, Chaja and her husband moved under the roof of one Józef Szozik, who had been handsomely compensated in advance for his hospitality. Chaja and her husband (her parents had been killed by then) lasted two weeks in Szozik's house. Fearing for their lives, they fled in the middle of the night to the forest. Their next host, a certain Adam Kokoszka, received a monthly stipend of fifty dollars (a considerable sum at the time) to hide the Jewish couple in his barn.¹³ After a few days, however, they had to flee again. This time it was Kokoszka's neighbor who spied out the Jews and, threatening them with the Gestapo, demanded her share of money. In February 1944, after a few other unsuccessful attempts at hiding among peasants, Chaja and her husband found refuge in bunkers in the Dulcza forest.¹⁴ Before the war ended, Garn-Rosenblatt had managed to give birth to a child (whom she left at the doorstep of a peasant couple in Dulcza), had seen the death of her husband who was killed during a manhunt by German soldiers, had survived torture in the Tarnów Gestapo prison, had lasted through beatings in the notorious Montelupich prison in Kraków, had survived the Płaszów concentration camp, had lived through the death march from Auschwitz in the winter of 1945, and—finally—had experienced the liberation in Bergen-Belsen. There is a saying often used by the practitioners of the legal profession: *hard cases make bad law*. Indeed, legislating under the influence of the most extreme and disturbing circumstances can often result in laws of dubious quality. One can question, therefore, how justified and how useful the most "extreme" testimonies and accounts are in understanding the tragedy of European Jews at the time of the Shoah. Unfortunately, on the "margins" of the Holocaust there are nothing but extreme cases, and these accounts are all we are left with when we try to grasp the tragedy of the doomed Jews.

The system of paid help had its own dynamic, its own rules and limitations. For some people, keeping Jews was just a side job that allowed them to supplement their otherwise meager income, and make ends meet. For others, it was a full-time occupation, extremely dangerous but very profitable. Sometimes, in order to survive, paid helpers had to bribe the "blue" policemen or even the Germans. All of this was, of course, money well spent. Adam Borsa from Dąbrowa, whose father had been a paid helper, recalled:

Who could betray you, if they [the hidden Jews] left the hideout only during the night? Outsiders wouldn't see a thing, so it had to be the neighbors. Father told me that it was his neighbor who informed on him. The Gestapo arrived, but by then the Jews had already been evacuated. My father had a good rapport with the Germans, he slaughtered [unlicensed] pigs, made moonshine vodka,

so the Germans stopped by, to have fun. They warned him, "Someone ratted on you, your house will be searched." So then my father would chase the Jews out, towards the river. And [the Germans] left empty-handed. This neighbor had already passed away. After the war my father greeted this neighbor every day. And why shouldn't he?¹⁵

For several peasants from Ruda Zazamcze (today inside the city limits of Dąbrowa), dealing with paid help was a full-time occupation.¹⁶ They had excellent contacts with the "blue" police, and sometimes with the Germans. Paid helpers received advance information about impending searches, and acted accordingly. "It cost my father a lot, but the Jews paid a lot, too," said a Pole from Ruda Zazamcze. "Germans (who are not stupid people) knew very well that Dąbrowa was a Jewish town and that the Jews must be hiding somewhere." In order to appease the Germans, hearing of a planned manhunt, paid helpers would select one of their charges and throw him out to the wolves, on the path of the approaching search parties. The Germans, after all, had to be able to show something for their efforts.

The testimonies written under the occupation are fairly consistent and indicate unequivocally that the chances for survival for Jews without financial resources were extremely poor. Adequate resources or credible promises of postwar compensation were essential, although not always sufficient, guarantees of survival. In rural conditions, Jews gave peasants their livestock, or promised to transfer titles to their land and farms after the war.¹⁷ Some people of substance signed promissory notes to be paid after the war. Immediate payments in hard cash or in kind were, of course, appreciated the most.

Reports of the Polish underground leave little doubt as to the types of help available to Jews. One of these reports (produced by the intelligence unit of the Warsaw District of the Home Army, and dated June 1943) stated, "The Jewish question is of little concern to the Poles, since the Jews have been practically completely liquidated in the area. Some Jews, wealthy enough to afford it, are being sheltered by the Poles. Those who fled to the forests are—for obvious reasons—hated."¹⁸ The reasons for this hate, although no longer so obvious today, were probably related to starving Jews' thefts of potatoes from the fields. Sometimes, however, even begging was enough to incite hate and trigger a manhunt. A Jewish woman named Lipka, and her three daughters, remained hidden for a short time in the village of Grądy, in the house of one Wiktoria Curyło. Lipka, whose family hailed from nearby Dąbrówki Breńskie, was well known to the locals. Not that it mattered: after two weeks, two "blue" policemen from

Mędrzechów knocked on Curyło's door and took Lipka and her daughters away. The policemen had been summoned by Stanisław K., who "complained that the Jewesses who stayed at Curyło's place kept bugging him for bread and potatoes." In order to solve the problem, K. reported them to the police. One of the neighbors testified later that "I asked him, why would he do that, and I told him that they would now be arrested, to which he replied that 'OK, they [the policemen] can take care of them, but I won't work for the Jews.'"¹⁹

In larger cities, and most of all in Warsaw, there existed a kind of "market" for rescue services, with the average price of shelter being negotiated (within fluctuating but well-known financial brackets) by Jewish "customers" and Aryan "service providers." In rural areas there was no competition, no anonymity, and consequently little or no negotiation.²⁰ The payments were received in cash, in promissory notes, in valuables, or in kind. Investigation into the activities of one Józef L. from Radgoszcz sheds more light on various kinds of payments and the expectations and attitudes of paid helpers. Józef L. offered shelter to the young Karolina Grün (whom he had known before the war) in exchange for "cash, clothes, and linen." At one point Karolina's cousins (who were also hiding in the area) transferred the ownership title to one of their fields to Józef L. Unfortunately, the host was still dissatisfied, and as soon as his Jewish guest ran out of money, he decided to throw her out. In this case, however, the young woman refused to leave, so he took her to the nearby forest and there, with his neighbor's help, killed her.²¹ Esterka, another young Jewish woman, survived for nearly half a year in Kłyż, in the house of one Wolański.²² In the end, Wolański threw Esterka out, but before he got rid of her he "had taken a lot of things from her"—as his neighbors pointed out with envy. One witness observed, "Wolański had a lot of 'Jewish things' in his house. There was a fur coat which belonged to Kałm Rot and three bed covers from Abraham Levi. I remember Wolański parading in this fur coat and only in 1944 or 1945 did he take off the original [fur] collar and attached a new one." The testimonies were very detailed; quite obviously the "ex-Jewish" (or the "post-Jewish") goods stood out when compared to the items associated with rural misery, provoking the ire of less fortunate peasants. "On the outside, the fur was black, the inside was grey in color, and the collar was black, but I don't know what kind of fur it was made of. In 1944/45, when Wolański took off the original collar, he attached a new one, made of black lamb wool. He personally told me that the fur belonged to the Rot family." The same witness also stated that Wolański "used Estera a lot." This expression might describe the paid helper's financial

gains but more likely referred to rapes and other forms of sexual abuse that happened often, but that are most of the time hidden “between the lines” of the preserved historical evidence. The victims were more likely to admit the worst horrors and to describe the deaths of their close ones, than to relive the shame and humiliation of a rape.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that rapes, sexual slavery, and other such “payments in kind” were often seen by paid helpers as part of the deal, or as an added bonus to it. “Twenty-year-old Szejna Miriam L., a girl from a wealthy Jewish family, was delivered into the hands of the Gestapo in June 1943. Under interrogation, she admitted that, “I told Garbacz [her helper] my story, and asked him to help me in my escape because too many Poles knew me in this area and I was afraid that one day they would deliver me to the gendarmes. Garbacz promised to help and that very night he had intercourse with me . . . the next day, around noon I was arrested by officers of the Gestapo. I want to add that I gave Garbacz a ring with a diamond, 1 gold watch, a man’s wedding ring, and a nearly new set of clothes. Now I know that I am doomed and that Garbacz betrayed me.”²³

In Gorzyce, a witness saw two young Jewish girls being led by the “blue” policemen to be shot. He said to the commanding officer: “But commander, those are the girls with whom you were often having fun! Right then the officer hollered: ‘shut your trap, or you will get shot too!’”²⁴ Attacks on Jewish women were often reported from the Dulcza forest. Indeed, the frequency of these reports seems to indicate that local bandits made them a prey of choice. One female survivor noted in her memoir: “One time [we learned] that there were bandits in the forest and that these bandits were very dangerous. One was called Lasota, [others] Irek, Julek, Franek, that they were wild where women were concerned . . . whenever we heard a sound, all the women would run into the hideout. It was awful to live like this day after day and night after night. Mendel suggested that all women wear only old rags and that they paint their faces with black crayon so that we all look like old women. But how long can you be masked like that?”²⁵

Looking at the reality of the *Judenjagd* in the Dąbrowa area, one cannot but agree with Cukierman: Jews paid for shelter often and they paid a lot. The trouble is that they paid for low-grade and low-quality help. Unlike the people who helped Jews for more noble reasons, paid helpers felt little bond with their Jewish charges, and there was definitely no special “pact of solidarity” between the two parties. Since one’s survival was at stake, the length of time spent in a

hideout was considered an important indicator of the quality of help. Unlike the Righteous, paid helpers usually assisted for short periods of time and assisted poorly—although there are some important exceptions, too. Most often, however, the help was short-lived, as described by Helena Aussenberg, who spent some time wandering in the area of our interest: “The peasant woman kept us for a day, and then we went on, to look for other shelter. We wandered from house to house; peasants sometimes took us in but were afraid of keeping us for long. We never stayed in one hut more than a few days . . . other peasants would learn about our presence, so we used to spend days in the woods, and come back to the village for the night.”²⁶

As soon as Jews ran out of money, they were faced with the threat of denunciation, expulsion, or outright murder. One local Jew remained hidden (with his son) for seven months in a barn in the village of Milówka, close to Tarnów. In December 1943 he ran out of money, clothes, and other “Jewish things” expected by his host. The peasant told him to leave, but—according to one of the suspects investigated after the war—“Mordko refused, and even threatened my brother-in-law that he would report him to the police, that he had sheltered a Jew.” Faced with such a threat, the host and his brother-in-law took the matters in their own hands: they gave Mordko a bad beating and later delivered him and his son to the “blue” police, for execution.²⁷ Władysław Nosek from Janowice went even further than the peasants from Milówka. For some time he kept a thirty-year-old woman hidden in his barn, but one day he decided to get rid of her. It is hard to say whether he feared the police, or wanted to steal two suitcases in her possession. “I prepared a thick club . . . and went to the bushes where the Jewess was hiding. I took the club, and struck her a few times on the head.”²⁸ Later Nosek buried the body in the field and shared the contents of the suitcases (clothes and bed linen, for the most part) with the members of his family.

The Jews who had left their valuables in the hands of the people who sheltered them for profit often found themselves in a very precarious situation. That was when the struggle between a sense of duty, fear, and greed began. For many peasants the prospect of easy money proved to be too much of a temptation; greed took over and Jews ended up being expelled in the street, delivered into the hands of the police, or worse. Leo Drellich, anticipating an impending *Aktion*, left his “Jewish things” with a peasant in a village a few miles from Dąbrowa. One night, on the run, he decided to reclaim his property. The peasant, with a few others, waited for him in ambush: “They struck me on

the head with an axe,” Drellich recalled in his testimony. “Blood flowed over my eyes, but I managed to hide in a pigsty.”²⁹ That is why some people, more prudent than others, distributed their wealth among several “Aryan” friends, minimizing, by the same token, the risk from dishonest recipients. In some cases impecunious Jews could “market” their professional skills and in this way compensate their hosts for shelter. Such an arrangement was especially viable in the case of Jewish craftsmen: shoemakers, tailors, or carpenters, whose skills were highly appreciated among the villagers. As long as the profits were reasonable, and the risks not too high, the arrangement would work and benefit both parties. This kind of understanding existed between one Wojciech Puła (a peasant from Dulcza) and his Jewish acquaintance Ajzyk Josek, the local tailor. Ajzyk stayed under Puła’s roof, worked hard and repaired clothes, and Puła made a tidy income. One day, however, the police ordered a hunt for the Jews in the area, and Puła was appointed one of the hostages. Afraid of possible consequences, Puła killed Josek with a pitchfork and terminated his arrangement with the Jewish tailor.³⁰

13

THE RIGHTEOUS

The most optimistic scenarios of help and rescue were, for the most part, inspired by the antisemitic campaign that swept through Poland in 1968. The Communist Party, eager to deflect the worldwide condemnation that followed the expulsion from Poland of the last Jewish survivors and their families, encouraged studies that painted a rosy picture of wartime Polish–Jewish relations and stressed the universality of the “helping phenomenon” in Polish society. What these studies and articles have in common (other than their obvious propaganda value) is an absence of credible historical evidence and a basic lack of intellectual rigor. However, the archival evidence used in this book as well as the oral testimonies of survivors allow us to verify and correct such assumptions. It is time to discuss specific people and to track down as many names as the evidence allows.

Table 7 (in the appendix to this book) lists the names of fifty-one survivors whose fates are reported in the archival evidence selected for this study. The total number of victims (and of survivors) of the *Judenjagd* is, most certainly, much higher than it would appear from the data included in the table. Not that this changes anything for the meaning of the presented evidence. Out of the fifty-one Jews who survived the war hidden on the territory of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County, twenty-seven owed their lives to selfless, altruistic help offered by their gentile hosts. In fourteen cases we lack precise information about the nature of received assistance, and ten people survived by paying their hosts throughout the war, or survived due to their own efforts and entrepreneurship,

without any significant outside help. In other words, more than half of all survivors from the studied area made it through the war thanks to the altruistic assistance provided by their gentile hosts. This number is more or less in line with the conclusions of Nechama Tec and other authors, who inquired into the issue of gentiles helping the Jews during the war and whose studies were based on interviews with survivors and with their righteous rescuers.¹

At the same time, the above numbers reveal how diametrically different the phenomenon of rescue and help is when we take into account all Jews in hiding, regardless of whether they lived or died. Nearly all, of course, at some point must have received some kind of help from their gentile neighbors. The quality of the received help was, unfortunately, dramatically uneven. Looking at the survivors alone, and leaving out the victims of the *Judenjagd*, yields a vision of the past that is as incomplete as it is fallacious. Looking at the survivors and their noble hosts shows us a narrow part of the “rescue” spectrum. When we take the survivors together with all those who lost their battle for life but, for at least some time, also received help, the “rescue scenery” undergoes a dramatic transformation. A comparison of the data from tables 4 and 5 makes this all the more obvious. The phenomenon of paid help, previously relegated to the margins of study, gains fundamental importance. This kind of assistance was of poor quality, but most often was the only kind of help available.

After the war, some Jews (such as David Goldberg and his fiancée Regina Grünhut, who emerged from Jastrąbka forest having spent more than two years in bunkers) made their way back to Dąbrowa, but, facing constant threats and concerned for their safety, quickly left the city.² Some went to Tarnów, where, between 1945 and 1947, attempts were made to revive the Jewish community. But that community also disintegrated in 1947 when its members began to flee Poland in the aftermath of the Kielce pogrom. In the 1960s, the last Jews remaining in Tarnów and in the area who had Polish spouses, and who threw in their lot with the gentile society, decided to assimilate. Today, the only traces of Jewish presence in Dąbrowa Tarnowska are the ruins of the Great Synagogue in the center of the city and the Jewish cemetery destroyed by the Germans, where the few remaining tombstones sink into the damp, green meadow.³

The role, motives, and extent of help given by gentiles to Jews has become one of the most hotly debated and controversial topics in recent research about the Holocaust—at least in East-Central Europe. The number of studies is large enough that we are forced to limit our attention to the most significant and relatively recent ones.⁴ This discussion, which involves painful questions of



Jewish cemetery in Dąbrowa Tarnowska.

wartime collaboration, has gone beyond academic circles, and has spilled into the media, where it has acquired a life of its own. The interpretations of the “rescue phenomenon” are, quite understandably, subject to considerable political pressure. In Poland, studies of rescue and rescuing found themselves hostage to the “historical policy” financed by the Polish state and carried out by its historical-investigative arm, the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN). The “historical policy” of the IPN (whose adherents consider themselves “custodians of an innocent Poland,” as one journalist aptly put it),⁵ resulted in a long series of conferences, articles, books, exhibitions, and educational programs. The common denominator of all these efforts is an undisputed drive to maximize the numbers of righteous Poles involved in the rescue activities.

While historians from other countries often commented on the hostility of Polish society toward the dying Jews, the publications of IPN historians point to fundamentally different attitudes. In the last few years, attempts have been made to intensify research into creating a list of Poles who gave their lives while saving Jews. These efforts actually started in the 1960s, and were initially conducted under the aegis of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes—the direct predecessor of the IPN. The list of Poles who paid with their lives while rescuing Jews now includes more than seven hundred names. To further expand the “field of rescue,” scholars from the IPN decided

to turn their attention to Poles who survived the war but who were in one way or another persecuted by the Germans for having offered assistance to Jews. More recently, historians from the IPN started to muse about expanding their lists to people who helped Jews for profit—some of whom made fortunes in the process. Indeed, why not? Izaak Cukierman, a leader of the Jewish Fighting Organization (*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa*, *ŻOB*) claimed that hard cash and prompt payments have always been the best guarantees of rescue and help. The question remains, though, as to when selfless help mutates into one based on the profit motive, when looking for profit gives ground to greed, and when greed evolves into blackmail, extortion, and outright robbery⁶—as happened in the case of Zdzisław and Halina Krzyczkowski, who received excellent compensation and, among constant threats, beatings, and extortions, sheltered the desperate family of Maurycy Berland for a long time. With the flow of time the memory of past suffering and humiliation faded away. Finally, in the 1980s, with the help of the Berland family, the “extorting rescuers” were even awarded medals of Righteous Among the Nations.

A recent contribution by an IPN historian pushed this line of reasoning to its logical conclusion. The historian discussed the case of a Pole who murdered one of his “Jewish charges.” The Jew was sick, had coughing fits, and could betray the hideout in which two other Jews were hiding. The murder resolved this painful dilemma: it saved the rescuer and his family and allowed the other Jews to continue living in the hideout. “The [Pole] killed a defenseless man. This is undeniable,” wrote the IPN historian. “On the other hand, one can defend his actions, and argue that he acted in extreme circumstances, in a situation which forced him to do what he did. If we adopt this line of reasoning, we can even agree that he should not only be declared not guilty, but even rewarded for having made an attempt to save three human lives. Shouldn’t he, therefore, be awarded a medal of Righteous Among the Nations, given by Yad Vashem Institute to those who saved Jews during World War II?”⁷ Another IPN historian devoted considerable energy investigating the tragic events surrounding the deaths of the Ulma family, from the village of Markowa in southeastern Poland.⁸ The Ulmas, who sheltered some of their Jewish neighbors, were ultimately betrayed and all eight of them were executed (together with the Jews who were staying under their roof) by the Germans. In the place where the Ulmas’ house once stood, a museum is now being planned. The museum will be devoted to the memory of Poles who saved Jews, and more specifically

to the fate of the Ulma family. So far, one can only applaud this initiative. It seems, however, that to understand this tragedy one needs to see the full complexity of the rescue drama. How did the Germans learn about the Ulmas? Who denounced them to the occupier, and why? More importantly, what was the reaction of the local community to the unfolding tragedy? A testimony preserved at Yad Vashem offers a glimpse at the horrors of the past. Yehuda Erlich, hiding in the village of Sietesz (two miles from Markowa), recalled the execution of the Ulmas and the Jews in the following words: "These were hard times for them [Jan and Maria Wiglusz, his gentile hosts] and for us. Searches were conducted both by the Germans and by the Polish peasants themselves, who wanted to find the hidden Jews. In the spring of 1944 a Jewish family was discovered hiding with Polish peasants. The Polish family—eight souls, including a pregnant wife—was killed [together] with the hidden Jews. As a result, there was enormous panic among the Polish peasants who were hiding the Jews. The next morning twenty-four corpses of Jews were discovered in the fields. They had been murdered by the peasants themselves, peasants who had kept them hidden during [the previous] twenty months."⁹ One can only hope that the planned museum will find some space to accommodate this and similar testimonies.¹⁰

It is disturbing that the "historical policy" pursued in Poland and in other countries of East-Central Europe left out the most important question: why was assisting the Jews so extraordinarily deadly and dangerous? Why were so many people willing to risk their lives breaking various other German regulations, but finding shelter for a Jew was so extremely difficult? After all, there was no shortage of those who kept unlicensed livestock, owned a radio receiver, told "political" jokes, or read the underground press (not to mention being involved in resistance). And, after all, these pursuits carried with them a very real threat of a death sentence. This question was raised for the first time more than a quarter-century ago by Jan T. Gross, but until today very few scholars have made any attempt to seek answers.¹¹

The experience of Józef Stopka, a farmer from Ratułów, may provide a partial answer to the question. In the fall of 1942, Stopka took in a Jewish family of four. The Jews remained under his roof barely for a week, and then Stopka, terrified of the consequences, threw them out on the street. Nevertheless, a couple of days later Stopka was called in to the nearest station of the Polish "blue" police. There, Officer Karcz slapped him repeatedly on the face, and told

him “that he knew I had kept Jews, and that he had every right to shoot me on the spot, and that the commander of the detachment had already received three letters about the Jews hiding in my house.”¹² In a small village all it took for the police to become aware of the crime of *Judenbegünstigung* was a few days of rescuing and sheltering. By pure luck, very few of Ratułów’s inhabitants knew German—otherwise the denunciations would have reached the gendarmes, rather than the Polish police, and Józef Stopka most probably would have had no opportunity to share his experiences with the court in 1945.

In 1986, Israel Gutman and Shmuel Krakowski, two Israeli historians, published an important book in which they argued that the average German could hardly tell a Jew from a non-Jew.¹³ They argued that Jewish fear was largely inspired by the Poles, who could denounce them to the Germans: “Similarly, those who worked to save Jews did so without benefit of support from the great mass of Poles; indeed, they were forced to keep their activities secret from neighbors, friends and, sometimes, even from relatives. The act of concealing or helping a Jew was distinctly unpopular; it was a cause of distress among Poles and often actively opposed by them.”¹⁴ The case of occupied Warsaw, for instance, seems to confirm the validity of Gutman’s and Krakowski’s thesis. On the basis of the relatively abundant documentation of German courts, one can conclude that the great majority of Jews hiding “on the Aryan side” were caught by the Germans due to a direct (outright capture) or indirect (denunciation) action of the local “Aryan” population.¹⁵

In the rural areas, rescuing Jews was even more dangerous than in the cities, where the anonymity of life offered a margin of safety. In the villages, little escaped the scrutiny of neighbors, and any changes in lifestyle raised suspicions and could lead to tragedy. In one case, the peasants, local vigilantes looking for Jews, took apart the house of their neighbor and beat up his children. The reason for this house “invasion” was simple—the farmer in question started to behave strangely, drinking more vodka than usual in the local pub. The conclusion was obvious: when you suddenly started to spend more money, it meant that you were probably keeping Jews. Pearl Kapelner from Bieniaszowice was found and later executed because of insouciance of her host. The Pole brought back home a newspaper, and in the rural, illiterate community, carrying a paper around was a dead giveaway.

The deadly fear of exposure and the constant drama of existential choices facing those who hid and those who were hiding continued until last days of occupation. For Melania Weissenberg and her cousin Helena Aschheim, hid-

den under the barn of Righteous Wiktor Wójcik and Emilia Kułaga, some of the worst memories revolved around the constant fear of starvation:

In the meantime we are stuck for weeks in a hole without air, in the stench of pigs, no one even comes to us throughout the day. Ciuruniu [Wójcik] stopped even to bring us water; only once a day they will throw a pot of something our way and they don't even want to say a word to us. Today we haven't received even a slice of bread; Panka threw our way three half-eaten apples. All this because the bastard has changed and he doesn't think any more about us. . . . On September 22 [1944] I stopped Ciuruniu and asked him not to ignore us. September, the whole month of September was horrible. October—nothing new, but even that's enough. Or, to be honest, lost of new stuff—we have even less food, the food is bad, and delivered irregularly. Our situation—from all points of view—had deteriorated. Ciuruniu changed completely. As if he were a different man; he changed in a terrible way. That's the reason why we suffer greatly. November was full of suffering. . . . November 22 Ciuruniu arrived and said: "Milka doesn't want to be bothered any more with you." What do we matter to this Milka? All she has to do is to throw us into the hay a bucket of potatoes, instead of throwing it to the pigs. How much she had changed. How horribly she treats us. And Ciuruniu allows us to suffer so much?¹⁶

Wójcik had good reasons to fear for his life. People told stories about Poles executed for helping Jews, and some of these stories were easy to corroborate—they often concerned someone living in the next village, or even a neighbor. Szarwark, a few miles east of Wójcik's farm, had been the home of Franciszek Mędała who, together with his family, was killed for having helped Jews. His ordeal gives us an understanding of the risks inherent in *Judenbegünstigung*. Adam Musiał, a local historian whose work we have already cited, described these events in the following words:

Many Jews went into hiding in the forests nearby. Some Jews established themselves in the woods close to Szarwark village, where they received help from the local people. As a result of a denunciation, at 2 AM, on the night of July 5, 1943, the Germans led by [gendarme Engelbert] Guzdek surrounded the forest and the village. Luckily, they failed to find the Jews, but in Franciszek Mędała's barn they found large quantities of bread, eggs, and milk. That's when the tragedy struck. The gendarmes killed Franciszek Mędała, his wife Theresa, grandmother Wiktoria Wężowicz, and their children, Józef and Stanisław. Then they set the buildings on fire and threw the bodies inside. Władysław Starzec, Mędała's neighbor, was burned alive. Had the Germans then found the Jews, they would have murdered and burned down the whole village.¹⁷

Musiał is wrong. First, the Jews had, in fact, been shot and, second, the Germans did not have to look for them—the local peasants brought them straight to the hands of the executioners.

The events involving the Mędala family, unlike many other similar tragedies, remained alive in the collective memory of Szarwark's inhabitants. In 2005 the local community, with the help of municipal authorities from Dąbrowa, put up a small monument commemorating these tragic occurrences. The monument was erected close to the edge of the forest, where the Mędala house had once stood.

Although we know a good deal about the last day of the Mędala family, and about the actions of the German police, the most pertinent question remains unanswered: what course of events brought about this tragedy? To understand the background of this story, one has to go back to the summer of 1942 when Jews living in Brnik and Szarwark were ordered to leave their homes and to move to the liquidated ghetto in Dąbrowa.¹⁸ Some of them obeyed; others did not. Among the latter were several Metzgers, members of a numerous, prosperous, and well-known Jewish family in Dąbrowa County. Samuel Metzger and his family, all residents of Brnik, decided to wait out the nervous and uncertain times in their own house.¹⁹ They were left alone for several days, but on July 23, 1942, two local peasants, Adam Wiczorek and Adam Kmiec (nicknamed "Oilman"), gave chase to Samuel Metzger.²⁰ Both peasants were armed with clubs, and Kmiec, according to a postwar testimony given by Metzger, "chased me for a few hundred meters, caught up with me, and struck me on the head so hard that for two hours I was unconscious, and I lost a lot of blood." Other Metzgers were also rounded up by the peasants and (together with Samuel, who finally regained his senses) went to the ghetto without further struggle. Only Estera Metzger (Samuel's aunt) and her two children (Tolka and an unidentified brother) refused to move to Tarnów or Dąbrowa, and decided to stay in the local woods, in a bunker, hoping for assistance from their "Aryan" friends and neighbors. Brnik and Szarwark are less than two miles apart. Dąbrowa Tarnowska is the same distance away. The area, densely populated, was not a good place to hide in, and the nearest police station was also too close for comfort. To make matters worse, Szarwark forest is rather small; it cannot even be compared with the large Dulcza forest situated east of Radgoszcz, described in the previous chapters. Despite these odds, Estera with her two children (and a few other Jews who joined them in the course of the fall, whose names have not been preserved in the records) managed to survive a whole year in



Monument commemorating the Mędala family killed for having helped Jews, Szarwark.

the hideouts. Their luck ran out in early July 1943, when wrong people learned about their whereabouts. According to an anonymous letter received by the Tarnów prosecutor's office in 1948,

Katarzyna Kmiec was the first to see the Jews in Szarwark [forest]. She was picking mushrooms and told her son Adam about the Jews hidden in the woods. She did not want to betray anyone. Adam, Katarzyna's son, told his brother Jan Kmiec from Brnik, not wanting to betray anyone, and brother Jan told his neighbor, Owsiak, also without malicious intent. Owsiak was a partisan with the Home Army (AK); he told his friends from the AK, and his friends often betrayed Jews and denounced them. Władysław P. or Józef, his brother, informed the Gestapo.²¹

Tying the "right-wing" AK resistance into the story, the author of the anonymous note quite obviously tried to pique the interest of the communist authorities and encourage them to conduct a more energetic investigation. After all, he wrote, he had already sent three letters to the authorities regarding the Szarwark murders. There is little evidence that the Home Army was involved in murdering Jews in this particular area, but there is no doubt that the Jews in Szarwark were detected and "rendered" into the hands of the Germans by local peasants.²²

Władysław Rzepka of Brnik (who had been investigated for an assault against Samuel Metzger in 1940) was able not only to recall the events in question, but also to place them precisely in chronological sequence: "On July 7, 1943 I married Weronika Moździeż from Szarwark commune," he testified in 1948. One evening, a few days before the wedding, Rzepka went to Szarwark to visit his fiancée. On his way through the woods—the same woods that had been home to the Metzgers since the previous summer—Rzepka stumbled on several corpses of dead Jews. "At the edge of the forest I met Feliks Węgrzyn, who, when asked, told me that the Germans had been shooting the Jews. At this point I saw Adam Kmiec, who emerged from the rye field, marching two Jewesses in front of him. When I came back home around noon, I learned from my mother that the gendarmes had been in the village and shot two Jewesses." Józef Grabka, another resident of Brnik, provided some more details. While Rzepka left to visit his fiancée in Szarwark, Grabka had been on his way back home and saw a crowd in front of Franciszek Owsiak's house:²³ "I saw a few members of the commune night watch. I was curious, so I went inside. In Franciszek Owsiak's apartment I saw two Jewish women sitting on the bench, next

to the oven. In the same room I saw Franciszek Owsiak himself, Adam Kmieć and Feliks Węgrzyn, although the latter two went out, to the foyer, and there they stood. When I asked the older Jewess [what was happening] she replied, ‘What did I do to Franciszek Owsiak? Why did they bring me here?’” These are the last recorded words of Estera Metzger, who waited for the executioners to arrive. Stanisław Bartosz, the village elder, added that “the old mother told me to take them to the ghetto, while the younger one was shaking with fear.”²⁴ Unfortunately, “taking them to the ghetto” was no longer an option: by then the Dąbrowa ghetto had been long liquidated, and the last Jews of Tarnów were being taken away to the Bełżec extermination camp or to the concentration camp at Płaszów. Grabka soon “felt uncomfortable” and went back home, while the village night watch took over the guarding duties.²⁵ On the next morning, the notorious *Jagdkommando* led by Guzdek and Rommelmann arrived in Brnik, took Estera and Tolka Metzger from Owsiak’s house, and shot them in the woods nearby. After the execution, the village elder instructed the brothers Wojciech and Józef Grabka and Piotr Skrzyniarz to bury the women at that spot. The gravediggers—according to one of the witnesses—had to stop when one more Metzger, a young lad, showed up above the ditch and told the peasants that he wanted to be buried together with his sister. Skrzyniarz and the Grabka brothers obliged, sent for a gendarme, who arrived, shot the boy, and ordered him buried with his mother and sister.²⁶ This highly unlikely scenario falls apart, however, when confronted with the recollections of other local people. Rozalia Kowalczyk, still today living in Szarwark, recalled that there was only one Jewish survivor of the initial manhunt, a fourteen-year-old boy, probably the young Metzger. He, too, did not last long and was soon caught by the locals and delivered into the hands of the Gestapo. Józef Pabian, from Dąbrowa, recalled that young Metzger had been caught by the father of Władysław Starzec, the young man who had been burned alive in Mędała’s house the day before. Rather than blaming the Germans, Starzec senior blamed the Jews for the death of his son: “I remember it as vividly as if it happened yesterday,” said Pabian:

Starzec took the Jew, tied his hands behind his back, and forced him to sit on the ground, on his field. I don’t know who went to get the Gestapo, but after a while a German arrived from Dąbrowa, on a horse. The German placed one foot on the young lad’s shoulder . . . and the Jew kept saying ‘Tarnów giet, Tarnów giet,’ because the Jews knew that they were supposed to report to the Tarnów ghetto.²⁷ The German placed the gun on the back of his head and squeezed the trigger. I

can still see, as if it happened yesterday, how [the Jew's] teeth fell out and how he fell dead to the ground.

The gravediggers' problems were not over, however. At one point they found out that Tolka Metzger, although badly wounded, was not quite dead: "So Wojciech Grabka took the shovel and threw a few scoops of dirt on her face." Bartoszek, the elder, watched from the side, and told him not to do it, but Grabka said nothing."²⁸ In fact, it was not the only example of Jews being buried alive by the locals on the territory of our interest. In nearby Janowice, the peasants were ordered by the Polish "blue" police to bury the bodies of two Jewish women. One inhabitant of the village in her deposition remarked, "The people told me that the police shot them [the Jewish women] but that one was still alive when they buried her."²⁹

Once Tolka Metzger was dead, the diggers had to apply themselves because, according to one of the peasants involved, "the ground was hard, and overgrown with roots." In the end, the peasants tore the clothes off the victims: "I remember that Franciszek Owsiak took the underpants off the Jew, so that we buried him naked."³⁰ Incidentally, the issue of Jewish clothes stirred some controversy among the locals. Soon after the execution, the police and the gendarmes brought several bags filled with property of the murdered Jews to Brnik. So many villagers were willing to take part in the spoils that it came to a scuffle, which had to be broken up by the police. Finally, the officers settled the issue and decided that only those who had taken part in the manhunt were entitled to the loot. While some people were unhappy with the decision, others were ill at ease with the whole situation. Weronika, the wife of Tadeusz Wałaszek, said: "Look how they tear the clothes off these Jews! They shouldn't bury them naked."³¹ Others were less concerned with appearances and more with the anticipated prize. Jan Kmiec took a jacket, a skirt and a shirt for himself³² and, according to Weronika Niemczura, "all were milling around, and clamoring to lay their hands on the Jewish clothes." The commotion around the bags was such that "one of the Germans had to step in, chased the people away, and said that only the deserving could partake in the spoils."³³ The fate of Jewish clothes definitely raised more interest than the fate of the Jews themselves. Echoes of the same dilemma can be heard in the testimony of Wojciech Salej, a farmer from Dulcza. Sometime in 1943 Salej ran into twenty-five-year-old Icek Mendel, who had been hiding in the forest. "I wanted to trade my trousers with

Icek because once the police found and shot him, good clothing would go to waste”—remembered the fellow after the war.³⁴

As a result of the July 4, 1943 *Judenjagd*, between five and ten Jews hiding in the Szarwark-Brnik forest were hunted down and killed. Today we are able to identify only some of the victims: Estera and Tolka Metzger and Tolka's brother. In the nearby Stawiska some other Jews (allegedly hailing from Kraków) were also caught. But the locals knew much less about them than about the Metzgers, who had been born and raised with them, in the same village. Here, we return to the point at which we started our inquiry, namely with the murder of the Mędala family. It is only in the context of the events described above that it becomes possible to evaluate the help that the Mędalas gave to the Jews in hiding. As mentioned before, the events in Szarwark, unlike many other tragedies of this kind, can be placed firmly within a proper chronological context—not only due to the testimony of Władysław Rzepka, who recalled that the murders happened “a few days before his wedding,” but most of all due to the precise information regarding the movements of the detachments of German gendarmerie. On July 3, 1943, one day before the murders in Szarwark, Guzdek's *Jagdkommando*, made up of German gendarmes and Polish “blue” policemen, committed a mass murder on Gypsies in Szczurowa, twenty miles west of Dąbrowa.³⁵ The members of Guzdek's unit killed ninety-three people that day. After the execution, and hearing about the Jews hiding in the forest in Brnik, the *Jagdkommando* moved east, seeking new victims. The available archival evidence does not allow us to ascertain beyond doubt whether the manhunt in the Szarwark-Brnik area started in anticipation of the arrival of the *Jagdkommando*, or whether Guzdek and his people showed up hearing about the successes of local inhabitants in locating the Jews. One thing is certain—several Jews tracked down within a relatively small area were—quite literally—living proof that someone must have offered them assistance. Without good contacts with the gentiles, neither the Metzgers nor the unidentified Jews from Kraków who were killed in the woods on July 4–5, 1943, would have survived in the wilderness for so long as they did. It is unclear whether the Mędalas helped the Jews out of the goodness of their hearts, for profit, or due to a combination of both reasons. Indeed, we do not even know whether the Mędalas helped the Jews at all. It is irrelevant—the fact remains that they were killed because they were accused of helping Jews. A denunciation filed with the police, and suspiciously large quantities of food found in the house, were

more than enough proof of Mędalas' guilt.³⁶ Everything that happened later happened exactly as described by Musiał, the local historian, in the opening part of this chapter.

Many years later the murders in Szarwark were at the center of investigative efforts of the Kraków branch of the Polish Main Commission for the Prosecution of Nazi Crimes. Between 1968 and 1970, several inhabitants of Szarwark and other villages in the area were questioned about the 1943 events, but this time the officials were only interested in the role played by the German gendarmerie. The Polish prosecutors were following up on questions received from their German counterparts from the prosecutor's office in Bochum, who, since the early 1960s, investigated crimes of gendarmes deployed during the war in the Tarnów area. The testimonies of witnesses collected on this occasion seem to have been taken out of the same script, and the role played by the local peasants in the Szarwark tragedy, disappeared completely.³⁷ Jan Wątroba of Szarwark went on record as follows: "I saw how the Germans surrounded several houses, including my own, and the house of Franciszek Mędala. A moment later I saw two Germans who climbed on a ladder and set fire to the roof of Mędala's house."³⁸ Stanisław Jan Pabian, also from Szarwark, gave a deposition in the same vein: "I saw the Germans surround Mendala's house, and a few other houses as well. Later I saw the Germans climbing up, on the roof of Mendala's house and setting it on fire." The testimony of Stanisław Dudek from Szarwark added little to those of his neighbors: "I saw the German army and gendarmerie surround the area, and a moment later I saw Franciszek Mendala's house on fire."³⁹ The testimonies given to the Main Commission in the late 1960s provide us with several new details concerning the activities of Guzdek and his subordinates. They describe the execution, the throwing of the bodies into the fire, the searches conducted in other farms and houses—but they say nothing about the murdered Jews. It is striking that all these testimonies (and there are many!) fail to mention, even once, the names of the dead Jews—Jews who were, after all, also local people, well known to all the members of the village community. Needless to say, the issue of Poles taking part in the *Judenjagd* disappeared completely from this part of the historical record. The 1968–1970 investigation dealt only with the German perpetrators and their Polish victims. By then the roles had been clearly divided; there was no room for ambiguity, nor was there any place for the murky issues of wartime collaboration and treason. In this new political and investigative context, it was not surprising

that the Jewish victims were firmly removed from the records and from the historical scene.

While the deaths of the Mędala family remained vivid in the memory of their neighbors, the quiet bravery of other rescuers went unnoticed. Indeed, in many cases the rescuers themselves studiously avoided recognition and attention, fearing the negative reactions of their neighbors. It is time to look at a few of those people who decided to assist the Jews and break not only the most severe German regulations, but also, and more importantly, who decided to act against the wishes of a significant part of their own community. There is no doubt that it was not the Germans but next-door neighbors who inspired the greatest fear both in those who rescued, and in those who were being rescued. The Germans only rarely appeared in the villages, and they knew even less about the inhabitants. Neighbors, however, knew a great deal about their immediate surroundings. Many considered Jewish life worthless and felt little hesitation to share their insights and suspicions with the police. Sometimes the informers had little against the Jews, as such. Simple envy often played a large part, too. According to many, those sheltering Jews were making a fortune in the process. Such “unjustified” enrichment bothered neighbors and friends, who considered themselves unfairly excluded from the redistribution of wealth that was happening around them. Jewish wealth thus was regarded as common property, and individual attempts at hiding Jews were considered egoistic assaults against the community. Since everyone could suffer because of possible German reprisals, there was no reason why only the chosen few should gain.

In Jadowniki Mokre, a large village located in Wietrzychowice Commune, on the western border of Dabrowa County, Józefa and Józef Gibes gave shelter to a Jewish family of four. The Jews survived the war but for the hosts the liberation was hardly the end of their ordeal. “The worst started after the war”—wrote a journalist who interviewed the Righteous rescuer several decades later—“the partisans decided to strike against Gibes. They constantly threatened him with death. Józef had to go into hiding. When his wife passed away, the ‘partisans’ threatened with death anyone who dared to come to the funeral. Even the priest refused to follow the coffin [to the grave]—he celebrated the mass inside the church.”⁴⁰ It was even worse. According to one of the Jews who survived the war hidden under Gibes’s barn, the “partisans” showed up before the funeral and executed the body of Józefa, while it was laying in the wake. They sprayed the body with bullets and one [of them] said: “You old Jewish whore, you should

have been shot much earlier! They wanted money; they were convinced that he [Gibes] enriched himself while hiding Jews.”⁴¹ The “unwelcoming” of Jewish survivors and their gentile hosts was a widely reported phenomenon. Moses Horn, who survived in Ostrówek, east of Dąbrowa, still in 1949 feared for the life of his Polish rescuer, who time and again, was being threatened by his neighbors.⁴² Mark Verstandig returned from hiding to his native Mielec in 1945, shortly after liberation. There, he met his former Polish colleague, now an official working in the mayor’s office. His friend could not hide his surprise: “So, you are still alive?” Later, he started berating him for having removed his armband with the Star of David. Indeed, theoretically he was right—the armband regulation has officially not yet been lifted. Helena Honig, also from Mielec, remembered her first days of freedom: “On the street, our friends refused to acknowledge our greetings. I wanted to cry when I saw my former teacher (who used to like me so much) turn her head away from me. Postman, who knew me since I was a child, looked the other way. And, when I wanted to buy bread, the baker told me to come back during the night, so that the neighbors wouldn’t see him selling bread to Jews.”⁴³

One of the forgotten helpers active in Dąbrowa County was Bolesław Sroka, an agricultural engineer and social worker who had been well known in the Tarnów area before the war. During the war Sroka worked in Breń, on the estate of Count Konopka.⁴⁴ In 1941, when the living conditions of Dąbrowa Jews became very alarming, he hired several dozen seasonal Jewish laborers from the ghetto. The Jews worked in Breń, received decent food, and could even offer limited assistance to their starving families back home. In the summer of 1942, when the Jews were removed from seasonal work and were shipped away in an “unknown direction,” Sroka decided to help at least some of them. One of these people was Fela Grün, an eighteen-year-old girl from Szczucin.⁴⁵ The Grün family was one of the richest Jewish families in Dąbrowa County; they had an estate close to Radgoszcz, where they even employed their own forest ranger.⁴⁶ Quite possibly, the Grüns and Sroka were acquainted with each other from before the war. In August 1942, Sroka sent Fela, her two sisters, and her brother to stay with his cousin, one Michał Sroka. Later, he arranged shelter for them in the house of Franciszek Soltys, a farmer living in the hamlet of Czarkówka, close to Radgoszcz. Immediately after the war, Fela Grün gave her testimony in Kraków: “My brother and sister stayed in Zabrnice, in the house of Pole Forgiel. He was a very decent and noble man, and they owe him their lives. Prof. Sroka placed my other sister with his friends in Swiebodzin, in Czupryna’s house, where she lived until the liberation. She was also content

with her life there. Prof. Sroka saved other Jews too, without any personal gain. He provided us with food and money, despite the fact that we had nothing to claim from him.”⁴⁷

The expression “nothing to claim from him” alluded to “Jewish things,” and cash, which the resourceful Grün family had already earlier left with several trusted Poles. Although Sroka arranged for shelters and provided his charges with some assistance, the daily risk of hiding fell on the shoulders of peasants who agreed to take Jews under their roofs. The above-mentioned Franciszek Sołtys from Czarkówka was one of these courageous people. According to Fela Grün’s account, she had spent the first year in hiding together with her sister at Sołtys’s place. Initially they paid for help by drawing on their savings, but after one year, in the summer of 1943, their money ran out. As soon as that happened, the girls offered “to go and bring the valuables which had been left for safekeeping with other peasants. During the day, however, fearful of being recognized, we could not leave the hideout. During the nights, the members of the night watch were roaming the village, and greedy peasants who wanted to steal our goods could give us away to the Germans, or simply murder us. In these circumstances, Franciszek Sołtys told us categorically to stay put and all the time provided for us, although he was very poor himself. He and his family suffered greatly on our account, because there were Poles who wanted to track us down.”⁴⁸ Fearing his neighbors, Sołtys dug out a special hideout under the pantry that could only be accessed through a well-concealed hatch. His foresight was more than justified, because people in Czarkówka soon started talking about Jews hidden in Sołtys’s house. Anastazja S. from Radgoszcz was the first to call in the Germans. S. had a notion of where the Grün sisters might be hidden, since one of them had spent one night under her roof before moving on, to Czarkówka.⁴⁹ The gendarmes and the “blue” police searched Sołtys’s place on several occasions, but always went away empty-handed. One of these searches was documented from both sides: as seen by the hunted Jewish girl, and from the vantage point of the murderer in the blue uniform—a murderer, one might add, well known to young Fela Grün from better, prewar times. First, let’s hear the victim:

Sometime in December 1943 two policemen from the Radgoszcz detachment showed up in front of Sołtys’s house. They arrived on a cart, but left the cart at the curb, and went straight inside. I and my cousin ducked into the cellar [and closed the hatch behind us]. Franciszek Sołtys quickly threw two baskets of potatoes on top on the hatch. He had no time to dump any more potatoes because the policemen barged running into the house, put a gun to Sołtys’s head, and asked

him where he had hidden the Grims [Grüns]. I have to add that looking through the window [before they entered the house], I recognized Stanisław Młynarczyk, one of the policemen. I knew him well because I used to live in Radgoszcz, and Młynarczyk often came to my parents' house, and we gave him butter, eggs, and other food. Sitting in the cellar I heard that Officer Młynarczyk took our host upstairs, to the attic, and initially asked Sołtys to show him where we were hidden. He promised him a reward, but Sołtys kept saying that there were no Jews staying in his house. Suddenly the officer saw a patch of pressed clover, in the same place where I was lying until very recently. A moment later he found my handkerchief. At that point he started to hit Sołtys hard, asking him about the hidden Jews. In the course of the search, Młynarczyk found a handkerchief which belonged to Sołtys's wife, but this time he was sure that this piece of cloth also had to be a "Jewish item." He conducted a very thorough search, and whenever he found a piece of cloth, he would say that it belonged to the Jews. Finally, Młynarczyk came down from the attic and told Sołtys that if he kept stalling, they would burn down his house. Then they searched the shed, the barn, and the pantry, and finally they left. Sitting in the hideout, I heard Młynarczyk's every word, and every blow, when he struck Sołtys. The other policeman (I do not know what was his name) remained all the time in the apartment and tried to rape (or maybe even raped) Sołtys's wife. I could hear very well when she sobbed and asked him to leave her alone, saying that her husband could come back at any moment.⁵⁰

Now, the same search seen through the eyes of Officer Młynarczyk, questioned seven years after the war, in Tarnów, about a different matter: "I admit that in the winter of 1943 I went with another policeman to search the house of citizen Franciszek Sołtys, resident of Czarkówka, Radgoszcz commune, in order to catch the Jews Grin [Grün], who were hiding in his house. I admit to the fact that I conducted a thorough search of the premises, and that I gave Franciszek a beating to make him reveal the location of the Jewish hideout, but I have no idea how many times I hit him."⁵¹

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. In the general accounting of gains and losses, the risks incurred by the community were incomparably higher than the uncertain, shifting, and often not fully accepted moral imperatives. This phenomenon, well known to psychologists, is linked to the general unwillingness to violate the norms of established group behavior. In other words, if certain activities become a norm, and favor the



Stanisław Pagos in front of the barn in which he sheltered the Weit brothers. *Yad Vashem Photo Archive*, 3594/3.



Abram and Awigdor Weit after the liberation, 1945.
Yad Vashem Photo Archive, 3594/2.

interests of one's own community (and such a community may be defined in a variety of ways), then taking an opposing stand becomes the privilege of the few—sometimes of a tiny minority that has to bear the hostility of their peers.⁵²

In a recently published book devoted to the issue of wartime rescue, a short passage is devoted to the siblings Stanisław and Zofia Pagos from Gruszów Wielki (a village located a few miles north of Dąbrowa).⁵³ These two noble and altruistic helpers sheltered two Jewish boys, Abram and Awigdor Weit, for a long time. Abram, the younger of the Weit brothers, was the first one to knock on their door, immediately after the liquidation *Aktion* of August 1942.⁵⁴ Awigdor joined his brother in the fall, after several unsuccessful attempts at hiding in the local forests. According to Awigdor, the Pagos family had been, for at least two generations, close to the Weit family: "Even Pagos's father used to come to the house of my grandfather, who helped him a lot. Stanisław Pagos himself was a frequent guest in our house ever since I remember. He once told me that (although he had no love for the Jews) if my grandfather were to rise from his grave, he would happily kiss his white beard. He came several times to the ghetto and told us that if things got worse, we could always come to him, and he would hide us." Pagos, like Sołtys, was most afraid of his neighbors. Like Sołtys, he also decided to prepare a special hideout, because keeping the Jews in the attic (where the Weits spent the first weeks of their stay in Pagos's household) was perceived as far too risky. The final hideout was dug out in the barn, under the horse stables. The access panel was hidden with wooden planks, and the planks were covered with horse manure. That is where both Weits ran to hide in case of an emergency.

They survived this way for two years, until the fall of 1944. Pagos not only provided for the boys throughout this time but even "after the war returned to us some of the valuables and a fur coat, which our parents gave him for safe-keeping, and about which we knew nothing." Pagos's house was in a remote area; "sometimes, however, neighbors dropped by and we could hear their conversations. They constantly talked about the Jews, that Hitler did one good thing, and that was that he had murdered the Jews. Pagos agreed, because he had no other choice." The Weit brothers remained at the Pagos's farm until October 1944, when they had to leave in a hurry. With the approach of the Eastern front some units of the *Wehrmacht* moved into Gruszów Wielki and all stables were taken over by the military for their own horses. Leaving the shelter at the very end of the war was extremely risky but, according to Awigdor, it was not as dangerous as one year before, because fewer people were so obsessed with

the Jews. By then, the great majority of Jewish refugees had already been caught and killed. Therefore, strangers appearing in the villages during the fall of 1944 were not automatically classified as Jews and asked to prove their “innocence.” The Jews were gone, the front was coming, and there were so many “Aryan” refugees fleeing from the East that the “Jewish” problem no longer preoccupied everybody as much as it did before. Awigdor completed his account:

One Saturday, after the war, Pagos arrived in Dąbrowa, stood next to the synagogue and listened to us praying. He said later that if he lived long enough to see Jews once again able to pray in the open, then he had to listen to it. After the war Pagos had to suffer on our account because all the people in the village mocked him and called him “Jewish uncle,” and he often came back alone from church, because the others shunned him on account of him keeping Jews during the war. In 1945 he was getting married and he insisted that we assist at this wedding. At that time, Polish villages were not safe for Jews, so he mobilized his family to protect us. [During the wedding] his two brothers, armed with pistols, stood next to us and made sure that we were safe.⁵⁵

It is striking indeed that just after the war, two Jewish survivors, invited by a friend to a wedding, had to be provided with armed bodyguards, to ensure their safety from their neighbors, or other wedding guests. In July 2010, when I visited Gruszów Wielki looking for Pagos’s farm, I met an elderly woman who told me that yes, true, Pagos was disliked in the village because “he took himself two Jew-boys, so that later, after the war, they signed their land over to him. . . . But I cannot say anything really bad about him,” she concluded.

CONCLUSION

In the summer of 2009 the influential German weekly *Der Spiegel* published a front-page article entitled “Dark Continent: Hitler’s European Helpers.” According to its authors, the extermination of European Jews was not only a German deed, but also a result of the involvement of many other nationalities, allies, sympathizers and fellow travelers. The extermination of the Jews was possible with the participation of Latvian policemen, Lithuanian “shooters” (*shaulai*), Ukrainian militias and guardsmen, Polish mobs from Jedwabne or Radziłów, French or Belgian volunteers for the SS, but also their civilian and uniformed fellow citizens, who robbed Jews and locked them in prisons. One could carry this list on and on. In Poland, *Der Spiegel*’s article raised some ire, mostly among politicians and journalists, who accused the German authors (not without some justification) of trying to share the blame for the Shoah with the rest of Europe. Maybe so, but the question raised by *Der Spiegel* still requires an answer: would the Germans have succeeded as completely as they did in exterminating the European Jews without the often unforced, and sometimes enthusiastic, support of non-German volunteers and helpers? In light of the evidence presented in this book, it can be argued that the attitudes of the local population had, at least for some Jews, fundamental and existential importance. The great majority of Jews, early on concentrated by the Germans into ghettos, were herded in the summer of 1942 into death trains and taken to extermination camps. One can debate what was, in these days, the role of Polish “blue” police or Polish *yunaki* from the *Baudienst*, but it is obvious that during that stage their impact, from the German point of view, was secondary.

A very different situation occurred after the deportations, when hundreds of thousands of Jews decided, in the face of death, to seek refuge among the Aryan population, or in the forests. As we know today, very few managed to survive under the German occupation that lasted until 1945. In the summer of 1942, despite years of hunger, epidemics, and terror, some 2.5 million Polish Jews were still alive. Assuming that around 10 percent of the Jewish population of the liquidated ghettos tried to flee the deportations, one can argue that 250,000 people made an active attempt to save themselves from the policies of extermination. Of that number, as we have noted above, less than 50,000 survived the war. The question is whether the 200,000 future victims of the *Judenjagd* lacked a chance from the very beginning. The evidence from Dąbrowa Tarnowska County presented in this book gives a partial answer to this question. Some of the Jews wandering through the forests, hidden in bunkers and hideouts, stuck under the barns, sheds and in the attics of their Polish neighbors' houses, could have probably lived until the liberation, had there not been a number of tragic circumstances. Sometime in the spring, or perhaps in the summer of 1942, Jewish life, in the eyes of a large part of Polish society, had lost its value. If not for the fact that all attempts to save Jews were so deadly dangerous and that helping Jews was considered by many a sin, or even worse a crime, many of the Jewish refugees could have survived until the end of the war. Raoul Hilberg, one of the foremost scholars of the Shoah, divided the human participants of the Holocaust into three groups: victims, perpetrators, and bystanders. With time, these categories have become blurred, the distinctions being not always as clear as they seemed. Now, it seems that the category of "bystanders"—at least in the context of Central and Eastern Europe—has to be fundamentally rethought. Jan T. Gross, in his recent book *Fear*, discussed at length the reasons that led some Poles to kill Jews in a series of well and not-so-well publicized incidents and pogroms, between 1945 and 1947. The murders, which culminated in the notorious Kielce pogrom, resulted in the deaths of some seven hundred survivors of the Holocaust. Seen from the perspective of the *Judenjagd*, this eruption of anti-Jewish violence acquires a new meaning; it no longer was an isolated outburst of hate, but rather a declining continuation of a wartime practice, familiar to people across the occupied land.

More than a quarter century ago, Szymon Datner (a historian, survivor, and former fighter from the Białystok ghetto) said that "at two opposite poles, there were two active groups. On the one hand there were people who hunted down the Jews, or murdered them out of greed, or from pure racial hatred. On

the other hand, there were people who sheltered the Jews, and who assisted them. This second group was both more numerous and more representative of the Poles and of the Underground State. But the first group was more successful and efficient in carrying out its actions.”¹ Even if one can take issue with Datner as far the numbers are concerned, it is obvious that the “group which murdered the Jews” was indeed very successful. The archival evidence and the testimonies of survivors confirm this beyond doubt. How successful was this “second” group of murderers and informers? According to Datner, “This concrete, although unimaginable, crime was the Holocaust. And Poles are not to blame for this crime. It was a German deed, and one executed by the Germans. I want to stress firmly that more than 90 percent of this horrible, murderous work was carried out by Germans without any involvement of Poles . . . but, if I may say, these remaining 250,000 Jews who tried to save themselves, they were a real problem for the Poles.”² It is impossible, however, to place this 10 percent among the unknown variables, for the data and the evidence are readily available. And each percent represents tens of thousands of individual tragedies of innocent people whose only crime was to have been born a Jew.

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APPENDIX: DOCUMENTS AND TABLES

1. SIPO officers stationed in Tarnów and in the area

Tarnów Gestapo

Gerhard Grunow [b. 11/10/1910, Pommern—1948] *Kriminalassistent der Abteilung Gestapo der Sicherheitspolizeiaussendienststelle in Tarnow (Judensachbearbeiter)*. After the war sentenced to death and executed in Poland.

Josef Palten—the chief of Gestapo in Tarnów, died in 1958

Walter Baach

Gerhard Gaa

Hubert Schachner

Ernst Hufer

Josef Kastura, sentenced to death in 1948. The execution took place in Tarnów.

Otto von Malottki, died in 1948 in a POW camp.

Hans Nowak, before the war a Czechoslovak citizen. In Tarnów he worked as an interpreter. Allegedly committed suicide at the end of the war.

Karl Oppermann. After the war tax inspector in Karlsruhe. On July 10, 1969 sentenced to life in prison by the Bochum court.

Wilhelm Rommelmann, handed over by the Americans to the Polish authorities, sentenced to death and executed in 1948, in Tarnów.

Hubert Schachner

Jakob Springer, Kriminalsekretär and SS-Sturmscharführer

Unger

Otto Jeck [Jek], translator working for in Tarnów and, after 1942, in Mielec Gestapo.

Artur Zimmermann, born in Czermin (Mielec commune)

Robert Jahn [John], translator, interpreter

Kriminalpolizei (KRIPO) officers stationed in Tarnów

Karl Klee (b. October 21, 1896)

Herbert Köther

Officers of the Security Service (Aussenkommando des SD)

Berhard Willi, SS-Obersturmführer

Eugen Arend, b. 1911 in Lwów, SS-Untersturmführer

Schosstak, SS-Unterscharführer

Officers of the Schutzpolizei and gendarmerie

(*Leutenant*) Wunder

(*Oberleutenant*) Strauss

(*Stabsfeldwebel*) Heinrich Anlauf

Officers of the City Police (Schupo, Stadtpolizeiabteilung)

Kurt Anger

Alfred Baumann

Willi Boehme

Arthur Franke

Gustav Ivanczics

Lichanin

Erich Lippold

Herbert Richter

Scheck

Rudolf Schmidt

Schreiber [Schreiter]

Weber

Gendarmerie*A. Tarnów detachment (Gendarmeriezug Tarnow)*

Albrecht

Hiesl

Juwann

Kaufmann

Peschl [Poeschel]

Rudolf Sommer

Zimmer

B. Brzesko detachment

Robert John
Otto Lapsch
Jan Mickler
Artur Schielberg
Paul Stoss

C. Dąbrowa detachment

Baumgarten [Baumgarter]
Josef Borhof
Boruschak [Boreschak]
Henke [Henkel]
Richard Ketter [Keter]

Rudolf Landgraf (b. 1898 in Dresden), in 1969 he was being investigated by the German authorities for his wartime crimes but the case against him never went to trial for reasons of the poor health of the suspect.

Wilhelm Münhof
Obermeyer
Josef Proescher
Bove
Schulz
Artur Todorowski

Members of the Sonderdienst in Tarnów

Heinrich Bau
Klenke

Source: BAL, B 162/8940; BAL, B 162/2148

2. Testimony of Suspect Gerhard Gaa, 26 June 1963

Gerhard Gaa (born in 1905 in Cologne), stationed in Paris during 1940–1942, from summer 1942 attached to the *Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und der Sicherheitsdienstes* (KdS—*Sicherheitspolizei* and *Sicherheitsdienst* commander) in Kraków, then detached to the Tarnów SIPO *Aussenstelle*.

My first execution of Jews proceeded as follows: I had been in Tarnów for about three months, when one day Rommelmann came to me and ordered me to go to the ghetto with him. A couple of people from our station (*Dienststelle*), including Jeck, were with him. Rommelmann added that we had something to do in the ghetto. So we went there together. There was a group of about 30–40 Jews [standing] in a big square in the ghetto. Rommelmann selected 3 or 4 from among them and ordered them to step out, and then he explained to us that those were the ones that had to be shot. The Jews were ordered to step back by about 10–15 meters and there they were ordered to stand in a row. Those were the men only. Rommelmann himself went a couple of steps away and ordered us to shoot the Jews on the spot (*an Ort und Stelle*). So we took our pistols out and we shot the Jews. I also fired a few rounds, but I don't know if any of the shots hit the targets. We were armed with Walther pistols. And so I fired three or four times. I was in the center of our group. We stood about 3–3.5 meters away from the executed Jews. For comparison I can say that that distance was like the width of the room where I'm being interrogated. The Jews stood facing us. After our shots the Jews collapsed onto the ground. We left the corpses there. I don't know why we were ordered to shoot the Jews. Afterward, Rommelmann and two other officers remained in the ghetto and I returned home. I was very shocked by all that, for Rommelmann hadn't warned us at all that we were going to shoot the Jews. I had no more contact with Rommelmann. He worked in the *Judenreferat* (department of Jewish affairs in the Gestapo Office) as an expert in Jewish affairs (*Sachbearbeiter*), and I worked in the Sabotage and Anti-Partisan Section (*Referat Sabotage- u. Widerstandsbekämpfung*). There was no head (*Leiter*) in our Section. Palten or his deputy Schachner were my superiors. To the question as to why I obeyed Rommelmann's order to shoot the Jews, I can say that it seemed to me that I had to obey him, for I was afraid that otherwise Rommelmann would report me to Palten. I was informed that Rommelmann was not my superior. To this I say that Rommelmann was still higher in rank than I was.

The next time when I shot the Jews came soon after the event I've just described, [i.e.] during the deportation of the Jews (*Judenaussiedlung*) from Tarnów. That day we all had to go to the ghetto early in the morning. The *Stadtpolizei* [city police], gendarmerie, and Polish police officers were already there. We were to look for the Jews hidden in the Jewish homes. Many Jews had already been brought onto the main square. I went from the square to those houses, which we searched one after another. There I found some Jews and Jewesses, as well as children,

whom I ordered to go to the assembly square. We knew that the Jews would be deported to Auschwitz. I also remember that some shots were fired during the search of the houses. But I don't know who opened fire. One could also hear shots in the square and I saw some dead Jews lying around. I also remember that some members of my station opened fire as well. I am not entirely certain who they were, but I'm sure that Grunow, Rommelmann, and Oppermann did shoot. After we had finished searching the houses, I returned to the square. In the meantime the Jews had been arranged in columns. After some time, the columns of Jews began leaving the ghetto. They walked to the railway station surrounded by policemen armed with machine guns. Palten ordered us to search the houses again in order to find the hidden Jews. I want to add here, that Palten was in charge of the whole action. During the search I captured a certain Jew of my own age and I escorted him to the square. Palten and Rommelmann were standing there. Rommelmann took that Jew, led [him] away from other Jews, and escorted him to a nearby wall. Then he ordered me to shoot him. Pelten was standing next to us. I fired a couple of shots at the Jew but I missed him. I know that this doesn't sound very plausible but I was [deliberately] trying not to shoot the Jew. Rommelmann was angry that I had not killed the Jew, and he took out a pistol and shot him himself. After it was pointed out that my explanations seemed very implausible, I hasten to add that at the time I was very agitated [*aufgeregt*]. It's not easy at all to shoot people like that. I was very nervous and glad that I managed not to kill the Jew. During the same deportation of the Jews we were also ordered to secure the ghetto borders so that the Jews couldn't escape. We knew very well that the Jews were taken to Auschwitz, where they would be gassed or liquidated in a different way. One other time I participated in an execution of about 10 people—I guess it was in spring 1943. The execution took place in a forest near Tarnów. I brought there the Jews by truck, and then—together with other Gestapo officers—I escorted the Jews to a mass grave [*Erschiessungsgrube*]. It was a freshly dug pit, 5 by 2 by 2 meters. The Jews had to stand at the edge of the ditch but I cannot recall now whether they were facing us or not. I was one of the shooters. On the right and on the left there were other Station employees [*Dienststelleangehörige*]; we all had machine guns. If I remember correctly I fired only once. Each of us aimed at one Jew. The victims were about 6–7 meters in front of us. Palten ordered us to shoot and then we all fired simultaneously. The Jews stood close to one another, for the ditch was only 5 meters long. I don't know why those Jews were shot. They were brought from a prison, so they could have been convicts. But at that time they no longer handled the Jews with kid gloves [*schon damals wurde bei Juden nicht viel Federlesen gemacht*]. I know that the Jews were liquidated for all kinds of sensible or absurd reasons [*möglichen und unmöglichen Gründen liquidiert worden sind*]. I also heard that in Jewish matters [*Judensachen*] one didn't have to send any reports or information to Kraków [*keinerlei Berichte zu erstatten oder Rückfragen in Krakau zu halten waren*]. One could execute the Jews whose behavior gave raise to any suspicion. The decision was at the station chief's discretion.

A break in the interrogation. Further testimony given on June 26, 1963.

I recall one more instance of my participation in an execution of the Jews. It happened not long after the execution of the Jews in the forest which I described [earlier]. We were ordered to search a certain house in the ghetto where some Jews were reported to have been still hiding. I went there with other Station employees, but I don't remember the name of the street where the house was located. I know that Ilkiw also was there with me. It was in the evening, it was getting dark. We searched the house but in the beginning we didn't find any Jews. Suddenly, we heard some noises and we searched the whole house again. Then we found 5 or 6 Jews, including a Jewess with a child. We escorted the Jews to the Jewish cemetery. As we had frequently been told, we were to shoot on the spot [*kurzerhand zu liquidieren*] any Jews captured outside the ghetto. When we reached the cemetery I was at the back, and on the right side of the group. Right past the gate of the cemetery I took out my pistol and fired off a shot. I remember well that I was walking right behind the Jewess—I knew her for she used to sew for our Station employees. Now she was carrying the child in her arms. In that very moment the other members of the Station began firing. Two Jews managed to run away. Others, including the Jewess with the child, were shot dead. I would like to add that when I fired the first shot I shot it the air and not at the Jewess or the Jews.

QUESTION: And why, Mr. Gaa, did you shoot first?

ANSWER: For I wanted to start a commotion which would enable the Jewess to run away with the child.

QUESTION: How did you imagine the Jewess with the child in her arms to be able to swiftly run away?

ANSWER: I wasn't thinking about it at all. I acted driven by instinct, impulsively . . . I also remember that the Jewess was crying. She and the other Jews knew exactly what was in store for them. When the Jews were escorted to the Jewish cemetery in the evening, it was obvious that they'd be executed. It's a pity that it is impossible to hear from any of the *Judenrat* members—they could confirm which executions I participated in. I kept in touch with one of the *Judenrat* members—Lehrhaupt—who wanted to give me a gift. The reason was that (contrary to an explicit order) I refused to shoot him and Volkmann, another member of the *Judenrat*. I know that at that time the members of my Station carried out numerous executions on the Jews. Those were mostly executions in the city—they killed the Jews hiding outside the ghetto borders. It is difficult to say who participated in those executions, but surely the translators did, e.g., Jeck. But I didn't participate in them, because the executions were usually conducted in the evenings, and in the evenings I had my National Socialist Motor Corps service [*Nationalsozialistisches Kraftfahrkorps*]. Besides, I was ill and they sent me to a sanatorium in Krynica.

The last deportation of the Jews [*Judenaussiedlungsaktion*] from Tarnów proceeded as follows: I cannot recall the exact date, I know only that we were dressed in jackets, so it couldn't have been cold. I was told that the deportation took place

in September 1943, so it's about right. My whole Station participated in the action under Palten's command. It was he who put up the order on the blackboard in the office. We went to the ghetto early in the morning. There were already lots of Jews [gathered] in the ghetto on the square. We were told to look for the Jews hidden in the buildings and to bring them to the assembly point. I don't remember now if we were ordered to execute on the spot those we found. One could hear lots of shots—but out in the street, not in the buildings. I don't remember if there were corpses lying on the streets, surely there were many on the square. I also saw a certain SS-Führer, who arrived from Kraków, and who kept shooting a lot. I didn't shoot during that action. When I went out of one of the buildings, I met Schachner in a Jewish droshky. *Judenrat* head Volkmann and Lehrhaupt were also in the carriage. A Jewish policeman was the driver. Schachner ordered me to take Volkmann and Lehrhaupt away and shoot them. I sat next to the driver and we set out. I went to look for Rommelmann, whom I found in a different part of the ghetto. I repeated Schachner's order to him and asked what to do. Rommelmann said that we simply couldn't kill Volkmann and Lehrhaupt. I left Rommelmann and the droshky and set out to search the other Jewish buildings.

Source: BAL, B 162/2152; BAL, B 1473–1477.

3. Testimony of Adela Gold from Ryglice near Tarnów

Transcribed by Judyta Laub

Ryglice was a small almost exclusively Jewish town. Acts of robberies were conducted by a Polish neighbor, Chrupka. G. was deported from Ryglice to Dąbrowa Tarnowska in July 1942.

Adela Gold was born in Zarzewy in Dębica district on January 25, 1911. She graduated from an elementary school in Zarzewy. Before the war she worked on a farm. Married, two children. All members of her family were killed. After the events of the last couple of years she is ill, she has just gotten back from the hospital where she had been for 6 weeks. She cannot walk—neither can her sister. Moreover, she is pale and tired.

Her story:

When the war broke out I lived in a small town of Ryglice, Tarnów district. In the town of Ryglice there were almost only Jews. Me and my family we leased a house with a garden and some buildings in the yard. We did pretty fine. When the Germans came, I didn't run away with the children, but waited to see what would happen. The Germans just marched through the town and went further. We lived in fear until '41. Until the deportations in that period it was usually quite peaceful, even though our landlord often wanted to throw us out. In the end, when everybody was looking for a place to stay, our landlord informed the commune behind our backs that he had an apartment to lease to the army. Consequently, one morning the soldiers came and threw us out. My sister-in-law took pity on us then, took us in and we slept at her place, at that time I had one child in Wole. We suffered like that for 9 weeks. Then a real tragedy struck. We could no longer trade, we had to sell the furniture due to the lack of space. When we saw that there was no other option, we could not go out, because they were capturing people to forced labor, we couldn't go anywhere without a pass and an armband. We decided to leave for W. [illegible word—J.G.], where I lived as an unmarried girl. When we arrived, the commune didn't want to take us in and made it difficult for us to register, but we managed thanks to money and friends. We had a neighbor, Chrupek, a fierce antisemite, who set his sights on our property. That man bothered us day and night. He was constantly giving us trouble. We endured that for about a year until the final deportation. My husband was working in the forest to be safe when the Germans often arrived, and then there was always trouble. If, making matters worse, they got drunk, they would shoot at our house and we always thought that that would be it for us, but we only lost the chimney. Our fear was boundless, I was pregnant then. When they arrived one other time, they stormed into our house, took out two Jewesses and shot them dead in the field. I'm sure that our neighbor had something to do with that. We anticipated death every minute and every day, whenever we saw the Germans approaching.

In the meantime they arrested my younger sister who, due to the fact that Chrupek informed on her, was accused of stealing some things from one Jewish neighbor, who had been in prison and who noticed the lack of those things upon her return. My sister was jailed for no reason and she never came back from prison. Later, when I was hiding, the landlady at whose house I was staying, told me that all those things were in Chrupek's house, and that he was the one who had accused her. She went there to do the laundry and to clean up and she saw those things. In July 1942 we had to leave the village and they deported us to Dąbrowa. We had no accommodation yet, all the things were scattered about, for we had no apartment, and [then] the real tragedy started. Next day at 4 in the morning, after we went to bed, an unexpected action started. Because in the meantime I gave birth to the child, who was two months old at that time, I slept poorly. I had just gotten up to check up on the baby, when I heard a shot—I woke everybody up and we went to check if something was on, the landlord of that house said that it was beginning. We didn't know what to do with ourselves or where to hide. I stormed into the basement with my husband, and covered my children and left them in the bed, because I was advised not to take the children with me, because they could have cried and they would have heard us, and there were about 15 of us. We heard shots from all directions. We sat there trembling with fear. Then came our house's turn. About a dozen thugs, whom the Jewish police had to escort, stormed in and began a search. They didn't find anybody in the apartment. They only found my poor baby and I only heard them saying, *Kinder, Kinder*. I didn't realize that they were talking about my baby, I was paralyzed with fear and barely conscious. I don't know why they didn't find us then, for we were [hidden] only behind some mattresses, and they walked by many times, flashing their torches. It lasted from 4 to 11 in the morning. We didn't know if it was over, but when we heard the shots subside slightly, the person, who was released from the action as a worker, announced that the action was over and that they were preparing for departure and that there were lots of corpses lying on the streets. We calmed down a bit and went out of the basement.

I ran to the apartment hoping that perhaps a miracle had happened and that I would find my children. I come to the bed, there were only their tiny clothes. They were taken away in their pajamas. The husband was still in the basement, I went to break the horrible news to him. After the end of the action the remaining men had to go collect the corpses. In the afternoon a commission comprising of Germans came over and checked the number of the remaining Jews and we, the surviving ones, had to pay a levy. Few of us remained. It was July 1942 on Friday. All the remaining Jews had to register on Monday. The men were immediately sent to labor camps, the remaining ones were just us, women, and a couple of elderly people. Now they were constantly bothering the remaining women too. We were forced to pave the market square or we were taken to the country to load a levy of hay. We were happy because at least we hadn't been deported. When somebody had no power to work or was a little late they hit and tortured her. It lasted two months

and a gossip started going round that all the rest would be deported and that there would be *Judenfrei*. I was only with my sister then. We decided to escape from the ghetto, which hadn't been closed yet. We wouldn't have gotten out alive later. I had a Polish acquaintance on the outskirts of the town from whom I sometimes bought milk. In the evening we went to her and when she saw us, she told us to go back, to stay in the forest until sunset, because she was afraid that some neighbors would see us. We sat in the forest until it was pitch black, crying, devoid of any prospects. For when a herdsman spotted a Jew, he shouted, "You're already running away, eh? They've already driven you out? Don't you know that you aren't allowed to be here?" Late at night we went to that Polish woman and begged her to take us in for the night. She did that, we spent the night at her place, and the whole night she kept checking if somebody was coming. The night passed peacefully. We didn't know at all what was happening in the town. I was very curious, but I paid that woman and asked her to go to the town and see what was happening, if we had something to return for. She left us alone. The woman was away for quite a long time. In the meantime, a Jewish woman whom I knew came over. She knew that we'd be there and she told us not to dare to come back, for everybody had been driven out of their apartments onto the market square where they were being sorted. She told us to run away immediately—we didn't wait for the landlady to come back and we left her apartment. We wanted to get as far from the town as possible. We didn't know where to go, for we didn't expect that somebody would take us in. We walked for a few kilometers with that third Jewess and then we parted. I decided to go to the village where I grew up, come what may. We walked so as to reach the village at night. Tired and hungry, we went to the poorest woman in the village, who used to work for us. For now she took us in for the night. We stayed there one more night and one more. She was very scared of her neighbors and ordered us to look for an apartment. But we were scared that the village people would find out that we were alive. Her husband wasn't at home when she took us in. When he came back from Tarnów and saw us, he started shouting that he didn't want to see any Jews, not even if he were paid millions [of zlotys]. We were desperate. We didn't have millions. We begged him and in the end he told us to stay one more night, but he didn't even want to hear about a day more.

The interview remains incomplete due to the witness's illness.

Source: Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (*Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, AŻIH), 301/772.

4. Testimony of Izaak Stieglitz from Dąbrowa Tarnowska

Transcribed by Dr. Einchhorn/W.

[The testimony] given by Iza[a]k Stieglitz from Dąbrowa in the Jew[ish] Hist[orical] Comm[ission] in Rzeszów, April 12, 1946.

Dąbrowa Tarnowska, camp in Mielec, Flossenberga

Izaak Stieglitz, b. October 13, 1918 in Dąbrowa Tarnowska, before the war lived in Dąbrowa, currently in Kraków, during the occupation: in Dąbrowa.

The German invasion surprised me in Kolbuszowa, where I fled to from Dąbrowa Tarnowska. And so I returned right away to my parents' house, where I lived with my 19-year-old brother and 15-year-old sister. On Erev Rosh Hashanah¹ I came back home at night and the next morning 3 armed Germans came (all [in] black and with skull² [emblems] and took me to forced labor. They escorted us to a school, where we had to throw out straw and tidy up the building. Instead of dust-pans the Germans gave some portraits of the saints. I pointed it out to them that it was a profanation, but they said that there was no God and that consequently those portraits of the saints were not sacred and I had to collect the litter onto those portraits. At the same time they brought some old respected Jews to perform that work. Among others the rabbi from Żabno, Doctor Schindler and his father, and after work they cut the Jews' beards, or they ordered some to cut the others' sidelocks and beards. They gave out blows while we worked, especially to the doctors. After we had finished the work at 12 o'clock at midday 2 cars came, one was full of machine guns. They took some of the people to unload the machine guns, and took away the others.

I was on that truck when they requested one more man to unload the machine guns. I jumped out and volunteered, and I found out later that those deported were executed in Mielec. My cousin, who by chance was then in Mielec, told me that he saw the corpses of those people, whom he and some other Jews were ordered to bury, and that among those people's documents he found an ID of somebody named Gastwirt from Dąbrowa Tarnowska. There were six people from Żabno. After a month the Germans from the [police] station showed up and requested that Hanna Adler, Gastwirt's mother-in-law, attest that her son-in-law had died of natural causes. She didn't want to sign it and she told us about it. But a policeman from the station advised her to sign it for her own good and she agreed.

Then I tried to get to the Russian side, but the Russians captured us and ferried us across the San River back to the vicinity of Żórawica near Przemyśl. So I remained in Dąbrowa and in summer 1940 the *Arbeitsamt* took me to Pustków. I paid the block leader off and they assigned me to do the sweeping. At that time it was still not that bad in Pustków. In Krause's *Kommando*, working at road construction, it was very bad. They used to beat them and the work was hard, so there were many ill ones and there were lots of instances of injuries. After 3 weeks I

escaped back to Dąbrowa, and the Tarnów county office head assigned me to paint street signs. That saved me from other kinds of forced labor. All orientation signs for the whole District (*Kreishauptmannschaft*) were painted in Dąbrowa Tarnowska and I worked there until the first deportation in Dąbrowa.

One day in spring 1942 the Germans went from one Jewish house to another and took people from a list. Pole Artur Todorowski, a boy about 16 years of age whose mother was German and the father was Polish, showed them the houses. The Germans executed the Jews they took either in the houses or in the yard. When they entered a house they executed the entire family. They killed about 40 people in that manner. Doctor Juda Schindler managed to survive. He jumped down from a veranda on the 2nd floor together with two of his brothers, Leon and Józef, and he hid in the Jewish cemetery. His parents and younger brother were shot in their beds. Later I went upstairs and saw the beds with the holes in them and the bloody bedding. I made something like a bunker in the closet, which I divided with a wall, I made it dirty so it looked old, we hung some old stuff there and put a wardrobe by the wall and six people were hiding there, and when the Germans arrived to search and we heard them behind the wall, we held our breaths so as not to reveal our presence. The deportation began before Tisha b'Av.³ A few days earlier the Germans imposed on the town a levy of 100,000 zlotys and [furniture for] 100 bedrooms, 100 dining rooms, and 100 kitchen appliances. Before the war in Dąbrowa there were about 700 [Jewish] families. During the occupation there could have been 3–4 thousand Jew[ish] families, because many Jews arrived from Kraków before the deportation. Even though the Jews paid the demanded contribution, the next day a *Sonderkommando* came from Tarnów. I had already lived in a different house then, for our house had been taken over by the county office. When I found out that the Germans had come, I ran home and hid in the attic. A Jewish girl had locked herself there. Through a crack I saw the Jews running away from the town to the fields and to the forests and I started knocking to be let out. My acquaintance opened the door and I stormed onto the street leading to the market square. Thirty meters ahead of me I saw a running German with a machine gun pointed at the people. He was driving them to the market square like a raging animal. At first, I began to retreat slowly, only when I heard a shot fired from the direction of the market square did I begin running and I hid in the fields. There I met the female acquaintance whose maiden name was Klausner, young girl Faiga Reich, and young boy about 25 years old [named] Izrael Glückmann. From 8 in the morning until 7 in the evening we ran through forests and across fields, but losing our way and hearing shots we kept returning to the same place where we started off in the morning and we thought that they were firing after us. And so we fled only 4 km during the whole day. We spent the night in the house of our Jewish acquaintances from the village of Skrzynka, and the next day we returned to the town.

I didn't find anybody home. The Germans took away my mother and sister, so I didn't go to the apartment, but that day I volunteered for the concentration camp in Mielec. The Germans made me work at aircraft construction. . . .

5. *Testimony of Michał Pinkas from Dąbrówka and Radomyśl Wielki*

Michał Pinkas (born in 1931). I lived in Dąbrówka with my family. There were the parents, two brothers, and two sisters. When the war broke out we were ordered to wear armbands, but the children didn't have to. It was peaceful for two years. Then they deported us. We arrived at my granddad's in Wola Wadowska. They took our horse and cow, and since it was before harvest we couldn't harvest anything. They threw out our granddad from the farm as well and we lived at some peasant's place. Daddy worked for the Germans. One day a German car came to collect the Jews. Me and my younger brother saw a German, we got scared and started running. He was shooting after us. There were some children playing on the way. We hid among them. The German stopped firing. Then we went into the fields. After the car had passed us, we went to the village, where they told us that mommy and sister had been taken. They ran away from Radomyśl and went back. Daddy gave me over to a peasant to work for him, and the rest were hiding. The landlord told me to leave after 2 weeks, I didn't know where my daddy was, and I wandered on my own for two weeks. It was summer, it was possible to sleep in fields and bushes. Daddy found out about that, found me and took me with him into the barn. After a month he gave me over to Dłubiec who I was to work for. I stayed there from August till February. It was awful there. They didn't give me food but I had to work. I dug up potatoes, I grazed a cow, a horse, I cut chaff. The Germans and the Polish police killed my daddy in winter. [They killed my] daddy, mommy, sisters, and brothers. They were hiding in the field, somebody informed on them. In February the landlord told me to go away. A few Jews were found in the village, a peasant was shot and my [host] was scared. I had nowhere to go. I didn't know if I had anybody left. It was cold, I slept in the field, sometimes, when somebody wanted to take me in, I slept in the village. Once a farmer put me up, and there was a burglary at his place at night. He sent for the police and said that there was a Jew at his place. In the morning they didn't let me go away and I knew that they were watching my every step. The police came, the farmer escorted me out, and I'm thinking to myself, if they escort me to the police they'll shoot me. I have nothing to lose, I'll try to run. And I ran away, and they all ran after me and they were firing, they surrounded me, I squeezed under a small bridge in Przykop, they were looking for me, and since it was close to the village, they were looking for me in the village [too] but they didn't find me. I stayed under the bridge until the evening. In the evening I went to Dąbrowa, I walked the whole night, I had nothing to eat.

Source: AŻIH, 301/767.

6. Testimony of Chaim Ehrlich from Książ Wielki

Transcribed by Gross

The testimony [given by] Ehrlich Chaim, born in 1892 in Książ Wielki.

Książ Wielki was deported on 29 August 1942. Until then there lived 1,130 Książ inhabitants and about 100 Jews from Kraków. Josek Edelist was the head of the *Judenrat*, and the local people have very bad memories of him. Beside the *Judenrat*, there was also the OD [Jewish Police]. There were some decent OD-men. The German Gendarmerie arrived from Miechów. In Książ there was only a Polish Police station. The Polish Police superintendent was quite decent, and they'd do anything in exchange for money. On Friday, August 28th, the *Judenrat* was called to Miechów and Berle, the SS-man for Jewish issues, informed the ones summoned, that the next day all the Jews were to transfer to Słomniki. That day in the evening the Polish police shot 16 Jews for no reason, including a brother of the person giving testimony.

Emil Suchar was the name of the policeman who walked the streets together with the village council chair and fired at the encountered persons. The next day Książ was deported in 84 wagons that had been prepared earlier. The only people to remain in town were the *Judenrat* and the OD, who were deported only on November 4th, and a few hundred Jews hiding in the forests and fields. From among those in hiding 116 were shot by *Volksdeutsch* Adolf Hübner, a restaurateur, who had a gun and looked for Jews. On the way *Sonderdienst* functionaries shot at the people, who were then buried by the road. The convoyed [Jews] were tortured and beaten and they received no water to drink. They were moving very slowly, and so they walked 30 km in 10 hours. At 3 the convoy arrived in Słomniki. They immediately began beating everybody up and stealing their things. *Baudienst*, *Sonderdienst*, and the Polish Police participated in it. We spent 4 days in Słomniki on some damp meadows. They were constantly hitting us with clubs. I could still feel it [the beating] even after two months.

There were 10,000 people from various local towns and villages. A few women gave birth. Hearing the delivering women's screams, the SD and PP functionaries came running and they beat the women until there was blood. Those were horrible scenes. 15 people were shot during that time. On Wednesday morning some SS-men came and a selection began. 1,200 were selected to Płaszów Julag I, and 200 to Rzeszów. More than 500 elderly people were shot on the spot, and the rest had to form groups of ten and were escorted to the station, and they fired at the marching people all along the way. Then they put 100 people into each car, and they didn't let them take any water. A certain Chaim Rosenzweig, a rich Jew from Książ, gave his whole property over to Wojciech Michosz before the deportation so that he'd save his two daughters (12 and 6 years old). The next day Michocz escorted them to the police. Hübner shot both girls, found the father in the fields, took him to a secluded place and shot him dead, too.

Source: AŻIH, 301/788.

7. *Testimony of Izaak Izrael from Tarnów*

Transcribed by Rachela Borgenicht, May 1945, Tarnów

Izrael Izaak, born in Tarnów on March 21, 1905, completed 4 grades of elem[entary] school, a cabby. All members of his family died. His family consisted of his wife and daughter born in 1936. Appearance: white hair, used to be a strong dark-haired man, aquiline nose, shy, calm. He was a regular droshky driver of Gestapo functionary Romelman [Rommelmann].

TESTIMONY: Before the war I lived in Tarnów, Widok Street no. 45a, in my own small house. I was pretty well-off, I had 4 droshkies, horses and cabbies. I didn't flee anywhere when the war broke out, for a bomb fell on my house and destroyed everything, except for my horses. I was at the Germans' disposal from the very first moment and I had to constantly drive them around for free. During the big synagogue's fire I was on duty on the "under the oak" square, 20 meters from the fire. It began on November 9, 1939 at night. There were only Jews living around the synagogue. They ran out of the houses in shirts, barefoot, for it seemed that the fire would spread onto the whole block. The Poles from the Steelworks and the barracks in Pogwizdowo—those scumbags, began taking out everything from the houses with permission of the German gendarmes and at their insistence. There was crying, shouting, lamentation all around. Some were allowed to take children to the families living in other parts of the city. I saw the soldiers throw a fleeing Jew into the flames of the burning synagogue. He managed to get out of there. He got burned, he was on fire. From then on we lived in great fear. At first, a Gestapo detachment came to town. They walked the streets and beat up every Jew they met. When somebody asked them why, they replied: why didn't he bow? But they hit them even if they did bow. After the establishment of the *Judenrat* we were at the authorities' disposal. Until the first deportation I drove the Gestapo functionaries, gendarmes, and Schupo (*Schutzpolizei*). In the meantime, I witnessed two pogroms in the town. During the first one they killed 19 Jews and arrested 360 in the street. They never left the prison. Near the *kahal*, where I was on duty, I witnessed Jew Leineond's killing. The action was carried out by Paul von Tiny [Otto von Malottki—play of words: the Polish word for *tiny* is *Malutki*]. A few cars with the gendarmerie circulated in the town. It was at 8 in the morning. They captured each Jewish passer-by, and shot or took him into the car. On 24 April at four in the morning they called me to immediately come to the Gestapo station. When I was driving along the town streets I could see the Jewish corpses lying everywhere. Then I met doctor Goldman from Kraków, an ophthalmologist, fleeing in pajamas. He managed to duck a bullet. They said that afterward he was in hiding for 3 days in the field on Polna Street, petrified with fear. I saw Jewish corpses in pajamas on Lwowska, Wałowa, Kopernika Streets and on the market square. I secretly

transported Szyja Stub's relative deported from Bielsko to the hospital. He didn't die right after he was shot. He died after the surgery. There were 60 casualties then. Those were exclusively the people who came back from Lvov after the Germans occupied that city.

In May 1942 Grunow phoned the *Judenrat* for my droshky, for it was the best one, to come and pick him up at 11 o'clock. That was the day when Gestapo officer Romelman (Rommelmann) came to Tarnów to take charge of the Jewish department in Tarnów. I drove to the Gestapo station with the Jewish police superintendent OD-man Bienenstock and I waited until 12. Romelman and Grunow came at 12. For starters they had already shot Jew Herman Weissman, and they ordered us to quickly dispose of his body. I drove Grunow and Romelman around the whole day. I drove all over the town, because Grunow took his guest everywhere. At first, we stopped by Rochl's restaurant. They left the place after two hours and approached me with revolvers and I had to pass an exam, [they asked] if I knew their ranks and names. Then I drove at a gallop to Sulek's restaurant with the revolver pressed against my back. When they came out of there, Grunow was totally drunk and held the revolver in his hand. I had to recite again what was his name and rank and then at a gallop we went to Limanowskiego [Street] no. 12 to Jew Stub's house, where Grunow and his mistress rented an apartment. He demanded a liter of cognac in 10 minutes. If not—death penalty. From there they went to photographer Kaczarowski to have a few pictures taken. Grunow held me at gunpoint the whole time. From the photographer again [we went] to the restaurant, and from there to the *Judenrat*, but that time Grunow [himself] was driving the horses and he whipped the Jewish passers-by. In the *Judenrat* he beat up all the OD-men. He entered the OD duty room where he saw OD deputy superintendent Wasserman and he made him open his mouth and he put the revolver's barrel into his mouth. He then beat him and 1st commandant Müller and he immediately switched their positions. Bienenstock became the OD superintendent, the so-called number one, Müller became the deputy—number two, while Wasserman became number three. Then they went to *Judenrat* head Volkman [Volkmann], he introduced him to Romelman, firing at him at the same time. The bullet flew right by his head making a hole in the wall. Romelman said that he had taken charge of the Jewish question (*die Judenfrage*) and that he'd show the Jews what he was capable of. From there they walked to Wacht's restaurant between two files of OD-men standing every 5 steps and they hit every OD-man as they went by. At Wachtl's Grunow beat everybody up so severely that he cut his own hand. So he ran across the street to the drugstore, made a dressing, came back and sat at the table to eat sweet-boiled carp and roasted duck. In the meantime, he ordered for the food for a party at home to be placed in my droshky. And so they brought meat, fish, poultry, cheese, bread, liquors, vodkas. From there once again [we went] to Rochl's and from there to TSS on Czyszowa Street. They stayed there and they sent me to get Grunow's brother-in-law to Nowy Świat Street—he had to come immediately or report to Urszulińska Street at 8 P.M. I came back, having fulfilled that order. Having taken

the guests from the SS, I went to the Gestapo station. I waited there and watched over the things in the droshky. They called the *Judenrat* from the duty room and ordered chairman Volkman and deputy Lehrhaupt to report in 10 minutes. When they came running, I asked to be excused, for the horse hadn't eaten the whole day and was half-mad of exhaustion. Of course I wasn't excused for the chairman was afraid to even mention it [to the Germans]. I was only to get a night pass. So I turned to *Oberscharführer* Kostura [Kastura] to ask for the same thing. He took all the alcohol and other things upstairs and promised to discuss it. He came back but he didn't let me go but he promised that I'd return home soon anyway. I waited one more hour, then, since it was already 10 in the evening, I transported them and two women to Gestapo chief Palter [Palten], Słowackiego Street no. 4. They gave me 2 cigarettes, tringiel (*Trinkgeld*—a tip (Ger.)) and they ordered me to go home, and the *Judenrat* was to reimburse me handsomely for the ride. At that time the *Judenrat* was composed of Volkman, Schipper, Fast, Aub, Reiss, and Fränkl.

The first deportation began on June 10, 1942. On the very first night the chairman sent for me to bring all the droshkies. I drove the whole night with the chairman and the OD to get some information at the Gestapo station. Late at night the Gestapo came to the *Judenrat*, surrounded the building, brought the papers from the Employment Office (*Arbeitsamt*), and ordered the clerks to check the lists of people unable to work (*Arbeitsunfähig*), [i.e.] people over 60. The wife and children up to 13 belonged to the same category as the husband. At dawn an OD-man brought the deportation cards and received the registration cards (*Meldekarte*). Then each OD was assigned one street, where he was to gather everybody to be deported and he escorted the whole group to the market square, where he handed them over to the Gestapo.

The first night I drove until 7:30 in the morning. In the morning, when I was on Legionów Street, next to Lane's company, I was waiting for my brother, who was a manager there, and I wanted to register my wife with the company as an employee, for she was a professional dressmaker. I could have made a lot of money then, but I didn't want to. Then old rabbi Josef Chaim Teitelbaum came with his daughter, he was to go to the Gestapo station for the stamp⁴—for he was an official rabbi and a *Judenrat* member. He wanted to pay [me] a lot [of money] but I didn't want any money from him and I drove him for free. He told me then: God will reward you for it.

Then I drove straight home hurrying the horse, let it into the stable and I had to come to the Czacki school for the stamps at 8 just like everybody else. There were already a few thousand people standing in the line outside the school. The Gestapo officers were sitting in the classrooms. Nevertheless, just like the rabbi had said all the doors miraculously opened before me. I walked straight ahead even though the others had to wait, I went through and nobody said anything. I entered the classroom right away. Sitting there was *Sturmführer* Romelman. I approached the table with the registration card and he asks me: *Was für ein Beruf?* (what's your occupation?) I told him, *Kutscher* (droshky driver). I told him that last week I drove

him the whole day, and he says, *Mensch, hast du Glück* (Man! Are you lucky!), and he gave me the stamp right away and asked me if I had a family. And when I told him that I had a wife and daughter, he told me to give him their papers and he gave me stamps for them too. I didn't even know if that was the right stamp, because it was the first time and they were giving double stamps. I got a round stamp. On the way I met an OD-man and finally he told me that the chairman and the *kahal* clerks got the same ones and that it was the right stamp.

I was already back at home at 8:30. At 9 an OD-man came running to me [and told me] to drive to the chairman right away. I had to continue driving after two days and two nights without a rest. I drove the whole day and the whole night, and at 4 in the morning they surrounded the *Judenrat*. At 4 in the morning OD-man Mendlinger comes and says, Izaak, why are you here? You are to be deported. I was at your place, I informed your wife and you need to go. Give me your registration card. I didn't want to. OD Keller came and he says, Izaak, don't make problems; look, I'm an OD-man, I have the stamp, and I'm to be deported too. I drove straight home, packed the suitcases. The horses were so tired that they refused to eat. At 5:30 in the morning the OD took us—me and my family—with a few hundred people. On the corner of Polna and Widok Streets I met my driver driving by and he says to me, "Boss! Where are you going? I've heard a Gestapo officer saying that those with the stamps don't get deported." I asked the OD-man to return my registration card, but he didn't want to. He told me to go to the Gestapo station. When he went to get some other people and we stopped for a moment, it was on Polna Street, I caught a droshky, put my wife and child on it and went to the Gestapo station. There was nobody outside the Gestapo station. So I went to the *Judenrat*, but there were lots of people. I barely got through to Reiss and I told him everything. Reiss told me to immediately go back to get back my papers. The OD-man didn't want to do that. But I wanted to beat him up, so he returned the papers. Then I drove with my wife and daughter and the suitcases to the *Judenrat* yet again, and Lehrhaupt was arranging the people with the stamps and he was to take them to the market square to ask the Gestapo functionaries what to do. He ordered me to stand in the line as well, but I didn't leave my horse and droshky. Five minutes later Lehrhaupt came back alone, without the people. They stayed on the market square until the deportation. At that time there were a few hundred people with or without the stamps in the *Judenrat* building and in the yard. In the meantime the Gestapo functionaries arrived by car, and I was in the hall then. I gave a sign to the driver so that he'd leave with the wife and child, for the Gestapo wanted four female workers and they only wanted girls with the stamps. A few minutes earlier I was standing in the hall with executive Schipper's father-in-law and I heard them say that those with the stamps would be free. I said to manager Schipper, Mr. Schipper, I'll drive your father-in-law home, and Schipper said that without an OD-man it was forbidden and that he'd go with us. When they went for those girls, I stood by the door and jumped onto an "Aryan" droshky, which took me home.

Half an hour later a droshky arrived at my neighbor's. The neighbor came to me and said, Dear God! Terrible things are happening in the *kahal*, a few hundred corpses. I couldn't believe it. Only later my brother came running, he had no stamp, and he told me the same thing and that doctor Schipper's father-in-law [was dead?] too. He told me, I'll take your horse, because it's better and I'll go to the town. I'm afraid to be at home, because I have no stamp. Then he came back from the OD and they all stayed at my place, because they couldn't bear looking at all that. There were already hundreds of corpses. At 11 my brother wanted to visit his wife and child; he lived on the next street. As soon as he entered the apartment, OD-man Sambor came running and drove him and his wife and child to Magdeburgski Square. They herded all the people from Starodąbrowska and Dwernickiego Streets (where the poorest Jews lived) to Magdeburgski Square, to meet the quota. The OD-man knew that they were all going to the cemetery. The *Judenrat* was to deliver a contingent of 600 people and it delivered the poorest ones. My brother's acquaintance OD-man Klahr came to him and said, what are you doing? get out of here! My brother took his wife and son and ran to my place. The others were then executed. No one living on that street survived.

Later, my brother was afraid to be at home for he had no stamp. He took my horse and droshky and drove to the town. He felt more at ease like that. That day the Jews couldn't go out. They wanted to shoot him, so he escaped with the horse and droshky to Spadzista Street, to droshky driver Wielgus's place. The landlady was scared of his being a Jew, she took the horse and hid the droshky in the barn and threw him out. So he took his shirt off so as not to walk with the armband and ran through the fields to my place.

At 4:30 in the afternoon neighbor Klein came running. He was a butcher and had a shack next to my place on his own plot. He said to my wife: "Almighty God! Horrible things are happening, the Gestapo officers from Kraków, the SS and the Baudienst are coming and they are shooting at everybody with or without the stamp. Mostly at men." My wife begged me to hide. I didn't want to but in the end I gave in to her pleas and hid in the basement. They covered the door to the basement with firewood and placed a deck chair to cover the door.

When the Gestapo entered the apartment; they wanted to seal it, for I had been marked for deportation and I figured on their list. At first they went into my tenants' place—the Gardens and Friedtals from Kraków. Friedtalar ran and hid in the cesspit, his 9-year-old boy ran into the fields, Mrs. Garden's 13-year-old boy hid in stables, in the attic. The only ones left were Mrs. Garden, her 7-year-old daughter and Mrs. Friedtalar were the only ones left behind. An SS-man came into the apartment, threw her outside and shot her just a few steps from the door. They entered the second apartment occupied by the Dorflaufers, who were also from Kraków but who had already been deported. Their two daughters and a son remained. When the SS made sure that the only people left were the children of the deportees' they didn't take anything, because these people were very poor.

Almost at that very moment my sister-in-law entered the stable with the child,

who was one-and-a-half years old. When my daughter saw the SS entering our apartment, she cried, Mommy, I won't be here, and she stormed into the stable. The SS-man went into the toilet right away, then into the attic, and a Gestapo-man entered the apartment and told my wife: if somebody is hidden here then I'll shoot all of you—tell me the truth! She said, that nobody was hiding. So he asked my wife where I was. The wife said that I was a droshky driver and that I had gone to the *Judenrat*. In the meantime he came down from the attic and I was lying under the stairs. The collapsed pile of firewood fell apart and I was sure that they were putting the wood aside—so I said to my brother: let's go! it's our last chance—I put on my hat, I said *Shema Yisrael* and wanted to leave the hideout. The Gestapo officer asked my wife about the stamp. She had the stamp. The SS-man came back from the attic and the *Baudienst* members came too, and they said that there was no one left. The *Baudienst* members jumped to the wardrobes and wanted to plunder but the Gestapo man says, everything's in order here, nothing can be taken. The tenants saw me in the apartment 5 minutes before and they didn't know that I managed to hide, but when the Gestapo officers came back and asked about me they said that I was a droshky driver (*Kutscher*) and that I worked in the *Judenrat*. Fortunately, they didn't enter the stable or look into the cesspit. They left having done no harm.

Across from my apartment there lived Silberman, a tailor whose wife and 2 children were deported in the morning. He was hidden behind a wardrobe. They dragged him out and started beating him on the head, and he cried, "You murderers! Your time will come too!" The *Baudienst* *yunak* who stood behind him just swung the axe and cut Silberman's head off. In the next house there lived a professor from Kraków, [with] his wife and a little son. Professor's wife and son had the stamps. They escorted the professor and his female tenant to my gate and the bandits killed them there with an axe. They were all drunk. That woman, the tenant, was still alive and she was moaning loudly. A Gestapo officer heard the moans, came back and fired his revolver at her. Later that Gestapo man ordered the professor's wife to get out with her son. She cried a lot and begged for her life. He noticed that she had the stamp and he let her go. In the meantime, my colleagues, who were driving the droshkies back and forth, saw a dead man at my gate, and told the others that I had been killed, that I was dead.

In the next house there lived a family with 4 children. An older daughter had the stamp, but the father, mother, 2 sisters and one brother were killed with axes in her presence. Later she said that she was unable to cry any more. They went two houses down the street. The Walds lived there: father, mother, 2 sisters, 1 brother. They killed them all with axes. One of the sisters, Ewka (I later saw her body) had her head completely chopped off.

They walked like that along Widok Street killing 2–3 persons in each house, whether one had the stamps or not. Soon afterward the platforms arrived to collect all the bodies. Then we began leaving our hideouts. We gathered in my apartment, because theirs had been sealed. I had to let that one from the cesspit to

change and to wash himself. His son came back from the field. We all ate something after the whole day of fasting and went to sleep at my place.

Driver Wielgus, who had my horse, came running at 4:30 in the morning. They told him that I had been killed. He shouted through the window, 'Mrs. Izaak!' He wanted to ask what to do with the horse and droshky, since her husband had been killed. I opened the window and then he cried, "You're alive?! They told me yesterday that they'd killed you." So he sent me his farmhand with my horse and droshky. At 8 I wanted to drive the droshky to the town. After a few hundred meters, I was stopped by one fellow from the Kraków Gestapo, one who was murdering the people the day before. I noticed some people already kneeling a few meters away from him. I had to enter each house on Widok Street with that Gestapo man and OD-man Berkelhamer and the *Baudienst* members. The *Baudienst* youths entered each Jewish apartment and drove all the Jews out onto the street. The Gestapo officer checked everybody's documents. He gathered those who had the stamps on one side and those who didn't, on the other. Some older Jews who didn't have the stamps and who were placed against the wall began saying the *Viduy* prayer. Some, and those were the tailors working for the army, left their machines and workshops, went out to show that they were workers working for the army, and that Gestapo officer didn't say anything, he just checked their documents. Then he gathered everybody from a few houses and said, that those with the stamps could go home. He arranged those without the stamps into rows of four. An OD-man led them, the *Baudienst* youths walked behind them, and I drove the Gestapo officers at the back. We reached the square on Widok Street, where everybody had to kneel down with their heads to the ground. The Schupos were watching them there, and we returned to Widok Street, [and drove] up the street. I drove until he ordered me to stop in front of the house no. 145. A pharmacist from Lvov lived there with her daughter. The mother was eighty years old and the daughter was sixty. He escorted them out of the house, and ordered them to be taken separately onto the square. Then they went into my house [no.] 45a. I pleaded with them [saying] that it was my home, my wife and daughter. The rest hid somewhere except for one boy, in whose defense I said that he had no family and that he lived at my place, for his mother had been taken, and [the Gestapo man] left everybody unharmed. Then I continued driving until 3 in the afternoon, along the same street, and we finished at number 110 and we went to the gathering square on Widok [Street]. The Gestapo man ordered these two old women to stand against the wall and we drove a little closer and he says to me, here's an axe, chop off their heads. I begged him [saying] that I couldn't do it, that I only knew how to drive a droshky, that I couldn't even chop wood. He burst out with laughter, took out the revolver and shot them.

We returned once again to the gathering square. He ordered everybody to stand up. There were whole families, some with as many as 5 children—I knew everybody. Everybody was calling me—Mr. Izaak! Send my regards to my wife, say hello to my mommy . . . to my husband . . . etc. I only nodded my head, I couldn't

say anything. Some went down on their knees and begged, saying that they had the stamps, and those were placed separately. The Gestapo man ordered them escorted to the Gestapo station to check the stamps, because there were rumors about some falsified ones. All the others were taken to the Czacki school.

Other streets were peaceful that day, it all happened only on Widok Street due to that Gestapo officer from Kraków. Then I escorted him to the Gestapo station and went to the *Judenrat* and reported for how many hours and with whom I had been driving. There were 13 droshkies outside the *Judenrat*. Romelman came to the *Judenrat*, spent some time in the chairman's office and demanded a droshky. Commandant Bienenstock came running and chose me, because my horse and droshky were the best. I drove Romelman for 2 hours and he gave me a paper stating that I had been his driver for 2 hours so that the *Judenrat* would pay me. OD-man Horowitz was with us and he was sitting next to me on the box holding Romelman's briefcase. Romelman ordered me and that OD-man to come to the Gestapo station on Saturday at 8:30. Then we went to remove the seals from the apartments of those Jews who had the stamps, but they were not at home, because they were at the *Judenrat*. We drove like that the whole day following chairman Volkman's list. At that time those who were employed but didn't get the stamps could still register at the *Judenrat*. They were also registering new people for work. The chairman produced a list of needed [occupations such as] bakers, droshky drivers, painters, and other workers. Then he collected all the registration cards and went to the Gestapo station to Romelman to get the stamps. I drove him. Romelman gave some stamps. He gave the stamps to all of us, droshky drivers.

The deportation continued on Monday. They rarely went to Widok Street, because it was already pointless. I stayed at home the whole day and I could hear all the time shots being fired, for my house was near the cemetery. I went into the attic, removed some of the roof tiles, so I could see what was happening in the cemetery. That day the number of victims was much smaller than on the first day of the deportation. Then they escorted everybody to the market square, where they selected strong and young people, gave them the stamps, and told them to form a separate group. In the evening they escorted the transport to the cars at the railway station. Some carts came and collected the corpses from the entire town, and those who had the stamps were ordered to go back home. They worked in the cemetery throughout the night, for they had brought electrical power there. They transported vodka, kielbasa, cigarettes, beer from the *Judenrat* to the cemetery all night long and the Schupo ate and drank while they were shooting and burying [their victims]. Some Jews appointed by the *Judenrat* were burying as well, and those who had no more strength to work—they were shot as well. One drunk SS-man took a few Jews and did some gymnastics with them. He ordered them to run among the tombstones, ordered them to climb the cemetery trees and the gravestones and then he shot them. I saw all of it from the roof of my house.

On Tuesday I continued to drive Romelman around, and he was removing the seals from the [emptied] apartments. He searched all the apartments; he bagged

expensive clothes, gold, and money into suitcases. We returned to his office. I took [those things] and placed them on his desk. Whenever he saw a Jew in a yard, he checked his papers, and shot those who had no stamp. I drove with him along the street, and he shot the Jews who didn't bow to him, and whose papers he had checked and who had no stamp. If the Jew had the stamp he asked why he hadn't bowed to him. When the Jew replied that he hadn't seen him, he took the whip from me, held it by the thinner end and smacked [the Jew] on the head until blood gushed out. It went on like that for some time. Later, when the Jews found out about it, they recognized my horse from afar and they always either hid as fast as they could, or they made a low bow.

Thursday was the third day of the deportation in Tarnów. The Jews were once again forbidden to walk the streets. I stayed at home the whole day. Every couple of minutes an SS-man and an OD-man came and checked the stamps. That day there were many more corpses [in the streets] than on the second day. That day they deported the elderly and the children to Zbylitowska Góra near the Żaby property, beyond the monastery. The *Baudienst* *yunaki* were digging the ditches. The next day the local farmers said that they saw the children being thrown alive into the ditches. Germans threw hand grenades after the children, and then covered [the ditch] with dirt. Everybody, both the children and the elderly had to strip naked. The elderly were shot with machine guns.

I came to the *Judenrat* on Friday morning. OD superintendent Wasserman's successor and *kahal* clerk Mrs. Leibow came running with a package for his father, who was deported the day before. His group was still in the barracks at [the] Piaszkówka [district] near the shooting range, beyond the Strzelecki Garden. I drove there, but in the meantime everybody had already been deported in an unknown direction, and we have found no one. I returned back to the *Judenrat* where they were gathering the people to take them to the cemetery. The gravediggers had to be replaced, because they were already very tired. The chairman was afraid that if they got exhausted they'd be shot. I went there with an OD-man to report that other people were approaching. They didn't want to take them in, because they said that the work would take 1 hour. They finished the work, escorted the gravediggers to the Czacki school to deport them, but the chairman went there, started begging and they released them.

This is how the first deportation ended. They said that 6,000 people were deported in an unknown direction, while 12,000 were killed on the spot. Then I drove around until midday with the *kahal* head. At midday *Oberscharführer* Opperman came to the *Judenrat*. He whistled for a droszky. And since I was there alone (in the morning the chairman ordered everybody to go home, because the town commissar Hackbast forbade the Jews to use carriages) so I volunteered to drive him. Opperman sat down, the chairman talked with him for some time, and Opperman asked him if he was tired for he knew that he hadn't slept for 3 nights. He ordered him to go home and get some sleep. The chairman said that he had no time, for he had a lot of work, so they said goodbye and the chairman returned

to the office. OD chief Bienenstock came and talked with him. In the meantime he asked me, how much I paid for 1 kg of oats. I was afraid to reply, I just shook my head, so he asks me again, and Bienenstock says to me, speak, speak, don't be afraid. I said that normally [it costs] 3 zlotys, [while] with a coupon [*Bezugschein*] it was 15 groszys. I got whipped on the back with a bullwhip (*reitpicza*), because I hadn't answered him right away. I drove him to the Gestapo station.

The next day they telephoned from the Gestapo station for a few droshkies. The chairman said that he had only 2 droshkies, for the town commissar had forbidden more Jewish drivers to work. They ordered as many droshkies as they needed, to have them ready at their disposal, and from then on we drove only the German and Jewish dignitaries. Nobody else could use our services. I was at Romelman's disposal every day from 8 to 1 and from 3 to 6. When they began the resettlement to the ghetto and I had to leave my apartment, because on Widok Street the ghetto reached only up to no. 39, and my house was no. 45, I told Romelman to release me for a day and that I'd send my driver, for I had to find an apartment. He agreed. I sent him a driver who was my relative, a young, handsome 18-year-old boy, whom he grew to like a lot. When he came for dinner and I asked him what Romelman said about him, he said that he had been very pleased. He carried some suitcases for him from the more elegant apartments that belonged to the deported Jews. He spoke German fluently. Romelman gave him some pants and a Jewish prayer book. I was glad that it went well. The next day I sent him again and I was very happy that I didn't have to drive Romelman myself and that another driver could step in my place. So from then on I drove the other droshky with the chairman.

Later, a fusillade began in the ghetto. Every now and then Romelman brought a couple of Jews into the *kahal's* yard and shot them there. After he had shot those people, we had to take a cart and transport the bodies to the cemetery. We often quarrelled because no driver wanted to do it. But it was impossible.. It was horrible. But there was a regulation saying that the first vacant droshky had to go. After some time I told the chairman that there were the baker's carts and that they could be used as a body cart (*trupiaraka*). The chief said that it was possible but he'd have to ask the Gestapo. They allowed it. I took such a cart, we arranged the planks on the bottom, one on top of another to be slid into the baker's cart. And from then on that cart was used to bring the corpses to the cemetery which was located outside the ghetto. There was always a gravedigger, an OD-man, and the driver who was in the line. When we saw Romelman from afar driving with a living man (a Jew), we already knew [what was about to happen] and we hitched up the hearse. Sometimes a couple of Jews were jailed in a cell at the *Judenrat*, they jailed for any reason, and when the commandant was approaching the ghetto and we saw him from afar, and it was always either before 1 o'clock in the afternoon or before 6 in the evening, we prepared the hearse.

We also transported things from the ghetto to the Czacki school. There was a warehouse (*Samellager*) of all former Jewish things. We also removed all the garbage from the ghetto to the pond on Garbarska Street, for it was forbidden to

take the garbage out of the ghetto so as not to spread the epidemic. Every Sunday a couple of our droshkies took the Gestapo functionaries to Dunajec for a swim. They took the Jewish droshkies because that didn't cost them anything. We also drove them to the swimming pool by the shooting range, beyond the Strzelecki Garden. They swam and sunbathed there. In the evening we had to pick them up and drive them home. They came there with their wives and children. We also had night duties. We worked like that until the second deportation.

There were rumors about the second deportation already two days before it began. The people anticipated something, but they knew nothing for sure. A panic broke out in the ghetto. Once, when I was standing by the *Judenrat* gate there was OD-man Teitelbaum, a Jew deported from Germany, another OD-man, a Polish woman, and a Jewess in mourning. The women went outside the ghetto, they were captured at the railway station, that Jewess and a Polish woman.⁵ A Gestapo officer brought them back to the ghetto, took them upstairs to the chairman, [and] asked them, who let them out. She said that she didn't know the surnames of those OD-men. Romelman came and ordered all the ODs to come to the ghetto in half an hour. Jeg [Jeck] and Romelman arrived after half an hour and ordered all the OD-men to gather in the *Judenrat* yard in 5 minutes. He asked right away who was on duty by that gate at 11 o'clock. He checked the duty hours in the register and said: OD-man Teitelbaum. There was another one from Germany by the same name, but [that one] was from Poland. [Rommelman] asked if he had let those women leave the ghetto. He said that he had. When he asked him why, he said that they were escorted by an OD-man, so he let them out. He asked who was the one who escorted them out. So he pointed at another one. His name was Krieger. Romelman ordered the four of them to turn around and the rest of the OD-men to leave. After they had left, he shot those four people right away; that is the two women and two OD-men. Then I had to transport the bodies to the cemetery. The blood was dripping from the cart onto the street. Earlier, during the interrogation, Romelman asked that Jewish woman, why she had escaped from the ghetto. She said that she had heard that there would be a deportation. Then he said, there won't be any deportation but here is the punishment for inciting panic.

The next day panic grew, people talked more and more about the deportation. My driver drove Romelman home at 7:30 in the evening and asked for a pass (*Bescheinigung*), to be able to pick him up as usual, for he knew that there would be a deportation and that they wouldn't let him leave the ghetto. Then Romelman laughed, but in the end he got angry and said that there would be no deportation. An hour later I drove my droshky to the hospital, because the hospital was outside the ghetto, one lady came running and said that the ghetto had been surrounded. A great panic broke out in the hospital. I wanted to drive home too, because I didn't want my wife to be alone with the child, but I had to wait for a patient to drive him to the ghetto.

When I was finally coming back, the ghetto was indeed surrounded by the SS and Gestapo. The doctors who were at home wanted to leave the ghetto and go

to the hospital, they felt safer at work, but they weren't allowed out. I drove home, I lived on Starodąbrowska Street then, and there was a great panic in the ghetto. People were walking and crying, some looked for bunkers and prepared them in a hurry, others ran around not knowing what to do. At 9 in the evening Romelman came to the *Judenrat* and ordered all companies to make lists of their people and they would get the stamps. At 9 or 10 an OD-man came running for me to immediately drive my droshkies to the *Judenrat*. The *Judenrat* clerks spent the whole night writing the lists of people [to be granted stamps]. Each company submitted its work cards individually. I asked the chairman what I should do with my people. He said that he'd personally do it. I took my wife and daughter's registration cards together with mine—my wife worked at Lane's as a dressmaker—and I registered her on Lane's list. At 1 in the morning I went with deputy chairman Lehrhaupt to the houses of a few rich Jews, then I drove him back to the *Judenrat*. I didn't like the whole thing.

I had a rich brother as well, he owned a big clothing company, and at that time he was a leader (*Laiter*) at Lane's. I woke him up at 2 in the morning. I ordered him to get up and drive with me. He went to the *Judenrat* with me and wanted to talk to Lehrhaupt, because he was his friend. He told him: "Idek! Tell me what it's all about." But Lehrhaupt didn't even want to talk with him. Lehrhaupt came running to me to drive with him again. He told my brother that he was stupid to be afraid. Lane is a major company and he, as a leader, is on the top of the list. I sent a driver with Lehrhaupt, and I stayed with my brother and we discussed our options. Anyway, we decided to look for a hideout. In the meantime, somebody called my brother and said that there was someone who was able to produce false stamps. We drove to Szpitalna Street, where that man was said to have lived, but he wasn't at home. We looked for him everywhere but we didn't find him. My brother came back home. He lived at Lwowska Street no. 48 in Kupferleg's building. All people who had no stamps were preparing a common hideout there. OD-man Sommer's father lived in that building.

The next day they began issuing the stamps at Magdeburgski Square. I sent the driver for Romelman in the morning, but he was already unable to leave the ghetto. He drove to the *Judenrat*. Romelman arrived by car. I was standing with the driver. Romelman ordered me to drive to Magdeburgski Square to the employment office (*Arbeitsamt*). My driver's name was Wolf Rand. I also gave him my work card. He got the stamp right away, but I didn't. Then I submitted the cards of all the drivers and their families to the *Judenrat*. It was extremely crowded there, lots of people [milling] around, the OD-men were fighting them away with clubs. Every now and then Grunow came from the employment office to shoot someone and sometimes he shot in the air so they'd disperse. Soon panic broke out. Grunow stormed out of the employment office and slapped OD-man Zimmerman so hard that he fell down from the top of the stairs. Grunow was angry that Zimmerman was unable to keep order. Once in a while the Gestapo officers came and gave the stamps to artisans who worked for them and who were self-employed (*selbstän-*

dig). But not to all of them. It depended on their whim. In the afternoon chairman Volkman called me to the employment office to *Oberscharführer* Opperman and introduced me as the head of the drivers and handed him the drivers' and their families' cards. He [Oppermann] then went to Romelman and said that he could make do with four droshkies. So I, my cousin and two other drivers got the stamps. Even my younger brother, also a driver, didn't get one, because they left the four of us as allegedly single ones. They excluded those who had wives and families. I admitted that I had a wife, because her card was at Lane's. In the evening I took all the Jews' registration cards to the *Judenrat*. Everybody ran to the droshky, everybody was looking for their [registration cards]. There was shouting, crying, people were trampling one another, snatching the registration cards away from one another so that some of the cards were damaged. Those who had no stamps were stealing other people's cards with the stamps. They were tearing off the [original] photos and placing their own pictures instead. Everybody stormed into the *Judenrat* office. There were a few thousand people [inside]. Robbery began. I was also looking for my wife's registration card. I didn't find it, because it probably had the stamp and somebody had stolen it. I found the card of my brother, a leader at Lane's, without the stamp. The whole family was without the stamps. I drove to him at night and told him about it. His oldest son had the stamp. I told him to hide.

At dawn the sister-in-law came to me with her children, because she knew about my hideout above the stable. There were already 40 people and my sister-in-law couldn't breathe so she went back downstairs. She went to her husband, to his hideout. There was a very good hideout in the basement with another exit. The door was covered with pieces of wood and coal and they pumped so much water into the first basement that it covered everything. Nobody would suspect anything there. And so all my relatives without the stamps went into the hideout and I was about to drive to the square. Suddenly, somebody ran into the house shouting that on the square they were giving additional stamps to young people. One person stormed out of my bunker and got the stamp. His name was Luksenberg, he came running to me, showed me the stamp and ran home with it and hid. In that bunker there was my sister with [her] two-year-old daughter and with [my] brother-in-law. The brother-in-law also stormed out of the bunker for he was young and healthy and he ran to the square. A panic broke out. Many people came running, everybody wanted to get the stamp, and then the Gestapo officers seated at the table in the middle of the square ordered everybody to kneel until the deportation. There were already a few thousand people on the square. They knelt with their heads to the ground and whoever lifted his head was beaten until he lost consciousness. Every now and then some of those who were on their knees ran to the table and managed to get the stamp. My brother-in-law stood up as well, trying to get to the table, but an SS-man started hitting him and instead of returning to the row, he ran in a different direction. Then the SS-man shot after him and he fell down. Those who were kneeling didn't see it because they had to hold their heads

low to the ground. Only I saw my brother-in-law's death from above, from the [droshky] box, and I couldn't do anything.

Half an hour later they removed the elderly and the sick, [and the] young cripples. We had to transport them to the cemetery on our four droshkies. An SS-man drove with us. On the way the people cried to me, mister, tell my wife, my daughter, my brother, etc., where they are taking us and why. I didn't even look back to see who was calling me, because the SS-man sitting on the box had a whip and I was afraid. This was how we transported these people to the cemetery. A few hundred living people. We approached the very wall of the new cemetery and the people got off there. The *Baudienst* members were digging the ditches. After the third or the fourth round I saw the people lying naked by the wall already dead, one on top of another. They were still twitching, the bodies were still trembling. Opposite [the bodies] there was a Gestapo officer sitting in a chair. The *Baudienst* members were searching the dead people's clothes lying beside him. They were looking for gold and money. They put the clothes on one heap. Later all those things were taken to the Czacki school and sorted.

Later groups of soldiers and militia men spraed out all over the ghetto and threw all the people out onto Magdeburski Square. Those with the stamps had to stand by the fence in the square with their heads turned to the side and those without the stamps who were found hiding, those were ordered to kneel until the deportation. They began searching for the people hidden in the buildings. They killed the old people they found, and brought the young ones onto the square. In my yard there was a pond in which there was a few dozen kilos of carp. There were some poultry traders who had a few dozen hens in cages. When that Gestapo man showed up to take people away he took the carp and the hens. When he came to Magdeburski Square and he showed [the fish and hens] to his colleagues, they arrived by cars into the yard and each one took some carp and hens. I was standing nearby and I didn't know what was going on. All my close ones were hiding there—my wife, child, sister with her child, all the relatives and friends—I didn't know what [the Gestapo people] were looking there for. I was certain that they had found my bunker. There was a special Sipo⁶ carriage [reserved] for Romelman and everybody knew that it belonged to me. I was already imagining that they would call me there as well and they would find everybody in that stable. But they simply came for the fish and hens.

At midday everybody with the stamps had to cross the square and hold their registration cards in outstretched hands. They took whomever they didn't like from the row to the transport, even if they had the stamps. Those with the stamps had to go to Starodąbrowska Street and in that direction, and those who had no stamps were escorted to the railway freight station. Gestapo officer Grunow came with Kostura to the *Judenrat* an hour later. They ordered me to go to Garbarska Street to a certain tailor called Rosenbaum. They met the OD superintendent on the way and asked where Apfelbaum was. He always delivered the best vegetables, fruit, and hens at a normal price. They asked if he had been deported. Bienenstock

didn't know. Then that Apfelbaum came and Grunow jokingly pretended that he wanted to beat him up. He asked him where he had been hiding and Apfelbaum said that he was in the basement. Grunow replied that perhaps it wasn't true because he came for him and looked for him in the basement. Apfelbaum had a wife and 5 children. Grunow told him to go to the employment office the next day, to Kam, who was his brother-in-law, who would give the stamp for him, his wife, and children. Later, however, he said out that there could be a mistake and that they could deport that Apfelbaum [after all]. He then ordered Bienenstock to take Apfelbaum's registration cards and come to the employment office on time in the morning.

Then we drove to Rosenbaum. He called him from the apartment and took from him the keys to the store, which was outside the ghetto and to which he had a pass and he said that he would take clothes which were there. He said, now you have lots of space. You didn't have enough space and now you'll have lots [of it]. He told Rosenbaum not to go to the store until he got a new pass. Later, I drove him to the Gestapo station. Outside the ghetto, in the city, I found out that the proper deportation was to take place the next day. They were to search for all the hideouts. I drove home fast and told those who wanted, to leave their hideouts, because all was quiet for a while. At first, I took out my little daughter. I drove to my brother's apartment, where only one nephew was present and I said that all was quiet, but the danger wasn't over, [I told them] not to leave their hideout, because it was very difficult to get out. Then I ran to the employment office. Mrs. Mandelbaum worked there. I had to give her instructions from Grunow to issue a registration card for my wife to replace the one she'd lost. She gave me a new registration card. That's how the first day of the second deportation ended.

At night my little daughter slept with me. I didn't put her in the bunker. In the morning I put her back in. The rest were sleeping there packed like herrings. No food was brought. They had bread and water there. There was also my cousin with a year-old infant. She put the child to sleep using some medication she had from a doctor. She was afraid that the child would cry and betray the hideout. There was also my sister with her two-year-old daughter.

At 6:30 in the morning I hitched up the horse, and since Magdeburgski Square (where the deportation took place) wasn't far away from my place, I drove to get the registration cards for my wife and my child. Gestapo chief Palten and Employment office head Kempf were sitting at a table in the square. Some of the Monton workers were being given the stamps. I approached them, showed mine, my wife's, and my child's cards. Mine was on the top. Kempf kicked me, but I pleaded that it wasn't about me but about my wife and about my little daughter. Palten gave me stamps for them. I drove home fast and took my wife and little daughter. My sister's child was crying loudly and it couldn't be hushed. The sister had to leave the bunker so as not to give away the others. She went into an open shack and sat behind some chests. When I took down my little daughter I thought that I wouldn't let her go to the square. Five minutes later the SS and OD came and or-

dered everybody out to the square. Whoever stayed at home or tried to hide would be executed. I decided to take my daughter with me onto the box, because the day before I saw the people stand on the square the whole day in the heat without a drop of water. On my box—I thought—she would be better off. I arrived with three other droshkies. The wife went to the square. The sister stayed in the shack and the hidden ones also remained in their hideout.

Those without the stamps who were to be deported knelt in the center of the square outside the employment office, with their heads to the ground. The SS and gendarmes watched them. Those who had the stamps stood along the fence. Every once in a while I had to drive the SS-men and the gendarmes around the ghetto. They were going to look for the hidden ones. At 10 AM I was standing across the street from my parents' house. My brother and his wife and son and my sister-in-law's mother and her sisters were hidden there. An SS-man stood up on my wagon, and since the house was low, he noticed a roof tile which moved. I was petrified with fear. The SS-men went upstairs. My brother saw them and jumped onto the other attic. He came running to my droshky from the back. Crying, he bid his farewell to me, [saying] that he was going to die. I told him, don't go! You've got time. Sit on the wagon. But he didn't want to. Look! They are escorting my wife and child there. I said to him, wait, maybe something can be done. He sat on the box, I got off. I was more confident because I had the stamp. Halber, the Czacki school leader, came running and I sent my brother to drive that leader to the Czacki school. I thought that this way they wouldn't check his papers. I went to the other wagon my driver was sitting on, but he didn't want to get off, even though he had the stamp, because he was afraid that they'd deport him anyway. And I stayed with the child. I told him, go to the opposite house. There was the horse and wagon which belonged to my cousin who had no stamp; hitch it up and go. He didn't want to. He said that today he was no longer a peasant. That he was a gentleman like me. I sat next to him and we drove to get that wagon. I finally had my droshky again. I placed my child on the box and calmed down a little.

Half an hour later all the people were already on the square. The SS, the *Baudiensts*, and the Gestapo began searching the basements of abandoned houses. They went into the basement at Starodąbrowska Street No. 10, someone sick was hidden there, so they shot him. They entered another basement. They found a full storehouse of clothes, shoes, and underwear. It all belonged to the *Judenrat*. Those were the clothes [sent] from England and donated by the Joint for the camp in Pustkowie—but the *Judenrat* didn't give anything [to anyone]. Lehrhaupt even put up an announcement that there was no point in asking for clothes because there were none. And there were thousands of items. The *Baudiensts* immediately changed into new shoes, clothes, and underwear and we took the rest [of the stuff] to the Czacki school. We ferried a couple of tons of things in a few hours. My daughter was by my side the whole time. It was mighty hot. Many Gestapo officers wanted to remove the child from the box. They thought that I wanted to drive her out of the ghetto. The Czacki school was in the Polish area. But somehow they gave in to

my requests. A few times when I drove by, my wife asked me for some water.

I was driving a gendarme who was completely drunk. While we were packing the things on Starodąbrowska Street that gendarme told us that he'd kill us all. Driver Holzer came with a hearse. He already had three corpses inside, he took the fourth one. Then the gendarme told him to transport those four corpses on the double and to come back for two new ones. I was sure that it would be me and my driver. I told Holzer, I'll help you with this corpse now but who's going to help you lie me down in an hour? I was sure that this was my final hour. After a moment the gendarme said that those corpses were in the nearby basement. I sighed. The gendarme ordered me to leave with the fully loaded wagon but to leave the child behind. I didn't say anything to that but I didn't leave the child, I left quickly. I was crossing the square. *Oberscharführer* Opperman was standing by the gate. He took out the revolver and wanted to shoot me, because he also thought that I wanted to take the child outside the ghetto. I started pleading and showed him my documents [saying] that it was my daughter, that I had nobody to leave her with. I won't leave her anywhere. I'll come back with her. After all, she has the stamp.

In the Czacki school we removed [the things] from the droshkies ourselves. There was a very heavy basket and the wagoner wanted to grab it in a more comfortable way, but the gendarme beat him up so bad that he collapsed onto the ground all covered in blood. My little daughter saw it but she knew that she couldn't cry, because I had asked her not to cry, so she began biting her fingers. She told me, "Daddy, I'm not crying, you see! I'm only worried about you." We came back to the ghetto. My unmarried cousin was standing in the square with the stamp. He had his brother's children with him. That brother was hiding because he had no stamp and he had given his children to him. Those were two boys, 5 and 7 years old. When I drove the second time with the clothes to the Czacki school, I saw Kufer first take the cousin out of the file and escort him five steps away holding him by the neck and then shoot him. A driver came to the Czacki school after me and told me, They shot your cousin because he had his brother's children with him. I asked, how did they know that the children were his brother's and not his own. He told me that Kufer was walking by the file and he heard the children go, "Uncle." He approached another Jew and he asks what *uncle* means. He was told that it meant *Onkel*. Then he approached my cousin, who denied that and said that those were his children. He ordered him to show him the registration card. It said "single" (*ledig*). Then he took him out of the file and shot him. Then I saw those children kneeling until the deportation and when I drove by, the children cried after me, "Uncle, rescue us." My wife was also shouting after me for some water. I couldn't help any of them.

It was already around midday when Romelman arrived and ordered all OD-men and those who worked in the *Judenrat* to stand in another corner with their children and entire families. He said that if the quota assigned for deportation isn't met, then the OD and the whole *Judenrat* with the families would be deported too. A panic broke out in the square. The wife of a certain OD-man from Bielsko said

to Listewnik (he was a Polish Gestapo functionary), and to German police head Jungnons and to Polish Police commissioner Laske, that she would show them a bunker with people hidden so that the quota would be filled. They all sat on my droshky and we drove to Dębowa Street no. 1.2. There was a bunker in a chimney. Nobody would've found it. They took a couple of people and 8 corpses out of there, because they opened fire inside. Among others there was Kluger, who was a *Judenrat* board member. They all went out covered in soot. The people from the bunker in the next house saw that and began jumping out on their own. They were given a horrible beating and were escorted to those kneeling on the square. My little daughter who saw it, closed her little eyes and kept saying, "Daddy! I'm not crying." My driver took the gendarmes to lunch. They roughed him up on the way. They were all drunk. On the way they shot a Jew hidden outside the ghetto in his store. At that time one could still have stores outside the ghetto and go there with a pass. They ordered my driver to take off the dead man's shoes and take them. He told us about all that after he came back.

All the ODs spread around the ghetto in search of the bunkers. They were promised that those who find a bunker would save themselves and their families. Wasserman, the Jewish Police superintendent, whose mother-in-law was 85, lived in the same building as my brother. To save her he gave away the location of the bunker where my brother was hiding with 50 other people. I arrived when they were already escorting the people out to the Czacki school. I was happy because I didn't realize that my brother and sister were there. I drove to Nowa Street with a certain Gestapo officer. After a while my brother arrived there with an SS-man and they were looking for a bunker. The driver told me that they brought my brother and his whole bunker for deportation at the last moment and that they were escorted to the Czacki school.

Some babies were lying on the Magdeburgski Square. The children had been abandoned by their parents who wanted to save themselves, for there was a rumor that they'd also deport those with children who had the stamps. They shot those found in the bunker on Nowa [Street]. We came back to the square with the gendarmes. It was already in the evening. The OD-men's wives and their families, the *Judenrat* workers and their families were ordered to go home but only in the direction of Szpitalna Street. It was said that it was forbidden to cross to the other side of the square or to the streets on its other side. My house was there.

I heard over and over again that they'd take away the children and that they'd murder them too. I knew that something was wrong. I asked the *Judenrat* head, the OD-men, what was up, what would happen, but they didn't reply. They hung their heads low. Everybody with the stamps and with or without children was still standing on the square. Romelman arrived and ordered the *Judenrat* and OD to go home. I joined them with my little daughter. I left my droshky unattended and went away. After a moment some OD-men, e.g., OD Weiser, came running to OD-man Driller's apartment and he started talking and he fainted. They barely managed to help him. Others came and said that everybody with little children,

even though they had the stamps, was to be deported. They were also decimating [them]. Every tenth person had to go. I feared for my wife. For she could've been the tenth one. But my wife showed up after a moment. I asked where she had come from, but she simply somehow managed. We were very happy that we were together and that we had our child. If I hadn't taken the child with me, she would have gone with the child [to the transport].

I ran to find out what was up with the nephew who was alone, [I wanted to check] if they hadn't selected him [for deportation]. But he was alive. I came back to the square to my droshky. There were already no people on the square, there were only the babies lying on the cobblestones, placed in the pillows. I drove over and they ordered me to put those babies onto the droshky. I began to lay them carefully down. An SS-man came running and said that if I didn't hurry, he'd shoot me. Another one came and I began throwing the children onto the droshky fast, like stones. One on top of the other. Another SS-man came running and began shouting, "Man, what are you doing, these are children after all." I began explaining that I am doing it so because I am afraid I'd be shot. Then he told me not to be afraid, to do it slowly. Then two SS-men stepped on both sides on the droshky steps and I drove those children to the barracks, to the shooting range. There was a transport about to leave. I came back from there and stopped on Nowa Street next to the *Judenrat*, because they said that it wouldn't be possible to come back onto the other side where I lived. There would be no ghetto. Only the OD-men would be allowed to go there to get their stuff. Nobody else. The OD-men kept watch on Magdeburski Square which was the [new] border, and they didn't let anybody go get their things. There were very many people hidden on the other side. Everybody wanted to get their family from there. The people gave gold rings and watches to the OD-men and to the droshky drivers to have their families brought onto this side. Some OD-men brought over those who were hidden, but others were afraid even to go get their own families. I also drove there. After all, my sister and my relatives were there. But the OD didn't let me through. He said he couldn't let me through because they'd shoot him, but I said that I had to take some food for the horse and I drove through. I come to the yard, I shouted for them to get out of the bunker, but nobody made a sound because they were afraid that it was the police. I went to them alone and I said that they had to move, because there would no longer be any ghetto there. I [also] said that when the OD would find them, they'd take them. I asked about my sister. They said that the sister went out in the morning because the baby was crying. In the meantime my sister heard my voice and went out to me. She sat the whole day almost in the open and God protected and saved her. I took my sister with the child and a couple of other little children onto the droshky. I informed the others where were the guards so that they'd avoid those places. I covered my sister and the children on the wagon with straw and hay and returned to Nowa Street. There was an empty apartment on the third floor abandoned by the deportees. We entered it with those who managed to sneak out. Luckily they managed to sneak through. Only my mother-in-law was spotted by

the OD when she wanted to enter the apartment on Nowa Street and she was taken because she had no stamp. My driver cousin who saw me escorting everybody also wanted to go get his mother, who was hidden on that other side. His mother was hidden in a wardrobe. One half of the wardrobe was open and she sat on a stool covered with a coat. They kept coming in the whole day to look for those in hiding but they didn't see her. The cousin came down to his mother and took her onto the wagon and wanted to ferry her to the other side of the ghetto. OD-man Weiser, who was even his distant relative, saw it and removed his mother from the droshky. Pleading didn't help. He jailed her pending Romelman's decision. My dog (that I had forgotten about and that was tied on a chain in my house) broke the chain at night and found me in our apartment. That's how the second day of the second deportation ended.

Unfinished.

Source: AŽIH, 301/818.

8. Testimony of Erna Landau from Dąbrowa Tarnowska

Transcribed by Dr. Eichhorn

Important.

She asks to be a witness in Goeth's trial.

Erna Landau, née Beller, born on December 7, 1908 in Dąbrowa Tarnowska.

[Domiciled in] Kraków, Floriańska Street no. 25, apartment 7.

Goeth was in charge of all three deportations in Tarnów. During the last action (September 7, 1943) during the so-called barracking all women with children and all men were transported to the railway station by Goeth's order. He selected only those most able to work and sent them to a camp. On Thursday morning one whole transport left for Auschwitz. There were 120 people in one car, the cars were whitewashed with quicklime. Everybody took 10 kg of luggage. Out of a several thousands of people only 400 arrived alive. Doctor Farber, a Birkenau camp physician, told us about it. The women to be deported to work to Płaszów couldn't take their children with them. And so some hid their children in backpacks and suitcases. The next day on Friday morning Goeth himself conducted a search at the station and he took the children he found back to the Tarnów ghetto. Many mothers went with the children and they were transported to Magdeburški Square. From there he and the guard escorted them to Szpitalna Street. I managed to escape with my 9-year-old daughter Zula and we hid in the bunker in the building at Szpitalna Street no. 13. Our hideout was located in a specially prepared stove. Suddenly, we heard a commotion; [we could hear] screaming outside. We went closer and through a crack we saw our acquaintances such as Icek Weiss with his 6-year-old daughter, Chaskal Klapholz with his 8-year-old daughter, and many others. Goeth himself shot the first victim, a woman, in a cul-de-sac leading to Szpitalna Street. After the victim had collapsed onto the ground, he dragged another woman over, ordered her to stand on the corpse and he shot her too, and he ordered the next victims to stand on the killed ones and he executed them one after another. If a mother was holding a child in her arms he shot them both. If a child was older, it had to stand [on the corpses] on its own and he shot the child. He killed about 60 people like that; I was watching and I cannot describe the horror of that scene. The dead bodies formed a heap. Grunow, who witnessed the whole scene, killed the last couple of people. The OD-men stood on the side. There were wagons in the distance and, having finished his victims off, Goeth ordered the OD-men to load the corpses onto the wagons and take them to the cemetery. It must be said, that Goeth was a good marksman and thinking about our already inevitable death we wished to be shot by him. He took a victim by the ear and killed the victim on the spot with one fine shot. Among those victims there was a lovely 6-year-old boy with fair curls. The scared child started running. Goeth called after him, "*Komm,*

komm, ich tue dir nichts" (Come, come, I won't hurt you). The child turned around and, wanting to placate the bandit, the boy carefully took out a small mirror and a pencil from the pocket and handed them over. Goeth called again, "*Komm, komm*," grabbed the child, and shot him. After they had finished they brought a bowl of water from the ambulance for Goeth to wash his hands in. I saw how the water turned red and they had to wash the blood off his clothes. He didn't show any emotions during the entire execution and he fired with an ironic grin on his face.

Erna Landau

I was with my mommy and I saw everything.

Zula Landau

Source: *AŽIH*, 301/159.

9. Testimony of Alter Milet from Dąbrowa Tarnowska

Minutes of the testimony given before the Prov[incial] Jew[ish] Hist[orical] Commission in Kraków on February 4, 1947. Transcribed by: Doctor Eichhorn. Testified: Alter Milet, born in Dąbrowa near Tarnów [on] September 18, 1907. Talmudist, before the war in Dąbrowa.

Dąbrowa near Tarnów

Before the war there were about 3,000 Jews in Dąbrowa, but at the end of 1940 and at the beginning of 1941 the Jewish deportees from Kraków and nearby villages and small towns began streaming in. In December and January 1941 some diseases, but mostly typhus, broke out due to the congestion in the apartments. Then an order was issued forbidding the Jews to leave the apartments. It was issued by Landeskomissar Stahler and his deputy Kleinwächter. Jewish messengers were appointed to bring food to the Jewish apartments. Ritual slaughter was done secretly and the food was smuggled, because otherwise the people would die of hunger. The city was closed for those two months and no vehicles could enter it. After that period a train with a delousing facility arrived at the train station. The Jews had to go there where they were shaved and subjected to disinfection.

In May 1942 there was the first mass action, during which 26 people, alleged communists, were brought out. There were women and children among the victims. The Germans stormed into the apartments and instantly killed everybody on the list compiled by some provocateur.

In June a levy was placed on the Jewish population, 50 sets of dining room furniture, 50 bedrooms, and 50 sets of kitchen furniture and 1000 zlotys. They delivered everything but it didn't help, because in June came another deportation, and an unexpected one too. In the morning the town was surrounded and the trucks arrived. The Germans entered the homes, drove the people out, took the elderly directly to the cemetery and executed some 50 people and deported 450 others. Many people fled to the fields, to the forests or hid in the bunkers. I fled to the forest with my wife and we returned the day after the deportation. The return of those who didn't find their close ones at home was tragic. We came back to our lives, we didn't earn any money, we subsisted on selling out the things left in the abandoned apartments. Less than 3 weeks later they established the ghetto into which they packed the Jews from the whole area and from the nearby ghettos, and on July 17, 1942 came the second action. Twenty-six wagons were brought to the station and 1,800 people were packed inside. Over 100 people were killed on the spot or during the loading of the train. The transport went to Bełżec. German gendarme Guzdek, a murderer notorious in the whole area, who was later killed, told my wife about it. The Jews would've escaped but they were mostly out of town and they had nowhere to hide and had no moral support on the part of the local population.

The third deportation came on September 18th. It was to be already the ghetto's

liquidation, but many people escaped to the forests, so the Germans managed to capture only 500 people and many of the cars departed empty. At that time 10 people were killed on the spot, including *Judenrat* chairman Doctor Neuberger, allegedly because there were too few Jews and because many had hidden in the *Judenrat* building. After that deportation the people came back from hiding and the so-called small ghetto was established. Out of the blue on October 1st, 900 people were deported in wagons, and a couple of days later they deported another 600 people mostly taken out of the bunkers. It was on October 6th. On that day 20-odd people were shot on the spot. Their names are: Rebazykl Rubin and his son Abraham, Chaim Uri Knobel, Leizer Mendelson, Tauba Werker, Chaim Nusen Grunosow, Benjamin Frank, Chaim Jassy, Goldberg (a refugee from Germany), Wolfgang (from Kraków), Chaim and Dobra Drelich, Mira Streim, Dawid Ehrlich, Chaim Kornbluet. I don't remember the rest of the surnames. The victims were escorted to the cemetery where *Hallel* was being sung, they held hands, singing. The German gendarmes and foreman Bowe stepped on the victims' bellies and shot into their mouths.

Twenty Jews remained in Dąbrowa to clean the ghetto and afterwards they were taken to the Tarnów ghetto. A few of them survived. There were only about 30 people, some OD-men with their wives and children. And they too were executed on December 20, 1942. They were stripped naked and shot one by one, together with the children at the cemetery. Kalman Fenichel, Hersz Majer Flaum, Uscher Ofen were the meanest among them.

About 50 Jews now lived in Dąbrowa. During the last months a few hundred Jews died in the forests near Dąbrowa, either given away by the Poles to the Germans or taken out of the bunkers and forests by the German gendarmes. I escaped with my wife, my mother, and two sisters during the third deportation. The German gendarmerie caught us in Stopnica but we bought ourselves out. At that time there was the registration to the camp in Skarżysko and me and my wife volunteered together with the youngest sister. The mother and the other sister stayed. They deported us to Skarżysko where I worked at Works C (Werk C). We arrived there at the beginning of October 1943. On Sunday there was a roll call before which they had ordered us to take everything. We stopped by the rails where the cars were supposed to be. We were arranged into fives. Suddenly, we heard screaming from afar. In the meantime the industrial guard [*Werkschutz*] walked among the people and kept saying, "Perhaps some of you have some valuables or dollars; why, they're useless to you, 'cuz they're going to deport you anyway." There was a barrack between the rails and they let the inmates in, and outside there was a file of SS-men, Ukrainians, gendarmes and they ordered [the inmates] to strip naked immediately. At the same time they gave them a beating so heavy that the people left their packs and clothes in the factory area, where the barrack was, next to hall no. 12 and ran away, and one cannot imagine those screams, that panic intentionally caused by the bandits to allow them to steal, that merciless beating of the helpless people. It was one of the most cruel searches.

Alter Milet

Source: *AŻIH*, 301/2348.

10. Minutes of the testimony of witness Dora Rosenbaum

Transcribed by Julian Olchawa, sergeant

December 14, 1949

My name is Dora Rosenbaum

Parents' names: Symche, Fryda née Rydler

Age 39, b[orn] on May 4, 1910 in Wojnicz

Occupation: housewife

Present address: Katowice, Gen. Sikorskiego Street no. 30, apartment 7

I am of Jewish origin, I come from Wojnicz, before 1939 my parents too lived in Wojnicz. After the beginning of the Polish–German war me and my husband Izaak had to work at road construction and perform many other forms of labor forced by the-then Gestapo. Afterwards we were deported to the ghetto, to Tarnów. I managed to escape from there, afterwards my husband Izaak escaped as well, right after that we hid from the Germans in the local forests and homes, and my sister Bronisława Lirt, who is abroad now, hid with us. We knew that the others, even my relatives, including my cousin Haskiel Rand, were in hiding as well, but we couldn't contact them in any way due to the fact that we were hiding in secret. In December 1943 we found out that my cousin Haskiel Rand and his minor 9-year-old son named Izaak had just been captured by some locals whom we didn't know and who severely beat him up knocking his teeth out, [and] handed him over to the Polish Police station in Wojnicz all covered in blood, and finally on the second or third day cousin Haskiel Rand and his little son were executed by the German Gestapo outside the jail in Wojnicz. We were also told that the minor [Izaak] was shot a couple of times by the Gestapo who couldn't finish him off. Having found out about that accident, my husband Izaak and I did our best using our own means to find out right away who had captured my cousin and handed him over to the Gestapo, but we could not establish any facts for sure. After the liberation we didn't go to the station because the local inhabitants knew very well about that. Secondly, we didn't know exactly who those people were, and we finally found out about it from an ex-policeman. Cit[izen] Tadeusz Misiał from Więckowice, Wojnicz commune, Mieczysław Bachara, Kuk—both domiciled in Miłówka, Wojnicz commune, but right after the liberation they escaped to the West where they have lived ever since. Right after the liberation I went with my husband to Katowice, where we live now, we sometimes came to Wojnicz, and we found out that when my cousin was escorted by the above-mentioned men to the Polish Police station in Wojnicz, a certain Kopytko, currently domiciled in Wojnicz, was the station commandant, and seeing a Jew whom he knew, he stated as follows, "Jesus Christ, you've brought Haskal," but because of his position he could only hand him over to the Gestapo. When my cousin was in jail in Wojnicz, in the same cell there was also cit. Stanisław Chmura, who spoke with my cousin

right before his death, in turn cit. Jan Słupski from Wojnicz was present when the Gestapo executed my cousin and his minor son. I have nothing else to add about it. As testified. . . .

Source: APKr, SAKr, 1018, IV K 135/50, k. 3–3v.

II. Testimony of Fela Grün from Radgoszcz

Fela Grün, born on April 8, 1924 in Szczucin, a pupil, before the war domiciled in Szczucin, now in Kraków, Wielopole Street no. 3, apartment 4. Survived the occupation in the village of Czarkówka near Szczucin.

HIDING—POLES' HELP

I lived in Szczucin until the outbreak of the war, i.e., until 1939. The persecutions of the Jews started after the Germans' arrival and there were many victims right from the beginning. All the refugees from the west living in the school building were burned alive because one German had been killed. But there's more.

All the Jews present at that time on the market square were captured, transported outside the city, and buried alive in a prepared ditch. The attitude toward the Jews became more and more hostile. Various regulations were issued, such as the duty to wear the arm bands with the Star of David, the ban on leaving the town, the Jews couldn't use the railway or go to school—forced labor. Moreover, they organized actions against the old and ill and executed them. Finally, there came the order to deport all the Jews from Szczucin and its vicinity to the labor camps and to the ghetto in Dąbrowa. I and my family were aware of the conditions in the ghetto, so we managed to find jobs for us at Baron Konopka's mansion thanks to the help of Pole Prof. Bolesław Sroka. At that time we still worked as Jews. All the Jews who worked with us at the mansion at that time had to live in a common barrack. The conditions were horrible. Eighty people had to fit into the three-room collapsed cottage without a floor. Since the mansion administrators were noble people, they didn't obey that order to the letter and most of the Jews lived outside the barrack.

Prof. Sroka helped us in all situations, thanks to him we got a comfortable apartment and we were allowed to use the vegetables and fruit from the garden. Moreover, Prof. Sroka trusted us to such a degree that he entrusted us with the sale of the produce from the garden. Unfortunately, it lasted just 6 weeks, for then they liquidated most of the labor camps and sent the young, healthy people to die in the gas chambers. Only 6 people were captured from our camp, the rest luckily managed to escape, including us, thanks to Prof. Sroka, who warned us in advance and simply forced us to escape. He sent two of my sisters to his distant relative Michał Sroka, who provided them with hiding for a couple of weeks. Me and my brother and mommy went to the village of "Czarkówka," where we had a property. I went to Franciszek Sołtys, who had a positive attitude toward us after the Germans had taken our property, and when it was really bad and we were in danger of death, he made a sacrifice for us when he hid us risking his and his family's life.

It lasted 2-and-a-half years. In the meantime he also provided hiding to my two sisters and my brother. In the beginning we paid for hiding of our own free will because we had some cash on us. But when we ran out of cash after half a year we

wanted to bring the property which some other peasants stored for us. Because we couldn't go out in the daylight out of fear of recognition, and the watch didn't rest even at night, and the greedy peasants, who wanted to take our property could've given us away to the Germans or murder us at any time, Franciszek Sołtys absolutely forbade us to go out of the hiding and he provided for us even though he was poor. Both he and his family suffered terribly because of us. The police conducted three searches looking for us, because there were also some Poles who spied on us.

We lived normally in the apartment and helped with the housework, we felt as good as in a gold cage, we experienced neither hunger nor cold. In case of danger we ran to the bunker under the pantry floor and that was why all the searches carried out by the Germans were useless. Neither beating nor promising a huge reward for our denunciation affected that noble man.

Out of anger the Germans and the Poles at their service wanted to burn Sołtys's house together with his family. But he didn't yield to the threats and before they managed to carry out their plan came freedom that we had yearned for. Until then even though we could've called ourselves lucky, we frequently experienced some very tough moments and the constant awareness of possible death, not only ours but also our helpers', made us almost lose our minds.

My brother and sister were hiding in Zabrze at Pole Forgiel's. He was also a very righteous, noble man and they owe their lives to him. The worst period came right before the liberation. Our helpers, who were hiding us, lived in a frontline zone and were deported. It was a terrible blow to us, because we ended up without any protection. And here I want to remark on our landlord Sołtys's great sacrifice; he had the courage to officially recognize us (me and my sister) as his relatives in an apartment located in the same district and occupied by three Germans. We could have been recognized and killed on the spot with Sołtys at any moment. But he was determined to execute his will until the end and he didn't fear even the most horrible tortures.

Prof. Sroka placed my other sister at his friends' in Świebodzin at Czupryna's, where she stayed until the liberation. She too had good conditions there.

During the deportation of the Poles from the front-line zone my brother was in Oleśno at Pole Leś's. He, and especially his mother, were very noble, and they took care of my brother until the liberation as if he had been their son.

Moreover, Prof. Sroka rescued other Jews as well. He provided us with food and money, despite the fact that we had nothing to claim from him.

Fela Grün

Kraków, 12 June 1946.

Source: AŻIH, 301/1571.

12. Testimony of Aleksander Kampf from Dąbrowa Tarnowska

Transcribed by M. Holender

Aleksander Kampf, born on December 27, 1884 in Ujście Jezuickie, Dąbrowa district. Tarnów. Occupation: farmer. Before the war until 1939 lived in Ujście Jezuickie. Now in Tarnów, Jewish Committee, Goldhamer Street no. 1. Spent the occupation in Russia. Lost his wife and children.

Bińczycki, a Nazi criminal. It is a former “blue” policeman, Piotr Bińczycki, who worked at the station in Łopatowiec [Opatowiec], Pińczów district. My wife and our three children were hiding in Kraśniów in Stanisław Deszcz’s barn. On the night of April 12, 1943 at night Binczycki stormed into the barn with two policemen and took out my wife and the children without any order of the station commander. He shot the wife on the spot and took the children to the station where he tortured them the whole day and the whole night and shot them the next day. He was by far more cruel than the German SS-men. Two days earlier he shot a young girl, 18-year-old Ruchla Koplik, from the distance of 30 steps on the road from Łopatowice [Opatowiec] to Kraśniów. He killed a certain Rogosz (a Pole) from the village of Pietrowice and other Poles as well.

I have recently found out that he now works for the [State] Security in Kraków. I don’t know exactly where. The inhabitants of Łopatów [Opatów], the eyewitnesses of the crimes he committed, told me about it. The names of the witnesses: Stanisław Deszcz, who provided shelter to my wife, domiciled in Kraśniów; Eugeniusz Miniur, domiciled in Kraków; and the Łopatów intelligentsia, who did not want to disclose their names, but if need arises I will give their surnames upon the court’s request. I don’t know Piotr Bińczycki personally, because I was in Russia during the German occupation.

Aleksander Kampf

Kraków, July 24, 1946.

Source: AŻIH, 301/1908.

13. Testimony of Cyla Braw from Dulcza Wielka

The minutes taken in the Prov[incial] Jew[ish] Hist[orical]
Comm[ission] in Kraków in February 1947.

Cyla Braw (born on February 2, 1935 in Dulcza Wielka, in the district of Dąbrowa near Tarnów). During the war she lost her father and 3 brothers: 13, 14, and 15 years old. Lived in Dulcza Wielka before the war, currently in Kraków, Sebastiana Street no. 27, apartment 9, second floor. Mother: Regina Braw, father's name Chaim, he was a forest ranger.

After the war broke out daddy went on a bicycle to Lvov, but he came back after 3 months. The Germans were already in the village and they were billeted in our apartment and in the barn. We had 4 rooms and a big barn, so they had enough space and they also put up shanties, some canvas tarpaulin tents in the yard. They did us no harm, they only took all of the hay for their horses and we had nothing left for our cattle. When daddy came back, the Germans were already gone, because they went to Radomyśl Wielki and they only shoed up from time to time, they looked into the closets, once they took some juice and they berated us for being Jewish. Once they took the only horse we had. In the summer of 1940 they arrived out of the blue and at first they went to our neighbor Grünzweig, who had a big barn. They gave him one day to move out with his entire family and everything. He gave some of his things to his neighbors, because he couldn't take [them] himself. A little later our female neighbor came to us and said that Grünzweig had been deported and that they might come to [take us] us as well. Mommy got scared and ordered the brothers to take the poultry and cattle out of the house and take them to the neighbors who were on friendly terms with daddy. Soon afterwards the Germans came but daddy had left the house earlier because he was afraid. The Germans walked around the house and asked where was daddy and where everything from the stable had gone. Mommy said that daddy was at our friends', and that the livestock had been sold during daddy's absence. Then the Germans told us to get out of the house: that they'd come in an hour and a half to see if everything had been taken. And that we'd lose everything we had left behind. Daddy came back right away and we all began packing anything we could as quickly as possible. We took out whatever we could and the neighbors were helping us, and so we left the empty apartment and we distributed everything among the neighbors and we went to farmer Ziobronka, who willingly took us in, for we had always been friends with him. Soon afterwards the Germans arrived, looked around the house and took off again, and daddy went to Radomyśl Wielki and rented an apartment there. My mommy was crying when we were leaving the village and I felt blue as well, because we had a yard where I could play and [here] I had good girlfriends; I didn't want to leave.

But we soon got used to Radomyśl, our acquaintances lived next to us and

my parents found a teacher who came to us and gave lessons to my brothers and me. We stayed a year there and we were fine, daddy traded, for he sold cattle and everything from the farm and bought some material, and the commune head from our village bought a lot. The Jews were forbidden to trade and daddy had to do it secretly under threat of a death penalty. They captured a Jew who was walking along the street with some merchandise, and they shot him on the street. Once I was alone at home with my brothers, because our parents weren't at home, and Jewish policemen came and took the quilts. When mommy came home we told her what had happened. Then mommy went to the police and they said that they needed precisely that kind of a duvet for their German superintendent. But mommy told them to give it back because we had nothing to cover ourselves with and they had to give it back.

In summer of 1941 on Saturday,⁷ I cannot recall the month, there was a commotion in town, there were rumors about an upcoming attack on the Jews, a deportation, because the Germans had told some people [about it]. We were having a walk just then. So we came back home and mommy told my oldest brother to take out the most valuable things, the quilts, the dresses and other [things] to friendly peasants. My brother went there, even though it was Saturday, and when he came back, he said that they were saying that they'd spare the lives of the Jews who had neat and clean apartments. And so mommy and my middle brother cleaned the whole place up, and the brothers, daddy, and me went to the field and hid in the rye. In the meantime, the brother who was with mommy went to town but came back running right away and told mommy that the Germans were already in the town and that they surrounded the town and were catching the Jews. Mommy took a peasant's blanket, covered herself with it and left the town with my little brother. They came to us to the field and told us that [Germans] were already deporting the Jews. We walked to Mała Dulcza to farmer Zawada and we stayed there the whole Sunday. My parents gave him some money, but then he was afraid and the next day he told us to leave because one could hear shots being fired. The people were saying that they were shooting the Jews in Radomyśl, so we went to Dąbrowa Tarnowska. There was my daddy's mother, my grandmother from Luszowice with uncle Romek Braw, and we went to [stay with] them. On the way the peasants told us not to go [to Dąbrowa] because the same thing would happen there too. Mommy didn't want to go but daddy wanted to and we all went and moved in with my grandmother.

We went on Monday, and on Friday at 5 in the morning the Germans surrounded the town [Dąbrowa] again. In the apartment where we were, there were 25 of us, daddy's family and some acquaintances in one room. We all slept on the floor. In the morning the Germans began shooting next to our house and we got so scared that I put on my dress and coat inside out in the darkness and I ran down the stairs. Nobody waited for anyone and I dashed to the cemetery. They captured daddy and 2 brothers right away when they were running down the stairs, and grandma was shot while she was walking down the stairs. Mommy

escaped when the Germans weren't looking because they stopped paying attention for a moment.

Mommy also came running to the cemetery [which was] next to our house.

When I was still alone at the cemetery, I saw two young ladies from our apartment—daddy's cousins with a small child, who went to give themselves up. And since I didn't see mommy or anybody from our family, I went with them to surrender as well. In the meantime I saw mommy running. Mom didn't see me but I ran after my mommy and caught up with her in the field when she was running toward the rye. We went into the rye, there was her, mommy's brother and his two little sons and the youngest brother. But a German spotted us, he called "*Halt*, stop," began firing and shot me in the arm and in the back. I didn't feel the bullet entering, but I collapsed. I called, "Mommy, help me," but mommy didn't look back, so I stood up and started running. The German shot twice, he caught mommy's brother and his little sons, and I ran after my mother to the cemetery and we hid behind a *maceva*.⁸ My uncle's son freed himself and ran to us, but the German, who spotted my little brother, shot at him and killed him. The uncle and his [other] son were taken to the market square and he went with the transport then.

There was a terrible fusillade. When it subsided, mommy helped me and my younger cousin up the fence and we ran to the field and mommy stayed behind for a while. After we dashed across the road we saw a Polish policeman but he didn't do anything to us. We ran across the field and we met a farmer whom we knew and he asked what had happened to me because he could see that I was covered in blood. I asked him to let me into the stable, but he said, "No, because they might slaughter my children." And he didn't even let me cross his yard. So I ran around it followed by my little cousin. He was only 5 years old, but he was already a brave boy. We sat on a charred piece of wood in the rye and soon my mom came running to us. It was already quiet then and it was all over in the town. Almost the entire town died then. Only the hidden ones survived. On the way to the forest, there was a peasant grazing a cow and when he saw us he cried, "Catch the Jews!" We started running and we fled into a forest. There we met two young ladies whom we knew, and who had a blanket and they wrapped it around me. I was bleeding, but we came back home that day and mom took me to a doctor, because she couldn't take the dress off me to clean the wound because the cloth got stuck to the wound. The doctor cleaned the wound, it hurt a lot, he put a bandage and it took a long time for [the wound] to heal. I couldn't lie on my side or on my back for half a year.

We were in Dąbrowa for 3 weeks, and my little cousin found his mommy, who was released because she didn't look Jewish and they thought she was a Catholic. Mommy made and sold soap and that's how she supported us. Two days before the second action there was a commotion and that time mommy didn't wait but simply took the most necessary things and we went to Polaniec. We stayed there for 2 weeks at some Jews who hadn't been deported, but there were rumors about an upcoming action there too, so mommy took our stuff and we went to our

village to Mała Dulcza, to farmer Zawada. He was nice to us, we gave him some of our things and we stayed in his barn for half a year. We sometimes went to the apartment at night and lay in the deck chair but mommy was afraid and we usually slept on the hay in the barn. My wound hurt a lot but in the end it healed. By that time the hunts for the Jews began in the village and people were saying that those who sheltered the Jews would be executed, so the farmer got scared and told us to leave.

And so, in 1942, we went to the forest, even though it was already winter. The man who had already been in the forest with my father and brother and who had an underground bunker came to get us. There was straw on the ground and we lay on it. The very next day there was a hunt, we heard the Germans walking, shouting, shooting. There were lots of Jews in the forest and the Germans killed them on the spot. But they didn't find our shelter, we only got very scared. Once all was quiet again, we returned to the peasants, who gave us something to eat, but we [had] to come back to the shelter. There were hunts twice a week, but our shelter was not discovered. We lay there the whole day and did nothing. We had nothing to light the shelter with, and after [illegible, probably after sunset—J. G.] mommy and one man went out [to look] for food, which they bought from the peasants. There were forty-eight Jews not far away from us, with whom we were in touch, and the boys who were there had machine guns. When there was nothing to eat, some people went out and stole, because they no longer had money to buy anything and they had nothing left [to eat].

When the Russians were getting close, the Germans were in retreat and they surrounded the forest on 3 sides. We couldn't get out of the forest and we ate [only] potatoes. We cooked at night, sat in the shelter during the day and so it went for 3 months. There were [man]hunts every day and once the Germans caught 18 people whom we knew. Then we decided to leave the shelter and cross the front lines. We left one day later, during the night. We went past the first trench and we made it. We were equally lucky the second time. But the third time the Germans began shouting, "*Halt*, stop!" We had agreed in advance that if they started shouting, we'd shout, "Hurray, away with Hitler." We did so and the Germans got scared because they thought we were partisans, but actually it was [just] a handful of Jews and the Germans let us go—they ran away as we crossed over [the third line of trenches]. Our boys began throwing the grenades which they took from a plane that crashed in the forest. Then the Germans illuminated the forest with a flare and when they saw that it was a handful of Jews, they began firing at us from 3 directions, and the Russians were shooting from the 4th direction, because they thought that they were shooting at the Germans. Many of us died then, some were ripped apart by mines; 25 of us got out of the forest, and 20 died.

We began shouting in Russian, "Don't shoot" and the Russians heard it, came to our rescue and bandaged the wounded and took them to the hospital. One Russian went to rescue a woman and a mine ripped his leg up to the knee. I went with mommy to Mała Dulcza to school, where the Russians were stationed; they gave

us something to eat but the Germans were all around us. They sent us further back and we arrived at a safe place where there were no Germans. The Russians kept us there for 3 weeks and [then] let us go.

Braw Cyla

Source: AŽIH, 301/2342.

14. *Testimony of Giza Beller (Landau)*

Transcribed by Mariańska

Interview no. 2. Giza Beller (Landau), born on June 5, 1932 in Tarnów (her father owned an umbrella factory)

When the war broke out I was with mommy and daddy in Gdynia. The very first day, or even a day before that, mommy took me and some things to my grandma, to Dąbrowa Tarnowska. People said that the war would last only a month and that we'd return to Gdynia. Mommy wanted to go back herself but it was no longer possible. Daddy came to us after a few weeks, because he didn't want to stay with the Germans and he went to the Russians, to Lvov. Then mommy went to [Nowy] Sącz, because daddy's parents had an umbrella factory there and they went to the Russian side as well, so mommy ran the factory, and I stayed at my grandma and granddad's in Dąbrowa. I cannot recall anything else happening, I was fine. But then one day they said that there would be a registration and that everybody was to go to the market square. It was during the deportation of the Jews from Tarnów (June 1942—int[erviewer's] note). There was much crying on the market square, they were shooting at the people and saying that they'd deport us. I ran away then. I saw others run away as well, but my granddad and granny were old, so they couldn't run. I was wearing a green coat, so I lay on the grass and one couldn't see me at all. Then I walked and walked and I came to a forest. I stayed for a long time in the forest, I don't know exactly, but I know that [I stayed there] for the night. Then I met a Jewish girl, who told me that it was already all quiet in Dąbrowa. So I went back. Granddad and granny were already gone and the apartment was sealed, the only one left was my aunt who also hid from the deportation. That aunt sent a cable to mommy to [Nowy] Sącz, but we couldn't write the truth, we only wrote that granddad and granny went to a sanatorium. Then mommy sent a certain lady, an "Aryan" woman, for me and she took me to Sącz.

Mommy ran the umbrella factory in Sącz and various Germans came to mommy. One of them was named Haman⁹ and another Johan, they were the worst of them all. When that Johan captured a Jew, he scrubbed him with a brush so hard that the skin came off, or he set his beard on fire and didn't let him put it out until the man was all burnt, or he set the dogs on him until they killed him. Once Haman told my mommy that if there were a deportation she shouldn't be afraid because she was needed and she'd stay. Mommy asked—and what about the child?—and he said that he didn't know about it. Then mommy knew everything and she decided not to go [to be deported], but to hide instead. We had a shelter in the attic and when they came to tell us that the next day everybody was to show up for the registration, we hid in the attic—me, mommy, and an old man with an old woman. We took some food and water to drink. We stayed there for 9 days. One man, mommy's Polish acquaintance, was to let us know what was happening.

Mommy arranged it with him that he'd put a letter in a certain place in the garden and mommy would go downstairs and take it at night. The letter said that all the Jews were either shot or deported and that Sącz was to be *Judenrein*. And that they would walk around and search the homes. My mommy knew [then] that we couldn't stay there any longer, because they'd surely find us.

The day after the deportation, when the Germans were drinking, we all came down. Mommy changed those old people's appearance a bit, she herself dressed as city lady, and she covered one of my eyes and we went like that to the church and mommy asked a priest she knew to buy us train tickets to Tarnów, which he did. We went separately to the station, at first mommy, then me, and then those old people.

On the way to the station mommy recognized a German woman from the SS, who had bought an umbrella from us. She recognized mommy right away, even though mommy was disguised and she followed us to the station. She approached mommy and asked mommy what right did mommy have to be here. Then mommy gave her 500 zlotys and asked her to have mercy and to leave us alone. Then we went into a [train] compartment for the Germans because mommy thought that if that German woman were to look for us, then she surely wouldn't look for her in the compartment reserved for the Germans. During the train ride mommy told me that if they took her [away] I wouldn't reveal that we were together, I was to get off in Tarnów instead and try to reach my uncle in the ghetto. Luckily we got to Tarnów, but on the street they caught the old woman, who came with us, and a couple of days later we found out that she had been executed. In Tarnów a lady we knew helped us get to the ghetto, but few days later there was a deportation. We hid together with the uncle and his little child, and the aunt ran to the square to get the stamp, because one couldn't stay without the stamp. She went and never came back. The uncle waited and waited and when he saw that she wasn't coming back, he said that he didn't want to stay alone with the child and he went to the square as well. They deported them. After that deportation mommy registered for work under uncle's surname of Beller—it was mommy's maiden name and it remained so. We went to work outside the ghetto to saddler Lacina, but we weren't entirely legal, because mommy couldn't get accommodation in the ghetto, there, where the [Jewish] workers were housed.

Another deportation came. They said it was only a lockdown in the barracks, but mommy never believed in such things and she always hid with me. Early in the morning we were woken up by the shouts of OD-men, and everybody went to the square. We wanted to get to the bunker in ghetto "B"¹⁰ but we didn't manage. The people on the square knelt with their heads turned to the ground. We hid in the basement and it was a very bad hideout, luckily they didn't find us. Polish boys from *Baudienst* were looking [for the Jews].

After that deportation we went to ghetto "B"—where the workers were, but it didn't last long and another deportation [came]. We had nowhere to hide and ev-

everybody tried to convince mommy that it would be a bad decision to hide, because all the workers would be put in a barrack and we would stay behind. We went to the square because that time mommy believed [it]. But on the square they put us in the group of those unable to work from ghetto A and then mommy knew that it was bad, that they would deport us or execute us with the others. We ran away from the square at the last moment and we hid in an apartment. There was a place for dried wood, and behind further back there was a bigger hole with just enough space for two persons. We had nothing to eat, we had just a bucket of water to drink. We sat there one, two, three days and nobody came. I got jaundice out of hunger, and kept vomiting. We sat like that for 9 days, I don't know how it was possible to go so long without food, I know that I was totally unconscious and when we went out I was unable to stand on my own. One time we heard some footsteps, it was a Jew, who collected eiderdowns from all the apartments and brought them to a storehouse. He gave us some pillows to carry and that was how we joined the people who had remained. There were no more than 300 Jews left in Tarnów, the rest had been deported and executed. They told us about the executions in the cemetery, they ordered the people to strip naked and climb the trees and they shot them like that, just for fun.

We collected all the things from the Jewish apartments in one place and sorted them and packed into parcels which were sent to Germany. Out of those 300 people they sent two transports to the camps in Szebnia and Pustkowie, but we hid each time. One hundred and fifty people remained and we worked cleaning the ghetto and sorting the things. There were more and more victims. There was Gestapo functionary Grunow, known in Tarnów, he shot all the Jews who were caught hiding. And so if he found money or gold on somebody, he'd shoot that person. Once he discovered a group of people who wanted to run away and they were hanged. Those were: Fast with his wife, Sternlicht with his wife and children, Stub with his wife and children, and one more lady with a child. I saw them being driven to the hanging. Later the witnesses said, that they asked for the children not to be hanged and they agreed and shot the children and one very fat lady. The rest were hanged from a balcony on the fourth floor and [their bodies were] burned afterward.

Mommy was trying to convince me to go to the "Aryan" side, but I didn't want to, I had a feeling that they'd catch us, and I wanted to go with the others if we had to. One day they packed us into a car and drove us to the camp in Płaszów near Kraków, it was in October of 1943. We were very badly received in the camp. I don't know why everybody was so unfriendly toward the people from Tarnów. There was Jewish commandant Chilowicz with his wife; Finkelstein and some other people. They called us the worst names and during the roll call they went like—hit the dirt! on your feet! in the mud and water. At first, I worked with mommy operating a wheelbarrow, we transported soil to the road. Then we went to cutters' shop (*Grossschneiderei*) and we repaired the [German] uniforms. We went to work next

to a “hill,” where they shot people and burned them at the stakes. There were executions all the time, they brought the people from the city captured with “Aryan” papers, there were lots of children among them.

On May 14, 1944 there was a roll call of the whole camp and they began reading a list of all the children’s names. It was obvious what it was about, the children were useless, just like the elderly or the sick and they had to be shot. When they read out my name, mommy didn’t want to let me go, but one couldn’t hide because they followed the numbers. I stepped out and mommy went with me. Gestapo officer Müller pushed mommy away and said, not you, you can still work. Mommy was totally frantic, but she decided to save me, as she always did. I was standing on the far end of the children’s row, and mommy ran along the entire row and wanted to get to me. And there were two Jewish policemen—Kerner and Marcel Goldberg—the worst ones in the camp. I don’t know how it happened but they let mommy go, one of them turned a blind eye and the other one said: “It’ll be too late in a moment.” Then mommy got to me, caught me by the coat, and snatched me back into the file. That’s how mommy rescued me yet again. In that transport they took all the children, the sick, and the elderly. A couple of children hid in the latrine. One child slipped underneath the car and the car drove away and the child survived. Some mothers went to die with their children but some weren’t allowed to. One mother went to die, because she thought that her child had been deported but actually it hadn’t. It was a horrible day in the camp. The speakers were on so as to drown out the mothers’ crying, the whole camp trembled with the shouting. The mothers were told to sit with their back turned away [from the selection area], so they couldn’t watch their children being deported. The next day Mrs. Chilowicz walked around during the roll call to see if any of the children had remained, she was very angry about it. Mommy put high-top boots on my feet, curled up my hair so that I’d look more adult and she told me to stand among short women so that I wouldn’t look like a child. That way I stayed in the camp and I worked at tailoring. I avoided showing myself to the Germans however I could. In July we managed to get out of a transport, already from the station, because there weren’t enough cars. Then Chilowicz, his wife, and a few others were shot and they laid their corpses by the latrine. The roll call was at 1 in the afternoon and everybody had to walk by and watch them and read that they were shot because they had a gun and wanted to escape. When the German commandant of the camp, Goeth, arrived on a horse, there were always some victims. The people trembled with fear at the sight of him; he was a very beautiful man but a criminal.

On October 21, 1944 we could no longer do anything, we went to a transport to Auschwitz. We drove in locked cars, terribly crowded and stuffy. We bid our farewells to everybody, because we knew that the stoves and gas chambers were waiting for us. Even though we spoke about it so often nobody could imagine how it would be. We arrived at the Auschwitz station in the evening and they immediately drove us to Birkenau. The sky was red in the distance, as if on fire. I couldn’t believe that those were people burning, I had seen a lot before that but it was dif-

ficult to believe something like that [could happen]. It was not smoke but fire that was coming out of the chimneys. The people were asking the guards (*Posten*), what was burning, and they said that it was bread being baked day and night. But we knew that it wasn't true. We sat in a big hall at night. It was so horrible that I can't describe it. Some people were crying, others were praying, others were swearing and still others sat totally indifferent; they didn't care anymore. Mommy was holding me tight and asked me not to be afraid, [she said] that God would certainly help us and we'd be saved, as always before. But I only pretended that I wasn't scared, because I didn't want to worry mommy, because I was terribly afraid and my whole body was trembling. They didn't give us any food, but I didn't feel hunger at all. Besides, there was no point in eating since we were going to die anyway. Then a selection started and that was the worst. Because everybody had to strip naked and doctor Mengele stood in the door and separated those who were to live from those who were to die. All the children were to die. Then mommy started begging a supervisor, a Czech woman, not to give me away and I hid under a heap of clothes in the corner of the room. Some older girls were hidden there too. I lay there for over 2 hours, I could feel somebody walking on my stomach, I did everything I could so as not to scream. They were checking if somebody was hidden there but they didn't find me. I was half-suffocated when mommy took me out of there. But I was alive and I was with mommy again. Then they washed us and shaved our heads and tattooed a number. Mine was A 26098. They said that if you had a number then it was OK, but the children frequently underwent selections and went to the gas chamber. Mommy kept hiding me, even from the bloc leader. During the roll calls she told me to stand there where I wouldn't attract attention. Generally, mommy was focused only how to hide me and how to save me. We had to live in constant fear and uncertainty—day and night. Finally they transferred us to Auschwitz and then we could sigh with certain relief. At first, I worked operating a wheelbarrow, together with mommy, and them commandant Höslér ordered me to stand at the gate and open it for the dignitaries. I was fine then. We got one-fourth of a loaf of bread a day and $\frac{1}{4}$ liter of soup and sometimes even $\frac{1}{2}$ liter. The most important thing was not the food but the fact that there were no chimneys or gas chambers.

And so it lasted until January 5, 1945, [when] the evacuation of the camp started. We were arranged into rows and given a loaf of bread and a piece of margarine and we were driven in great haste. The Russians must've been very close for the Germans were in a great hurry. We couldn't stop even for a moment, either in the daytime or at night. They fired right away when somebody bended to adjust one's shoes or to catch one's breath or when one was too weak to walk. We took the back roads and marched through a forest and in the snow. There were corpses lying, or even sitting, everywhere. I tried not to look, but you couldn't pass them [without looking]. After two days they put us into open cars. There was neither food nor water. When we ran out of bread, we ate snow. Nobody believed anymore that we'd survive.

We arrived at Ravensbrück. It was a women's camp. Thirty women slept on one berth, without a cover. There were diseases and hunger and dirt. People were dropping off like flies. They transferred us to Neustadt. We spent 2 and ½ days in the open cars. We threw out the corpses onto the snow and they lay there. Nobody resembled a human being any more. I could hardly see anything, mommy too looked like a corpse. They herded us into a stable, we lay in the hay, there was neither water to drink nor anything to cover ourselves with. I really wanted to die, but mommy begged me to hold on a little longer. They distributed coffee and pieces of bread, but one had to struggle to get to the pot. I don't know from where mommy took the strength to get some food for me. There was one chief Kapo (*Lagerälteste*), who hated Jews, she stole all our soup and beat the people up like a bandit. The women were dying in great numbers, there was typhus and *durchfall* (diarrhea). We stayed there until May 2nd, and each day there were fewer of us. Then they locked us down and they boarded up the doors and windows, and we all sat inside and everybody thought that they'd blow us up or burn us. But they didn't manage because the Americans arrived and they released us. At first, I couldn't believe that we weren't in any danger. But they started giving us food, lots of chocolate and then I realized that the war was over.

We partly walked, partly drove home. Then mommy went to Sącz and Gdynia to get the factory back and to look for daddy, because somebody said that he had survived. I am now in an institution in Zakopane and I'm going to school. I would like to forget about those camps but I cannot, because other children had also been through a lot and they are constantly talking about it.

Zakopane 20 October 1945.

Source: *AŻIH*, 301/2040.

Table 6. County Dąbrowa Tarnowska (1921)—Polish and Jewish Population

| Name | Population (total) | Population of Mosaic Faith |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| A. Court District Dąbrowa | | |
| Dąbrowa (county) | 63,711 | 4,815 |
| Dąbrowa (city) | 2,660 | 1,306 |
| Bagienica | 1,449 | 118 |
| Bolesław | 657 | 74 |
| Brnik | 650 | 37 |
| Brzezówka | 570 | 21 |
| Delastowice | 393 | 11 |
| Dąbrówki Brneńskie | 709 | 13 |
| Grądy | 742 | 29 |
| Gruszów Wielki | 1251 | 17 |

Table 6. *continued*

| Name | Population (total) | Population of Mosaic Faith |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Lipiny | 449 | 11 |
| Luszwice | 1649 | 68 |
| Łęka Szczucińska | 376 | 13 |
| Małec | 574 | 31 |
| Mędrzechów | 1151 | 36 |
| Oleśno | 764 | 52 |
| Podborze | 457 | 12 |
| Podkościele | 655 | 69 |
| Radgoszcz | 3322 | 188 |
| Radwan | 844 | 28 |
| Ruda-Zazamcze | 734 | 34 |
| Samocice | 1067 | 23 |
| Skrzynka | 640 | 47 |
| Słupiec | 1095 | 31 |
| Szczucin (miasto) | 1358 | 491 |
| B. Żabno Court District | | |
| Żabno | 1228 | 361 |
| Bieniaszowice | 330 | 21 |
| Biskupice | 291 | 26 |
| Borusowa | 534 | 35 |
| Czyżów | 106 | 29 |
| Demblin | 538 | 34 |
| Gręboszów | 557 | 22 |
| Jadowniki Mokre | 1324 | 29 |
| Karsy | 429 | 54 |
| Kłyż | 517 | 21 |
| Lubiczko | 415 | 13 |
| Miechowice Małe | 589 | 22 |
| Miechowice Wielkie | 756 | 15 |
| Nieciecza | 703 | 11 |
| Otfinów | 793 | 30 |
| Pierszyce | 213 | 16 |
| Pilcza Żelichowska | 559 | 33 |
| Siedliszowice | 814 | 23 |
| Targowisko | 274 | 25 |
| Ujście Jezuickie | 438 | 37 |
| Wietrzychowice | 643 | 71 |
| Żelichów | 513 | 36 |

Table 7. Jews Who Survived the War Hidden on the Territory of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County

| | Name | Place of Hiding | Comments |
|----|----------------------------|--|--|
| 1 | Samuel Metzger | Dąbrowa Tarnowska County | Son of Mojzesz and Hana b. September 10, 1910 in Brnik |
| 2 | Adler Rand | Dąbrowa Tarnowska | |
| 3 | Chaim Metzger | no data/county | After the war living in Tarnów, Goldhamera 3 |
| 4 | Beniek Grün | Radgoszcz/ the Grün family hides at Franciszek Sołtys' place | Born in 1912 |
| 5 | Fela Grün | Radgoszcz commune | |
| 6 | Regina Grün | Radgoszcz commune | |
| 7 | Karolina Grün | Radgoszcz commune | |
| 8 | Dawid Wassersturm | In the forests | Born in 1932 |
| 9 | Dawid Wassersturm's sister | In the forests | |
| 10 | Abram Weit | Gruszów Wielki, in the farm of Stanisław and Zofia Pagos | Rescuers decorated as Righteous Among Nations |
| 11 | Avigdor Weit | Gruszów Wielki, hiding at Stanisława and Zofia Pagos's house | |
| 12 | Fiszel Drelich | Hidden in Augustyniak's(?) house | After the war working in prosecutors' office(?) |
| 13 | Salomon Goldberg | For some time hiding together with Fiszel Drelich | |
| 14 | Herman Weizer | First, hidden in the farm of Mr. Siutaj, in Dąbrowica Betrayed, he escaped, but his family was killed Later he lived in bunkers, in the forest | |
| 15 | Roman Braw | Hidden in the forests, between Radgoszcz and Dulcza | |

| | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---|--|
| 16 | Cyla Braw | Hidden in the forests, between Radgoszcz and Dulcza | Born on February 2, 1935 in Dulcza Wielka |
| 17 | Berta Millet | Hidden in Dąbrowa | |
| 18 | Moser Wolfowicz | Hidden in Dąbrowa | |
| 19 | Marcin (Markus) Adler | Hidden in Dąbrowa | |
| 20 | Salo Lederberger | 20–26—Jews from Żabno, hidden in the house of Piotr Heleniak and Helena Heleniak-Kaczmarek, in Ujście Jezuickie | Rescuers decorated as Righteous Among Nations |
| 21 | Izak Ferderber | Jews from Żabno, hidden in the house of Piotr Heleniak and Helena Heleniak-Kaczmarek, in Ujście Jezuickie | Rescuers decorated as Righteous Among Nations |
| 22 | Jakub Kalb | Jews from Żabno, hidden in the house of Piotr Heleniak and Helena Heleniak-Kaczmarek, in Ujście Jezuickie | Rescuers decorated as Righteous Among Nations |
| 23 | Eleonora Wolf | Jews from Żabno, hidden in the house of Piotr Heleniak and Helena Heleniak-Kaczmarek, in Ujście Jezuickie | Rescuers decorated as Righteous Among Nations |
| 24 | Dorota Wolf | Jews from Żabno, hidden in the house of Piotr Heleniak and Helena Heleniak-Kaczmarek, in Ujście Jezuickie | Rescuers decorated as Righteous Among Nations |
| 25 | Genia Wolf | Jews from Żabno, hidden in the house of Piotr Heleniak and Helena Heleniak-Kaczmarek, in Ujście Jezuickie | |
| 26 | Tobcia Wolf | Jews from Żabno, hidden in the house of Piotr Heleniak and Helena Heleniak-Kaczmarek, in Ujście Jezuickie | |
| 27 | Izaak Scherman, | 27–30—Hidden in village of Kanna, in the house of Stanisław and Maria Kaczówka | Rescuers decorated as Righteous Among Nations in 1992 |
| 28 | Sister of Etki Scherman | Hidden in village of Kanna, in the house of Stanisław and Maria Kaczówka | |
| 29 | Etki Scherman (wife of Izaak) | Hidden in village of Kanna, in the house of Stanisław and Maria Kaczówka | |

Table 7. *continued*

| | Name | Place of Hiding | Comments |
|----|-----------------------------|---|--|
| 30 | Sara Ziss | Hidden in village of Kanna, in the house of Stanisław and Maria Kaczówka | |
| 31 | Fajga (Franciszka) Kryształ | Hidden in Gorczyce; she later married one of her rescuers, and stayed after the war in Poland | Feliks Swierczek, the rescuer, decorated as Righteous Among Nations |
| 32 | Aron Werker | After the liquidation of Dąbrowa ghetto—hiding in the forests | BAL, B 162\2166 k. 4323 |
| 33 | Michał Pinkas | Worked for peasants tending the cattle | Born in 1931 |
| 34 | Rosa Weit | In Radgoszcz(?) | |
| 35 | Chaskel Gruszow | In Dąbrowa | |
| 36 | Gruszow's mother | In Dąbrowa | |
| 37 | Hersz Buch | Until February 1944 in the liquidated Tarnów ghetto | February 1944—January 1945 lived under assumed identity in Oleśno and Adamierz, close to Dąbrowa |
| 38 | Cesia Holzer | From Tarnów. She was hiding together with Hersz Buch | YVA O3/2865 |
| 39 | Manek Kehl | In village of Skrzyńka | The rescuer, Ewa Zajęc, has been recognized as Righteous Among Nations |
| 40 | Sara Kehl | In village of Skrzyńka | The rescuer, Ewa Zajęc, has been recognized as Righteous Among Nations |
| 41 | Samuel Weiser | In village of Skrzyńka | The rescuer, Ewa Zajęc, has been recognized as Righteous Among Nations |
| 42 | Rae Weitz b. Goldman | Born in Żabno, hiding in several places, mostly in village Sieradza | Born in 1925, Spielberg archive [40783] |

| | | | |
|----|---|---|---|
| 43 | Ann Shore, b. Goldman | Born in Żabno, hiding in several places, mostly in village Sieradza | Born in 1929, Spielberg Archive [39906] |
| 44 | Goldman, mother of Rae Weitz and Anne Shore | Born in Żabno, hiding in several places, mostly in village Sieradza | mentioned in the VHF accounts left by her daughters |
| 45 | Izrael Isaac | In Tarnów until late 1942, later hidden in Ruda Zazamcze | Hidden in the house of Franciszek Borsa |
| 46 | Melania Weissenberg | Until September 18, 1942 in Dąbrowa Tarnowska ghetto | Hidden in Dąbrowa, on a farm of Wiktor Wójcik and Emilia Kułaga. Both hosts recognized as Righteous |
| 47 | Helena Aschheim | Until September 18, 1942 in Dąbrowa Tarnowska ghetto | Hidden on a farm of Wiktor Wójcik and Emilia Kułaga. Both hosts recognized as Righteous |
| 48 | Majer Künstlich [Adam Merc] | Born in Jadowniki (1932?) | Hidden at Józefa and Józef Gibes' farm in Jadowniki Mokre. See the testimony of Adam Merc, VHF 36249-42 |
| 49 | Weronika Künstlich | Born in a hideout at Gibes farm in April 1943 | Child left by the parents with the Szatan family in Jadowniki |
| 50 | Dora Künstlich | | Killed in Tarnów, February 1946 |
| 51 | Jakub Künstlich | | Killed in Brzesko [Wietrzychowice?] 1945/46 |

**Table 8. Dąbrowa Jews Who Survived the War Outside Dąbrowa Tarnowska County
(Based on War and Postwar Court Documentation)**

The table below lists Dąbrowa Jews who survived the war outside Dąbrowa County. These people most frequently stayed in the Dąbrowa area until the liquidation of the ghettos in the summer of 1942. They later fled the county and—after the war—testified in Polish and German courts against the Germans and Poles accused of crimes against the Jews.

| Name | Place of Hiding | Comments |
|--|---|--|
| 1 Pinkas Drelich | Survived in the Soviet Union | July 1, 1946 reported in Tarnów |
| 2 Adela Gold | Until the liquidation in Dąbrowa. Later—no data available | |
| 3 Kalman Adler | in the Soviet Union | He came back to Dąbrowa in 1945 and exhumed the bodies of his two cousins [“cousin Lewi and her husband”] killed by local peasants |
| 4 Saul Schochar | No data | In 1946 reported in Tarnów |
| 5 Awigdor Kahane | | Came back to Dąbrowa in 1945 |
| 6 Izaak Stieglitz | Survived in the camps | |
| 7 Władysław Biernat (real name: Dawid Kogel) | Survived in the camps | Son of Mendel Kogel. Returning from the camps he started to inquire about his father’s death |
| 8 Aleksander Ciepiela—son of Mendel Kogel | Survived Auschwitz | Son of Mendel Kogel. Upon returning from the camps he started to inquire about his father’s death |
| 9 Alter Milet | Until fall 1942 in Dąbrowa, later—in the camps | B 162\2165 k. 4038—deposited on 8.4.1946 in Dąbrowa |
| 10 Jehuda Schindel | No data | After the war in Israel |
| 11 Leon Schindel | No data | After the war in Israel |
| 12 Zelig Ben-Schai (Fischer) | No data | After the war in Israel |

| | | | |
|----|----------------------------|---|--|
| 13 | Lea Wolmann | No data | After the war in Israel |
| 14 | Szymon Mandel | Until 1942 in Dąbrowa | After the war in Israel |
| 15 | Jakob Werker | Until 1942 in Dąbrowa | After the war in Israel |
| 16 | Abraham Braw | In Dąbrowa ghetto, he escaped from a death train on the way to Bełżec | Born in Łuszwice; after the war in Israel |
| 17 | Anker Jecheskiel | Survived as slave laborer. Later, in Mielec labor camp | Merchant from Dąbrowa Tarnowska, YVA, 03\2227 |
| 18 | Mordechaj Gelz | In Dąbrowa ghetto until its liquidation Later—outside the county | Born in Dąbrowa |
| 19 | Aleksander Adler | In Dąbrowa ghetto until its liquidation Later—outside the county | Born in Dąbrowa |
| 20 | Aleksander Kampf | in the Soviet Union | Born December 27, 1882; raised in Ujście Jezuickie, farmer. After the war in Tarnów. He left his wife and children |
| 21 | Ichhak Lewi | In Dąbrowa ghetto until its liquidation Later—outside the county | Born in Dąbrowa |
| 22 | Isadore Petersile | In Dąbrowa until the 1942 Action. Later—in labor camps | Born in Dąbrowa, 1924, Spielberg Archive 39762 |
| 23 | Leo Drellich | In Dąbrowa until 1942. Later in Tarnów ghetto and in various camps | Born in 1913, Spielberg Archive 51138 |
| 24 | Abraham Kuhn | Survived in Mielec labor camp and other camps | Born in 1926, Spielberg [39250] |
| 25 | Harold Brand | In Dąbrowa until 1942, later Tarnów ghetto and Auschwitz | Born in 1927, Spielberg [43549] |
| 26 | Sarah Frankel (b. Matzner) | Survived in the Soviet Union | Born in 1912, Spielberg [12981] |
| 27 | Joseph Matzner | In Dąbrowa until 1942, later in Tarnów ghetto and in Plaszów | Born in 1923, Spielberg [24113] |

Table 8. *continued*

| | Name | Place of Hiding | Comments |
|----|------------------------------|---|--|
| 28 | Zofia Nowik b. Bloch | In Skrzynka until 1942, later survived as a laborer in Germany | Spielberg Archive[28302] |
| 29 | Leon Silber | Born in Szczucin | Spielberg Archive [5251] |
| 30 | Sabine Silber | Born in Szczucin | Spielberg archive [5252] |
| 31 | Majer Roth | 1939–1940 in Dąbrowa Tarnowska, 1940–1944 in Pustków labor camp | In January 1947 in Dąbrowa Tarnowska. YVA, JM 3499/6 |
| 32 | Regina Goldberg (b. Grünhut) | In Jastrząbka forest | Born in 1920, in Luszowice |
| 33 | David Goldberg | In Jastrząbka forest | Born in 1920, in Luszowice |

Table 9. Jews Who Reported to the Dąbrowa Tarnowska County Office of the Central Committee of Polish Jews (1945–1946)

The list includes both local Jews and Jews who may have hailed from other areas but in 1945–1946 found themselves in Dąbrowa.¹

| | Name | Date of Birth | Coming From |
|----|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Adler, Hirsch | 1891 | Hideout |
| 2 | Adler, Estera | 1893 | Hideout |
| 3 | Adler, Markus | 1928 | Hideout |
| 4 | Adler, Chajka | 1930 | Hideout |
| 5 | Adler, Abraham | 1932 | Hideout |
| 6 | Adler, Reisla | 1936 | Hideout |
| 7 | Adler, Sender | 1924 | Camp |
| 8 | Adler, Kalman | 1918 | Camp |
| 9 | Arimowicz, Markus | 1923 | Hideout |
| 10 | Blaugrund, Ewa | 1920 | Hideout |
| 11 | Braw, Roman | 1909 | Hideout |
| 12 | Braw, Gusta | 1920 | Hideout |
| 13 | Bertram, Liza | 1912 | Camp |
| 14 | Cizer, Pinkas | 1905 | Hideout |
| 15 | Cizer, Rozalia | 1901 | Hideout |
| 16 | Cizer, Józef | 1930 | Hideout |
| 17 | Ehruberg, Liebe | 1896 | Hideout |
| 18 | Goldman, Abraham | 1895 | Camp |
| 19 | Goldman, Czarna | 1905 | Camp |
| 20 | Gruszów, Rachela | 1885 | Hideout |
| 21 | Gruszów, Haskiel | 1915 | Hideout |
| 22 | Gruszów, Maria | 1912 | Hideout |
| 23 | Grinzweig, Mozes | 1897 | Hideout |
| 24 | Gruszów, Erna | 1925 | Camp |
| 25 | Grinzweig, Rachela | 1903 | Hideout |
| 26 | Gastwirth, Samuel | 1913 | Hideout |
| 27 | Gastwirth, Beila | 1917 | Hideout |
| 28 | Gruszów, Isak | 1906 | Hideout |
| 29 | Jachimowicz, Tema | 1886 | Hideout |
| 30 | Jachimowicz, Sisel | 1907 | Hideout |
| 31 | Jachimowicz, Samuel | 1909 | Hideout |
| 32 | Jachimowicz, Leon | 1915 | Hideout |
| 33 | Kamm, Majer | 1897 | Hideout |
| 34 | Kamm, Czesława | 1930 | Hideout |
| 35 | Kamm, Leon | 1929 | Hideout |

Table 9. *continued*

| | Name | Date of Birth | Coming From |
|----|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 36 | Kehl, Manek | 1927 | Hideout |
| 37 | Kehl, Sara | 1928 | Hideout |
| 38 | Lampel, Abraham | 1905 | Hideout |
| 39 | Margulies, Ida | 1893 | Hideout |
| 40 | Margulies, Henryk | 1919 | Hideout |
| 41 | Mehr, Izrael | 1899 | Hideout |
| 42 | Metzkier, Samuel | 1914 | Hideout |
| 43 | Metzkier, Chaim | 1910 | Hideout |
| 44 | Metzkier, Regina | 1903 | Hideout |
| 45 | Rand, Alter | 1924 | Hideout |
| 46 | Millet, Alter | 1907 | Camp |
| 47 | Millet, Chana | 1919 | Camp |
| 48 | Millet, Berta | 1918 | Camp |
| 49 | Rand, Mozes | 1933 | Hideout |
| 50 | Roth, Majer | 1913 | Camp |
| 51 | Roth, Samuel | 1920 | Camp |
| 52 | Singer, Hirsch | 1904 | Russia |
| 53 | Singer, Jenta | 1909 | Russia |
| 54 | Singer, Józef | 1930 | Russia |
| 55 | Singer, Sala | 1941 | Russia |
| 56 | Stieglitz, Regina | 1915 | Hideout |
| 57 | Stieglitz, Ignac | 1920 | Hideout |
| 58 | Spieler, Etna | 1924 | Hideout |
| 59 | Salomon, Sara | 1938 | Hideout |
| 60 | Salomon, Abraham | 1906 | Hideout |
| 61 | Samuel, Maria | 1918 | Hideout |
| 62 | Suess, Etla | 1910 | Hideout |
| 63 | Suess, Sara | 1913 | Hideout |
| 64 | Unger, Naftali | 1906 | Hideout |
| 65 | Unger, Rachela | 1924 | Hideout |
| 66 | Weith, Wigdor | 1922 | Hideout |
| 67 | Weith, Abraham | 1928 | Hideout |
| 68 | Werker, Jakub | 1903 | Hideout |
| 69 | Werker, Estera | 1915 | Hideout |
| 70 | Werker, Aron | 1914 | Hideout |
| 71 | Weiser, Herman | 1905 | Hideout |
| 72 | Weiser, Samuel | 1900 | Hideout |
| 73 | Schlesinger, Ida | 1917 | Camp |
| 74 | Schlesinger, Rozalia | 1922 | Camp |

| | Name | Date of Birth | Coming From |
|-----|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 75 | Roth, Fischel | 1910 | Camp |
| 76 | Ehrlich, Hirsch | 1910 | Camp |
| 77 | Ehrlich, Lola | 1923 | Camp |
| 78 | Anker, Chaskiel | 1916 | Camp |
| 79 | Kegl, Dolek | 1910 | Hideout |
| 80 | Jassy, Chiel | 1904 | Camp |
| 81 | Schnur, Tauba | 1910 | Camp |
| 82 | Fertig, Chaim | 1924 | Camp |
| 83 | Schlesinger, Pinkas | 1923 | Camp |
| 84 | Beder, Fischel | 1912 | Camp |
| 85 | Gelz, Markus | 1915 | Camp |
| 86 | Ferderber, Abraham | 1910 | Camp |
| 87 | Wolfowicz, Mozes | 1902 | Hideout |
| 88 | Wolfowicz, Basia | 1916 | Hideout |
| 89 | Gewelber, Mozes | 1910 | Russia |
| 90 | Drelich, Pinkas | 1909 | Russia |
| 91 | Fischman, Jakub | 1909 | Russia |
| 92 | Fischman, Szymon | 1907 | Russia |
| 93 | Fischman, Berl | 1918 | Russia |
| 94 | Ehrlich, Berisch | 1904 | Russia |
| 95 | Frinzweig, Pesla | 1908 | Russia |
| 96 | Gelz, Estera | 1920 | Hideout |
| 97 | Rosner, Hirsch | 1902 | Camp |
| 98 | Goldberg, Helena | 1930 | Hideout |
| 99 | Stieglitz, Isak | 1918 | Camp |
| 100 | Margulies, Lotka | 1925 | Hideout |
| 101 | Suess, Chaim | 1923 | Russia |
| 102 | Wind, Alter | 1916 | Russia |
| 103 | Cohlman, Leon | 1920 | Russia |
| 104 | Schlesinger, Naftali | 1909 | Russia |
| 105 | Schlesinger, Brucha | 1913 | Russia |
| 106 | Schlesinger, Frida | 1942 | Russia |
| 107 | Ehrlich, Salomon | 1923 | Russia |
| 108 | Wind, Limer | 1918 | Russia |
| 109 | Wind, Sala | 1942 | Russia |
| 110 | Cukerbroth, Ryfka | 1915 | Russia |

Note:

1. AŽIH, CKŽP, Department of Statistics, 303/V/files 492, 493, 527.

Table 10. Jews Who Reported to the Local Office of the Central Committee of Polish Jews in Wietrzychowice Commune (January 1946)

| | Name | Date of Birth | Place of Birth |
|----|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Celnik, Samuel | 1905 | Wietrzychowice |
| 2 | Chmielnicki, Mozes | 1895 | Chmielnik |
| 3 | Drelich, Fiszal | 1908 | Otfinów |
| 4 | Goldberg, Markus | 1907 | Jadowniki |
| 5 | Ickowicz, Alfred | 1913 | Wietrzychowice |
| 6 | Kohane, Eliazsz | 1923 | Wiecice |
| 7 | Künstlich, Majer | 1932 | Jadowniki |
| 8 | Spangelet, Mindla | 1907 | Wietrzychowice |
| 9 | Spangelet, Moses | 1935 | Kraków |
| 10 | Spangelet, Rachela | 1909 | Wietrzychowice |
| 11 | Suess, Samuel | 1917 | Miechowiec |
| 12 | Kohane, Rachela | 1900 | Bolesław |

Source: AŻIH, CKŻP, Department of Statistics, 303/V/493.

Table 11. Jews Who Were Killed while Hiding on the Territory of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County, 1942–1945

| | Name | Location | Date/Comment |
|-------|---|---|--|
| 1–4 | Herszfeld, Lejb [Hirszfeld], his wife and two daughters | Luszowice | 1942. Killed by the locals or denounced by the locals and killed by the police |
| 5 | Herszfeld's daughter | Luszowice | Denounced, delivered to the Germans and killed by gendarmes |
| 6 | Polonicer, Estera | Kłyż, Otfinów commune | 1942/43. Caught by the locals, executed by the “blue” police |
| 7 | Minc, Mendel | Bolesław, commune Bolesław | Summer 1944 |
| 8 | Wilk, Kalm | Otfinów commune | Spring 1943, shot by the “blue” police |
| 9–14 | Schneps Baruch, Sara, Regina, Fela, Helena, Ryfka | Radgoszcz commune | 1943. Denounced to the German gendarmerie |
| 15–18 | Juma and Chwałka and their 2 children | Wólka Mędrzychowska, Mędrzychów commune | March 1943 |
| 19–21 | 2 NN [man and a woman] and Otek, their child | Smyków/Nowa Jastrząbka | March 1943. Otek—11 years old at the time of death |
| 22–27 | 6 NN Jews [2 families] | Tonia, Bolesław commune | March 1943 |
| 28 | Metzger, Estera | Brnik/Szarwark | July 1943 |
| 29 | Metzger Dalka | Brnik /Szarwark | July 1943 |
| 30 | Metzger [Chaim?] | Brnik /Szarwark | July 1943. 14 years old at the time of death |
| 31–40 | 10 NN Jews | Dąbrowa Tarnowska | Summer 1943 [including 5 Jews from Kraków] |
| 41–44 | Mendel Icek and 2 NN men and 1 NN woman | Radgoszcz commune | 1943[?] |
| 45 | Kogel Mendel | Bolesław commune | 1943 |
| 46 | Drelich, Sala | Dąbrowa Tarnowska | 1942 [winter] |
| 47 | Einhorn Maria | Dąbrowa Tarnowska | 1942 [winter] |

Table 11. *continued*

| | Name | Location | Date/Comment |
|-------|--|--|--|
| 48 | Einhorn Rywka | Dąbrowa Tarnowska | 1942 [winter] |
| 49 | Adler, Józef | Dąbrowa Tarnowska | April 1943 |
| 50–54 | Fałek[?], Fałek's wife and 3 children | Wólka Mędrzychowska, Mędrzychów commune | 1943 |
| 55 | Kapelner Pejka | Bieniaszowice, commune Otfinów | Spring 1944 |
| 56 | Jakub "Czarny" | Bieniaszowice, commune Otfinów | Spring 1944. Jakub "Czarny," born in Opatowiec |
| 57–60 | 3 NN women and 1 NN man | Gruszów Wielki, Dąbrowa commune | March 15, 1944. Caught by the locals, shot by the "blue" police |
| 61–65 | 5 NN Jews | Hamlet Brzeźnica, Tonia commune | 1943 |
| 66 | Kapelner Mendel | Siedliszowice, Otfinów commune | May 1943 |
| 67–68 | Holender and her child | Hamlet Grochowiska, Radgoszcz commune | Late 1942. Holender's child was 3 years of age at the time of death |
| 69–70 | Frass [Tess] and his brother | Radgoszcz | 1942. Before the war Frass [Tess] was a butcher in Radgoszcz |
| 71–72 | Langner [woman from Korczyn] and another NN woman | Gręboszów area | |
| 73 | Sztum | Radgoszcz commune | 1943 |
| 74–82 | Grozman [woman, baker's wife] and 8 other people | Radgoszcz commune | 1943 |
| 83 | Schacher | Dąbrowa Tarnowska commune | 1943. Young woman |

| | | | |
|---------|---|--|--|
| 84–89 | Spatz, a family of 6 | Dąbrowa Tarnowska commune | 1943 |
| 90 | Metzger[?] | Dąbrowa Tarnowska commune | 1943. Young woman |
| 91–94 | Grincwang, Moses, his daughter Nena, and two grand-children | Brnik, Beleryt | 1943 |
| 95–100 | Fischer [family of 6] | Dąbrowa Tarnowska commune | 1944 |
| 101–105 | Pinkas and his family of 5 | Suchy Grunt/Wola Wadowska | 1942 |
| 106–107 | 2 sisters of Dawid Wasserstrum | Bunkers in the forest (Smyków/Jastrząbka?) | 1943–1944 |
| 108 | Rosenberg, Adela | Oleśnica | 1943. Killed by the “blue” police and Sonderdienst |
| 109–122 | 14 NN men and women | Bunkers in the forest (Smyków/Jastrząbka?) | 1943–1944 |
| 123–126 | Erlich sisters and two children | Olesno (Oklesna??) | 1943? |
| 127–131 | Fogel family of 5 | Skrzynka | 1942 or 1943 |
| 132 | Bloch (mother of Zofia Bloch) | Skrzynka | Late 1942 or early 1943 |
| 133 | Ehrenberg Lejba | Pilcza Żelichowska, Bolesław commune | 1944. Delivered by the locals and shot by the “blue” police |
| 134–135 | Ehrenberg Aron and NN man | Pilcza Żelichowska, Bolesław commune | 1944. Delivered by the locals and shot by the “blue” police |
| 136 | Metzger, Jankiel | Brnik | Late 1942. Killed in a manhunt |
| 137 | Metzger, Haftka | Brnik | October 1944 |
| 138 | Metzger Minka | Brnik/Szarwark/ Dąbrowa Tarnowska | October 1944. During a manhunt in the woods |
| 139–144 | Finder family of 6 | Forests in the Lipiny/ Jastrząbka area. | 1943 |
| 145 | Knie Chaim | Sutków [Łąk], Radgoszcz commune | Executed in May 1944. The locals delivered him to the “blue” police station in Radgoszcz |

Table 11. *continued*

| | Name | Location | Date/Comment |
|---------|--|---|--|
| 146–149 | 4 NN women | Gruszów Wielki | March 1944. Killed by the “blue” police |
| 150–159 | Minder family, other refugees—10 people | Brnik (forests in the area of) | Fall 1943. Killed in a manhunt |
| 160 | Süss Hela | Gorzyce, Otfinów commune | January–February 1944. Killed by the “blue” police |
| 161 | Süss Sala | Gorzyce, Otfinów commune | January–February 1944, Killed by the “blue” police |
| 162–165 | Lipka and her 3 daughters | Grądy, commune Mędrzechów | 1943 |
| 166 | Abramówna Rozalia [Jabramówna] | Nieciecza, commune Otfinów | January 1943. Captured by the locals and delivered into the hands of the “blue” police |
| 167–171 | 3 NN women, 2 NN men | Załuże, commune Szczucin | Killed by the gendarmes and the “blue” police. |
| 172–176 | Weiser [Wajzer] family of 5 [father—Dawid; brother—Hirs, sister—Estera]. | Dąbrowica, commune Szczucin | October 1942. The locals deliver the Weiser family to the “blue” police. Executed at the Szczucin police station |
| 177–178 | Salpeter [man] and one old woman | Bolesław commune | Spring 1943. Delivered by the locals to the “blue” police, and shot |
| 179–182 | 4 NN women and men | Radwan, Radgoszcz | Late 1943/early 1944 |
| 183 | Hesko, Roman, son of Adler | Bolesław commune | 1942/43. Shot by the “blue” police |
| 184 | Gries [man] | Skrzynka | 1942/43 |
| 185 | Szyjna [woman] | Skrzynka | 1942/43 [in the house of Stefania Mostek?] |
| 186 | Peretz Kupfer | Karsy, commune Gręboszów | 1944. Kupfer hailed from Nowy Korczyn |
| 187 | Hana Kupfer | Karsy, commune Gręboszów | 1944 |
| 188–190 | 2 women and 1 child | Olesno/Bobrek. Shot at Salaterski’s place | 1943 |
| 191 | Grün Karolina | Radgoszcz | 1942 |

| | | | |
|---------|---|--|---|
| 192–198 | 7 NN men and women | Dąbrowa Tarnowska | 1943/44 |
| 199 | Brand, Apolonia | Pasieka Otfinowska, commune Otfinów | 1943. Betrayed, killed by gendarmes |
| 200–202 | 2 NN women and 1 child | Górki, commune Radgoszcz | 1943 |
| 203 | Chil Lejb | Grądy | 1944 |
| 204 | Kampf | Smęgorzów | 1943[?]. Horse trader from Dąbrowa, betrayed by the locals, killed by a gendarme |
| 205–210 | 6 NN women and men | Żabno | Late 1942. Killed by the “blue” police |
| 211–227 | Millet Lejb and 17 other men and women | Dąbrowa Tarnowska ghetto | Late 1942. Bunker in the ghetto betrayed by the locals |
| 228–231 | NN woman and 3 children | Dąbrowa Tarnowska commune | Date unknown. Locals betray the Jews to the Germans |
| 232 | Bechner Lazar | Dąbrowa Tarnowska commune | 1943. 37 years old |
| 233 | Bechner Pesia | Dąbrowa Tarnowska commune | September 13, 1943. 31 years old |
| 234–242 | Grumet Baruch and 8 other men & women. | Dąbrowa Tarnowska commune | May 3, 1943. Grumet was 37 years old at the time of death |
| 243 | Kupelman [woman] | Bolesław commune | Late 1942. Killed by the “blue” police |
| 244 | Szacher, Paweł | Luszwice, forest | 1943 |
| 245 | Szacher, Lejb | Radgoszcz commune, forest | 1942 |
| 246 | Szacher, Izaak | Radgoszcz commune, forest | 1943 |
| 247–275 | 30 NN victims | Brnik/Szarwark/Dąbrowa | October 1944 |
| 276 | Ruchla Koplik | Ujście Jezuckie or Kraśniów | April 1943. Killed by the “blue” police |
| 277–278 | Mr. and Mrs. Levi | Dąbrowa Tarnowska area | 1943? Killed by the locals, exhumed by Kalman Adler after the war |
| 279–283 | 5 NN Jews | Wietrzychowice—church | Hidden by the local priest, denounced by another priest, in 1943 |

Table 11. *continued*

| | Name | Location | Date/Comment |
|-----|-------------------|--|--|
| 284 | 1 NN Jew | Killed by policeman Gordziejczyk in Smyków, in late fall of 1942 | The killed Jew was armed and died exchanging fire with the policeman |
| 285 | Rozalia Polanecki | Ujście Jezuickie/ Wietrzychowice | Betrayed in September 1942 by one Suwara/ Suwała, resettled from Kolbuszowa |
| 286 | Sabina Goldman | Dabrowa Tarnowska | September 1942. Arrested by the “blue” police, executed by the Germans |

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. The original Polish edition of this book was published in Poland in early 2011. It stirred a lively debate among historians and in the media. The present English-language edition has been significantly expanded and updated. The inclusion of new sources, such as interviews with survivors and testimonies from the Visual History Foundation, helped to shed more light on the fate of Jews who struggled to survive in the area under scrutiny. New data permitted the addition of more names to both the list of survivors and the list of victims who died in hiding. Although the book brings forward significant new evidence, its conclusions do not differ from those of the Polish edition.

2. The name describes the Polish police under German command. They were usually called *policja granatowa*, or “dark-blue police,” from the color of their uniforms. For reasons of simplicity, I will refer to them as the “blue” police.

3. The term was introduced into historical writing by eminent historian Christopher R. Browning, who studied the interrogation records of German SS-men and gendarmes who were investigated by the German authorities in the 1960s and 1970s.

4. State Archive in Lviv (Dierżawnyj Archiv Lvivskoj Oblasti; DALO), collection of the Special Court Sondergericht Lemberg, collection R77, Opis 1, dossier [delo] 791, 504.

5. DALO, Sondergericht Lemberg, R77, Opis 1, dossier 847.

6. Szymon Datner, “Zbrodnie hitlerowskie na Żydach zbiegłych z gett. Groźby i zarządzenia “prawne” w stosunku do Żydów oraz udzielających im pomocy Polaków” [Nazi Crimes against Jews Who Fled the Liquidated Ghettos: Threats and “Legal” Regulations against the Jews and against the Poles Who Helped Them], *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 75 (1970): 28–29.

7. Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945* (New York: Harper, 2007), 632: “Of the 3.3 million Jews who had lived in Poland in 1939, some 300,000 survived the war; among these some 40,000 at most survived in hiding on Polish territory”; Albert Stankowski and Piotr Weiser, “Demograficzne skutki Holocaustu” [The Demographic Consequences of the Holocaust], in *Następstwa zagłady Żydów. Polska 1944–2010* [The Consequences of the Holocaust, 1944–2010], ed. Feliks Tych and Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska (Lublin, Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2011), 15–39.

8. Emmanuel Tanay, *Passport to Life: Autobiographical Reflections on the Holocaust* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Book Clearing House, 2004), 112–113.

9. Visual History Foundation (VHF), testimony of Leo Drellich (b. 1913), Index no. 51138.

10. Yad Vashem Archive (YVA), collection M.1.E /950, Dr. Symcha Hampel, “Życie pod knutem okupanta” [Life under Occupier’s Whip]. Quoted in Barbara Engelking, *Jest Taki Piękny Słoneczny Dzień. Losy Żydów Szukających Ratunku na Wsi Polskiej, 1942–1945* [It Is Such a Beautiful and Sunny Day: The Fate of Jews Looking for Rescue in Rural Poland, 1942–1945] (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2011), 133.

11. Jan T. Gross, *Golden Harvest: Events at the Periphery of the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 64.

12. Jean Hatzfeld, *Une saison de machettes* (Paris: Seuil, 2003), 75.

13. Adam Chętnik, *Pod niemiecko-hitlerowskim obuchem* [Under the Nazi-German Hammer], National Library, Warsaw (BN), Manuscript section, III 7925. pp. 8 and 85.

14. Neville Laski, “Report on Journey to Austria, Poland and Danzig, August 15 to 31, 1934,” file 788, the archive of the “Joint,” New York. Quoted in William W. Hagen, “Before the ‘Final Solution’: Toward a Comparative Analysis of Political Anti-Semitism in Interwar Germany and Poland,” *Journal of Modern History* 68, 2 (1996): 356.

15. Quoted after Michał Grynberg, “Pomoc udzielana Żydom w czasie okupacji niemieckiej w Polsce. Uwagi i Refleksje” [Poles Helping Jews during the German Occupation in Poland: Comments and Observations], in *Polskie podziemie polityczne wobec Zagłady Żydów w czasie okupacji niemieckiej w Polsce. Referaty z sesji*, ed. I. Borowicz (Warsaw: ŻIH, 1988), 89.

16. From the letter of Chaja Rosenblatt-Lewi (b. Garn). I am grateful to Leila Férault, Chaja’s granddaughter, who provided me with a copy of this document.

17. Christopher R. Browning, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), 255.

18. “Little Poland” (*Małopolska*)—a geographical description of an area of southeastern Poland, with Kraków as its capital.

19. Emanuel Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations during the Second World War* (New York: Fertig, 1976), 137.

1. DĄBROWA TARNOWSKA

1. Omer Bartov, *From the Holocaust in Galicia to Contemporary Genocide: Common Ground—Historical Differences* (Washington, D.C.: USHMM, 2002), 6.

2. For an excellent example of such a “microhistorical” approach, see Nicolas Mariot and Claire Zalc, *Face à la persécution. 991 Juifs dans la guerre* (Paris: Jacob, 2010). Using a broad array of available sources the authors followed the wartime destinies of all the Jewish citizens of Lens, a city in northern France.

3. Krzysztof Jasiewicz, *Rzeczywistość sowiecka 1939–1941 w świadectwach polskich Żydów* [Soviet Reality, 1939–1941, in the Testimonies of Polish Jews] (Warsaw, Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, 2010), 114–15.

4. The index was based upon the 1921 national census.

5. Although prewar Dąbrowa enjoyed the legal status of municipality, most of its inhabitants were still, one way or another, involved in farming.

6. In 1941, the Germans reorganized the administrative structure of occupied Poland, and the border between Kraków and Radom Districts went along the pre-1914 divisions.

7. In some cases survivors left more than one testimony.

8. The Kielce pogrom (July 4, 1946) started with a rumor of ritual murder committed by the Jews. The pogrom claimed lives of more than forty Jewish survivors of the Holocaust who were murdered by mobs of Polish townspeople, soldiers, and militiamen.

9. Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie (State Archive in Kraków; APK), collection of Kraków Appellate Court (SAKr), file 1019 IVK/ 142/50, investigation against Jan Musiał, opened in Dąbrowa Tarnowska on April 25, 1950.

10. In addition to the “August” files, historians can also take advantage of the “Prosecutors’ files,” or records of investigations that, for a variety of reasons, were discontinued and never went to trial.

11. Kreishauptmannschaft Tarnów—one of the twelve administrative-territorial units making up the Kraków District.

12. Interestingly, similar investigations conducted by East German prosecutors in the DDR followed a very different pattern. There, the questions were phrased in more aggressive tones, the accused seem to have been treated harshly, and they were far more likely than their West German counterparts to divulge the details of executions and other crimes perpetrated by themselves (or by members of their staff) against Jewish victims. For more information, see Wendy Lower, “Male and Female Holocaust Perpetrators and the East German Approach to Justice, 1949–1963,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 24 (Spring 2010): 56–84.

13. APK, SAKr, dossier 1044 IV K 266/50.

14. The local parlance had a special expression to describe the process of delivering Jews to the authorities: “*zdać Żyda*”—“to render the Jew.”

15. The locals often referred to the Jews as *Żydki*, a term lost in translation, whose closest equivalent is the English *Jewboy*. In rural areas, during the war, however, this expression was not necessarily an indication of disrespect, or hostility. It was reflective of the “good-natured contempt” mentioned earlier in this book. The expression *Żydek* was even used by Jews themselves in their testimonies given after the war to the regional Jewish Historical Committees.

16. Violation of Jewish corpses was a commonplace occurrence. First, clothes were taken off the bodies of the victims, then off came watches, chains, and, finally, golden teeth. “The bodies of the dead were robbed a few moments later, and one of the peasants chopped off Friess’s hand”—reported a Jewish survivor from Tarnów. See APK, SAKr 1022/IV K/151/50. This issue is debated at length in Jan T. Gross’s *Golden Harvest: Events at the Periphery of the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), in particular, 26–38.

2. JEWS AND POLES IN DĄBROWA TARNOWSKA BEFORE 1939

1. Sławomir Tokarski, *Ethnic Conflict and Economic Development: Jews in Galician Agriculture, 1868–1914* (Warsaw: Trio, 2003), 21. According to Tokarski, in the beginning of the twentieth century nearly 18 percent of Galicia’s Jews worked in agriculture and forestry.

2. The Index, based on the data from the 1921 national census, was published in 1925.

3. There were 101 villages and two towns in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County.

4. Emanuel Ringelblum, *Polish–Jewish Relations during the Second World War* (New York: Fertig, 1976), 137–38.

5. In prewar Poland, the definition of *Jewishness* had been primarily associated with religious determination, but, before long, a definition based solely on race, initially introduced in Germany, was used more and more frequently.

6. Archiwum Akt Nowych (Archive of Contemporary Records, Warsaw; AAN), Kraków District Office [Urząd Wojewódzki Krakowski], Department of Public Security, collection 268.

7. This account is based, in large part, on records taken from the Polish State Archives in Tarnów, collection RG-15.020M, and held at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, D.C.

8. USHMM, RG-15.020 M, The investigations of this kind were numerous. See, for instance, examples drawn only from one reel, for 1933 (and the USHMM collection includes eleven reels). The files of the Tarnów District Court and prosecutor’s files are titled U-2/4/33; 898/33; 1684/33; DS 1787/33; DS 1605/33; II Ds 1600 5/33 IV KPS 403–33 C.:Ds 2014/33.3459/33-. 3716/33 C.:718/31—.652/31.569/32, 554/32.

9. All-Polish Youth—*Młodzież Wszechpolska*.

10. USHMM, RG-15.020 M District Office, Department of Public Safety [Urząd Wojewódzki Krakowski, Wydział Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego]; see the following files: 268\ II-9 (MF 1559\6) 268\II-11, pp. 2–4, 268\ II-25.

11. YVA, collection 03/2020, testimony of Awigdor Weit.
12. The case can be found in the previously cited collection: USHMM, State Archive in Tarnów, PT218 IIDs 1031/37 W380/38, reel 3.
13. USHMM, RG-15.020M, W63/39 PT227, reel 3, October 27, 1938. The records of the city of Tarnów, District Court, Prosecutor's Office, RG-15.020M, PT 84, microfilm reel 1.
14. For more details about this issue, see Dariusz Libionka, "Alien, Hostile, Dangerous: The Image of the Jews and the 'Jewish Question' in the Polish-Catholic Press in the 1930s," *Yad Vashem Studies* 32 (2004): 227–67.
15. A very thorough and detailed analysis of the anti-Jewish discourse in the Catholic press from the Kraków area can be found in Viktoria Pollmann, *Untermieter im christlichen Haus. Die Kirche und die "jüdische Frage" in Polen anhand der Bistumspresse der Metropole Krakau 1926–1939* (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2001).

3. FIRST YEARS OF OCCUPATION

1. Additional information about this topic can be found in Aleksandra Pietrzyk, "Z dziejów zagłady ludności żydowskiej w regionie tarnowskim" [The Destruction of the Jewish Population in the Tarnów Region], *Zeszyty Tarnowskie* 2 (1970): 78–97; Jerzy Rzeszuto, *Żydzi dąbrowscy* [Jews of Dąbrowa] (Dąbrowa Tarnowska: Wydawnictwo "Kurier Dąbrowski," 1993); Abraham Chomet, *Zagłada Tarnowskich Żydów* (Tarnów, n.p., 1990). Chomet's book is a Polish translation of a book originally published in 1954 in Yiddish, in Israel.
2. Aleksandra Pietrzyk, "Powiat Dąbrowski w Latach Okupacji Hitlerowskiej, 1939–1945" [Dąbrowa County under the Nazi Occupation, 1939–1945], in *Dąbrowa Tarnowska. Zarys dziejów miasta i powiatu*, ed. Feliks Kiryk and Zygmunt Ruta (Warsaw-Kraków: PWN: 1974), 557–609.
3. *Ibid.*, 561. *Sonderdienst* was officially created in the spring of 1940, but local ethnic Germans had begun serving in the police as auxiliary policemen, interpreters, and administrative support personnel as early as the fall of 1939.
4. Rudolf Landgraf (b. 1898 in Dresden) was being investigated in 1969 by German authorities for his wartime crimes. The case against him never went to trial due to his poor health.
5. In Mazovia (Warsaw District) a similar process of amalgamation of smaller police stations had begun in early 1943. AAN, collection AK\202\II-37, p. 37—report of March 31, 1943.
6. Pietrzyk, 562.
7. USHMM, Selected records (Tarnów), reel 11.
8. Tarnów regulations went even further than similar restrictions in other districts. In Warsaw, for example, radios were also seized by the Germans, but people were allowed to keep their telephone receivers.
9. USHMM, Selected records (Tarnów), reel 11, Regulations of Tarnów *Stadthauptmann*.

10. USHMM, Selected records (Tarnów), regulations of the City Commissioner, Dr. Eckert.

11. USHMM, *ibid.* Regulation issued by the City Commissioner Dr. Hein, October 11, 1941.

12. Dan Michman, *The Emergence of Jewish Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); see, in particular, chapter 7, “The Invasion of Poland and the Emergence of the ‘Classic’ Ghettos,” 61–89.

13. Visual History Foundation (VHF), account of Carl Willner, index no. 01899.

14. YVA, 0.33/1888, account of Icchak Stieglitz given in Tel Aviv, November 15, 1981.

15. The data concerning social care in the Dąbrowa ghetto come from the files of the Jewish Self-Help (ŻSS); see the Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw (AŻIH), ŻSS, collection 211, file 340.

16. AŻIH, ŻSS, 211/340. Report filed from Dąbrowa Tarnowska to the ŻSS headquarters in Warsaw regarding the October 1941 period.

17. YVA, 03\2020, testimony of Weit brothers, p. 5.

18. AŻIH, 301/772, testimony of Adela Gold from Ryglice.

19. Visual History Foundation (VHF), account of Rae Weitz (b. Goldman), index no. 40783.

20. YVA, 03\2363, testimony of Dr. Jehuda Schindel.

21. VHF, account of Carl Willner (index no. 01899), and Morris Suss (index no. 27618).

22. VHF, account of Leon Silber from Szczucin, index no. 5251.

23. Józef Marszałek, *Obozy Pracy w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945* (Lublin: Majdanek State Museum, 1998), 25–27.

24. Father Józef Opióła was a priest from the local Catholic parish in Szebnie. During his meetings with *Hauptsturmführer* Kellerman, the German commander of AEL Szebnie, he intervened on behalf of Christian inmates, some of them members of his flock. Rev. Opióła was particularly upset with the Jewish prisoners who, unlike the Poles incarcerated in the camp, were able to work in the highly coveted kitchen detail and outside the camp perimeter. Kellerman argued that while the Poles were in the camp serving short sentences, the only Jews to leave the camp were dead. However, Rev. Opióła rejected this argument and soon the Jews were removed from the cozy kitchen detail. See testimony of father Józef Opióła, August 9, 1945, materials from the Main Commission, YVA, microfilm JM 3499/6, pp. 138–40.

25. *Volksdeutsche*—ethnic Germans, former Polish citizens.

26. APK, SAKr, 1034/IVK 204/50, testimony of Mieczysław Dutka: “Back then when the Jews could still walk free, but when the Germans had already started putting them in the ghetto, some young Jews (boys and girls) were brought from Dąbrowa to Gorzyce, and placed in two houses. They worked

in Jan Augustyński's estate, and I heard that Augustyński arranged with the Germans for a special permission to have them work in our community. These Jews were roaming free, without any guards, and I remember seeing two young girls among them, the taller one a brunette, and the other, smaller one, a blonde. These Jews worked for Augustyński. About one month and later, after the harvest, they were brought back on two carts to Dąbrowa."

27. "Goy."

28. YVA, 03\2020, the account of Weit brothers.

29. The estate of Baron Jan Konopka in Breń. Baron Jan (father) and Feliks (son) Konopka managed the family estates until 1945.

30. AŻIH, 301/1571, testimony of Fela Grün.

31. Regina Goldberg (b. Grünhut) remembered that David Goldberg, her future husband, had been taken to the "deportation" train straight from his forced labor detail, while he was building levees along the Dunajec River. David, with three other Jews, was able to flee from the train, and survived in the Dulcza forest. Interview with Mrs. Goldberg, Givatayim, Israel, June 18, 2011.

32. YVA, 0.33/1888, account of Icchak Stieglitz given in Tel Aviv, November 15, 1981.

33. Rzeszuto, 118.

34. YVA, 03\2363, p. 5. Also see VHF, account of Joseph Matzner, index no. 24113.

35. Shavuot, in English known as the Pentecost. In this case, Shavuot fell on May 22–23, 1942.

36. YVA 03\2020, testimony of Avigdor and Abram Weit.

37. VHF, account of Rae Weitz, index no. 40783 and Ann Shore (b. Goldman), index no. 39906.

38. BAL, collection G 162/2148, deposition of Hannelore Anlauf-Hambloch. *Die haben wir fertig gemacht, dass ihnen das Wasser im Arsch kochte vor Angst.*

39. VHF, account of Antoni Balarzyn from Radomyśl Wielki, index no. 48515.

40. Action [against the] communists (Ger.).

41. BAL, B 162, dossier 2164 k. 3856–58. See also BAL, B 162/2162 p. 3464.

42. Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009).

43. A *voit* was the chief of the lower level of rural administration, usually in charge of a *gmina* [commune], or a group of dozen or so villages.

44. VHF, account of Zofia Nowik (b. Bloch), index no. 28302. For another account concerning the early restrictions placed on Jews living in local villages, see the testimony of Cyla Braw, AŻIH, 301/2342 in the annex at the end of this book.

45. Interview with Chaja Rosenblatt-Lewi, Paris, May 19, 2012.

4. THE DESTRUCTION OF DĄBROWA TARNOWSKA

1. Aleksander Bieberstein, *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie* [The Destruction of Kraków's Jews] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1985), 56.

2. Jerzy Tomaszewski, ed., *Najnowsze Dzieje Żydów w Polsce* [Contemporary History of Polish Jews] (Warsaw: PWN, 1993), 318–20.

3. AŻIH, ŻSS, 211/340.

4. Franciszek Kotula, *Losy Żydów rzeszowskich, 1939–1945. Kronika tamtych dni* [History of Rzeszów's Jews: The Chronicle of Those Days] (Rzeszów, n.p., 1999), 98–101.

5. Stein, 434. The *Restghettos* were created according to the regulation issued by HSSPF Krüger on November 10, 1942.

6. Here, the rural and urban situation was very much alike. Hundreds of Jews managed to flee the Warsaw ghetto during the April–May 1943 uprising and spent time on the “Aryan” side of the city. Some of them, unable to cope with the constant threat of denunciation, chose to return to the burning “Jewish quarter.”

7. The successive stages of the destruction of Dąbrowa have been described on the basis of court proceedings against Landgraf, the chief of gendarmes. See BAL, B 162\2164 and B 162\2165 (among others, p. 4099, the testimony of Julian Zawislak from Gęboszewo, April 6, 1946; p. 4038, the testimony of Alter Milet, April 8, 1946 in Dąbrowa).

8. AŻIH, 302/318, testimony of Chaja Rosenblatt.

9. AŻIH, 301/2348, testimony of Alter Milet filed with the Jewish Historical Commission in Kraków on February 4, 1947.

10. Memoir of Regina Goldfinger (nee Rivka Schenker), from Radomyśl Wielki. I am indebted to Leila Férault for making available a copy of this document to me.

11. Testimony of Samuel Feiner, AŻIH, 301/1209.

12. AŻIH, 301/2348, testimony of Alter Milet.

13. Other OD-men killed with Fenichel included Leib Gruszow, Hersz Meier, Uscher Ofen, Pflaum, and the Wolf brothers.

14. BAL, B 162/8940, deposition of Stanisław Dorosz, October 31, 1968.

15. AAN, AK/203/III/ 117, reports from Tarnów and the Tarnów area.

16. Literally: “Falcon”—a patriotic Polish organization founded in the 1860s.

17. BAL, Ludwigsburg, B 162\8940, pp. 27–29 [June 19, 1969], testimony of Janina Jadwiga Starzyk, born October 10, 1923 in Dąbrowa.

18. AŻIH, 301/772, testimony of Adela Gold from Ryglice, east of Tarnów.

19. Free of Jews (Ger.).

20. AŻIH, 301\2342. Cyła Braw's testimony is included in the appendix to this book.

21. YVA, 03/3785, the diary of Fela Fischbein.

22. German Chief of the Tarnów Region.

23. BAL, collection B 162\ 2151, pp. 945–46, interrogation of Dr. Kipke.

24. BAL, B162\2149, pp. 202–206, interrogation of Dr. Karl Pernutz, lawyer and notary.

25. YVA, TR 10, v. 3762/5, p. 5 (795), deposition of Alfred Otto Hermann Baumann, August 16, 1968, from the files of the Office of Attorney General of the DDR.

26. BAL, B 162\2150, p. 711.

27. BAL, B 162\2150, p. 711, p. 724.

28. IPN (Kr) 07\2592, p. 8. Trial files of Wilhelm Rommelmann.

29. BAL, B 162\2150, pp. 714–15.

30. I am grateful to Marcin Zaremba for drawing my attention to this source. AAN, Armia Krajowa, 203/III-98; pp. 145–46.

31. AAN, Armia Krajowa, 203/III-98, p. 161.

32. AAN, collection of Armia Krajowa, 203/III-99, p. 40; 203/III-99, p. 41; 203/III-98 pp. 145–46.

33. BAL, B 162\2166 p. 4307, testimony of Abraham Braw from Luszowice: *Ich habe miterlebt, wie Gendarmerie auf dem Rynek in Dąbrowa die Juden bewachte und später zusammen mit uniformierter polnischer Polizei zum Bahnhof trieb. An beiden Seiten gingen Gendarme und polnische Polizisten.*

34. B 162\2166, p. 4307.

35. APK, SAKr 1041/IV K/ 241/50, deposition of Andrzej Piękoś.

36. Krasnodębski, *Policjant konspiratorem*, 108.

37. I am deeply grateful to Mrs. Molly Applebaum (b. Weissenberg) for having made her diary available to me.

38. Sabina Goldman's letter has been preserved and made available to me by Mrs. Applebaum.

39. State Archive in Kraków, regional office in Tarnów [Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie, Oddział w Tarnowie], collection of the Municipal Court [Sąd Grodzki in Dąbrowa Tarnowska], dossier no. 49, p. 10. Decision regarding Lejzor Mendelsohn.

40. BAL, B 162\2159, pp. 2676–77, deposition of Alfred Koch: *dass in Tarnow schreckliche Zustände geherrschaft haben sollen.*

41. Memoir of Rivka Schenker; copy of the text in the possession of the author.

42. BAL, B162\2149, k. 202–206 K. 224—Testimony of Ester Landau from Izraela: *Nach meiner Ankunft in Tarnow war ich nicht in der Lage als Arierin dort zu leben, weil ich vollkommen entfremdet war und ging deshalb ins Ghetto, wo ich bis zum Liquidierung des Ghettos, d.h. bis Anfang 1943 verblieb.*

43. AŻIH, 301/ 2348, testimony of Alter Milet.

44. BAL, B 162\2166, p. 4280, testimony of Izaak Izrael.

5. JUDENJAGD—HUNT FOR THE JEWS

1. The translation preserves the style of the original statement made in awkward Polish. SAKr 1032—IV K 191/50, deposition of witness Matus Zyngier.

2. Additional information on this subject is found in the dossier deposited by Kozaczka's family in the Yad Vashem archive. See YVA, o.48\284.7.

3. Jerzy Rzeszuto, *Żydzi dąbrowscy* [Dąbrowa Jews] (Dąbrowa Tarnowska: Wydawnictwo Kurier Dąbrowski, 1993); Adam Kazimierz Musiał, *Lata w ukryciu* [Years in Hiding] (Gliwice, n.p., 2002). This last book (an eclectic mix of undated testimonies and newspaper clippings) includes Kozaczka's article *in extenso* and makes numerous references to his "findings."

4. *Zielony Sztandar*, April 14, 1968, p. 9.

5. Józef Kozaczka, "Pomoc Żydom w powiecie Dąbrowa Tarnowska" [Helping Jews in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County], in *Polacy, Żydzi, 1939–1945*, ed. Stanisław Wroński and Maria Zwolakowa (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1971), 341–46.

6. Kozaczka, 346.

7. Maria Hochberg-Mariańska, and Mieczysław Mariański, *Wśród przyjaciół i wrogów. Poza gettem w okupowanym Krakowie* [Among Friends and Enemies: Outside the Ghetto, in Occupied Kraków] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1988), 11.

8. Rzeszuto, 206–208.

9. *Spis zbrodni hitlerowskich dla powiatu Tarnów* [Index of Nazi Crimes in Tarnów County], GKBZHWP, District Tarnów, no date of publication, description of the situation in the village of Kłyż, p. 103.

10. Quoted from Alina Skibińska and Dariusz Libionka, "Przysięgam walczyć o wolną i potężną Polskę, wykonywać rozkazy przełożonych, tak mi dopomóż Bóg. Żydzi w AK. Epizod z Ostrowca Świętokrzyskiego" ["I Swear to Fight for Free and Mighty Poland, to Execute the Orders of my Superiors, So Help Me God." Jews in the Home Army; an Episode from Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski], *Zagłada Żydów IV* (2008): 292.

11. APK, SAKr 966 IV K 138/49, deposition of Hugo Spiller.

12. AŻIH, 302/30, Diary of Stanisław Żemiński. Żemiński was a rural teacher and before the war a member of the Polish Socialist Party. His diary was found in a heap of garbage, in the Majdanek concentration camp where, most probably, he died in 1943.

13. BAL, B 162\2160, pp. 3000–3001. Testimony of Berta Millet from Dąbrowa, October 31, 1946.

14. Zygmunt Klukowski, *Zamojszczyzna, 1918–1943* (Warsaw: Karta, 2007), entries for October 21–24, 1942, 303–306.

15. AŻIH, 302/318, testimony of Chaja Rosenblatt.

16. Ibid., account of Chaja Rosenblatt (b.Garn), from Radomyśl Wielki, p. 24.

17. YVA, files of the Department of the Righteous, testimony of F. Krysztal.

18. YVA, 03/2865, testimony of Hersz Buch, p. 19.

19. A detailed account of this phase of the *Judenjagd* can be found in the notorious report of Friedrich Katzmann, the chief of police and the SS [HPSSF] for District Galizien. See *Lösung der Judenfrage im Distrikt Galizien*, ed. Andrzej Żbikowski (Warsaw: IPN, 2001).

20. See Robert Seidel, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Polen: Der Distrikt Radom 1939–1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006); Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Judenmord in Zentralpolen: Der Distrikt Radom im Generalgouvernement, 1939–1945* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2007); Czesław Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w Okupowanej Polsce*, I–II (Warsaw: PWN, 1970); Markus Roth, *Herrenmenschen. Die Deutschen Kreishauptleute im besetzten Polen- Karrierewege, Herrschaftspraxis und Nachgeschichte* (Goettingen: Wallstein, 2009); Peter Longerich, *Holocaust: The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2010).

21. A review of several thousands of dossiers of the Warsaw *Deutsches Gericht* and *Sondergericht* verifies and corroborates this statement. See Jan Grabowski, “Jewish Defendants in German and Polish Courts in the Warsaw District,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 35, no. 1 (2007): 49–81.

22. Waław Bielawski, *Zbrodnie na Polakach dokonane przez hitlerowców za pomoc udzieloną Żydom* [Crimes Committed by the Nazis against the Poles Who Helped the Jews] (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich, 1987). The list contains nine hundred names. Later this list was checked for accuracy and reduced to 704 names. See Waław Bielawski, *Those Who Helped: Polish Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust* (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich, 1993).

23. Jan Grabowski, “German Anti-Jewish Propaganda in the Generalgouvernement, 1939–1945: Inciting Hate through Posters, Films, and Exhibitions,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 23, no. 3 (Winter 2009): 381–412.

24. Agata Tuszyńska, *Oskarżona: Wiera Gran* [The Accused: Wiera Gran] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2010), 207–208. The play was shown for the first time in Kraków, on July 31, 1942, on the site of the Old Theater. A summary of the play *Quarantine* is found in the files of Kraków Main Propaganda Office. See YVA, microfilm JM 3499/8, letter of Klausfelder, July 29, 1942, pp. 91–93.

25. AŻIH, 301/3419. Testimony given to the regional office of the Jewish Historical Commission in Kraków, September 12, 1947.

26. AŻIH, 302/318, testimony of Chaja Rosenblatt, p. 47.

27. APK, SAKr 1034/ IV K/ 204/50, p. 56. Deposition of B. Rajski.

28. APK, SAKr, 1015, IV K 125/50, p. 15.

29. SS-Hauptsturmführer Heinrich Hamann (1908–1993), commander of the Aussendienststelle Nowy Sącz (1939–1943), later commander of Grenzkommisariat Jasło (August–November 1943), and finally, chief of Referat IV A/K.d.S Krakau (November–January 1945). Hamann, the notorious chief of Nowy Sącz Gestapo, was responsible for mass executions and “liquidation actions” in the southern section of the Kraków District. In 1966, Hamann was sentenced in Germany to life in prison.

30. APK, SAKr, 1020/IVK/147/50, p. 8.

31. Literally: “post-Jewish clothes” (*pożydowskie ubrania*). In the Polish language the only other occurrence of this extraordinary expression can be found

in the case of “post-German” goods, in the context of German goods appropriated by the Poles after World War II. In the case of goods belonging to members of other nationalities, this kind of expression, to put it simply, makes no sense at all. Jan T. Gross discusses this linguistic curiosity in *Golden Harvest: Events at the Periphery of the Holocaust* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 41–44.

32. APK, SAKr 965/K 134/49, pp. 10–12. On June 13, 1950, Witkowski was sentenced by the Kraków Appellate court to six years in prison.

33. *Propaganda Centralna* (PC), publication of the NSZ, 14/27, 1942.

34. “Kto ma być najbogatszym” [Who Will Be the Wealthiest], *Placówka*, January 23, 1943 (2), p. 12.

35. Quoted in Dariusz Libionka, “Polska konspiracja wobec eksterminacji Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim” [Polish Underground and the Extermination of Jews in the Warsaw District], in *Prowincja noc. Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim*, ed. Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka (Warsaw: IFiS PAN: 2007), 496.

36. APK, SAKr, 1021 IV K/150/50 v. 1, pp. 269–70. The expressions “Jewish uncle” and “Jewish aunt,” which were used to mock people suspected by neighbors of helping (or sympathizing with) Jews, can be found frequently in the court documentation.

37. Bundesarchiv, Zentralestelle Ludwigsburg (BAL), B 162 dossier 2158, p. 2549.

38. Stanisław Kosieniak and his band terrorized the inhabitants of the local villages in 1940–1943. He was finally killed by the police in December 1943.

39. Alina Skibińska and Jakub Petelewicz, “The Participation of Poles in Crimes against Jews in the Świętokrzyskie Region,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 35, no. 1 (2007): 5–48.

40. AŻIH, 301\3419, testimony of Izaak Stieglitz, b. Dąbrowa Tarnowska, October 13, 1918. The protocol signed in front of the Jewish Historical Commission in Kraków, September 12, 1947.

41. In this case, the court declared the accused innocent with the following justification: “Icek Apfelbaum lives today abroad, leads a comfortable life, and he writes letters to witness Stanisław Gass in which he accuses the suspect of betraying him and his brother to the German gendarmes, but he fails to provide any proof of it.” This is one of the many examples that illustrate how difficult it was to conduct postwar investigations of people who murdered Jews. AIPN, the Regional Court for the Warsaw District [Sąd Wojewódzki dla Województwa Warszawskiego] (SWWW). GK\318\305 and AIPN GK/ 366/241. Icek Apfelbaum’s letter, sent from Germany to Stanisław Gass from the village of Władzin (Koźbiel commune), was attached to the proceedings.

42. Dorota Siepracka, “Mordercy Żydów przed nazistowskim Sądem Specjalnym” [Murderers of Jews Facing the Nazi Special Court], *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 6 (2004): 233–46, and Archiwum Państwowe w Warszawie [State

Archive in Warsaw; APW], collection of the Staatsanwaltschaft beim der Sondergericht Warschau, dossier 4869 (4579).

6. RURAL SOCIETY AND THE JEWS IN HIDING

1. A typical Polish commune (in Polish *gmina*; in German *Gemeinde*) usually included a dozen or more geographically contiguous villages.

2. Czesław Madajczyk, *Polityka III Rzeszy w Okupowanej Polsce* (Warsaw PWN, 1970), 1, 222.

3. APK, SAKr 1020/ IV K/ 147/50, p. 7.

4. APK, SAKr, IV K 239/49, deposition of Elder Piotr Trojanowski from Wieniec, p. 293.

5. Jan T. Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation: The Generalgouvernement, 1939–1944* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), 141.

6. Krystyna Kersten and Tomasz Szarota, eds., *Wieś polska 1939–1948: Materiały konkursowe* [Polish Village, 1939–1948] (Warsaw: Instytut Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk. Zakład Historii Polski Ludowej—Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1967–1971), vol. II, p. 265. I am grateful to Dr. Dariusz Libionka for drawing my attention to this text.

7. Gross, 142.

8. BAL, B 162/8940 p. 20—deposition of Antoni Patoń (b. 1897), during the war the elder in Oporyszów.

9. SAKr 1044 IV K 266/50, justification of the sentence.

10. IPN, Warsaw, collection GK/318/169, deposition of Krzysztof Kolacz, March 1, 1949.

11. APK, SAKr 1033/IV K200/50, testimony of Franciszek Noga, SAKr 1025 K IV 163/50. Account of Piotr Miłosz, September 27, 1948: “He came to me, as a section leader, and said that they had caught some thieves in the orchard.” It seems that the function of a *dziesiętnik* [section leader] was known only in the Kraków District.

12. IPN Kraków, Special Penal Court in Kraków [Specjalny Sąd Karny w Krakowie; SSPK], GK/203/91, interrogation of “section leader” Stanisław Kwaśniewski, March 16, 1945.

13. APK, SAKr, 974, IV K 210/49, statement made by witness Tadeusz Pęka from Pleśna.

14. YVA, microfilm reel JM 3499 v. 6, p. 125. Deposition of witness Antoni Wilk, August 28, 1947.

15. APK, SAKr, 994/IVK/6/50, pp. 18–19.

16. AIPN, GK/255/697, pp. 7–8, deposition of Izydor Wojtas.

17. Quoted after Dariusz Libionka, “Zagłada na wsi w optyce polskiej konspiracji (1942–1944)” [The Extermination of Jews in the Rural Areas as Perceived by the Polish Underground, 1942–1944], in *Zarys krajobrazu, Wieś polska wobec zagłady Żydów, 1942–1945* ed. Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2011), 99.

18. APK, SAKr 1044, IVK 266/50.
19. APK, SAKr, 1028 IV K 178/50, testimony of Franciszek Bułat.
20. APK, SAKr 1018 IV K 135/50, testimony of Piotr Kopytko, pp. 12–12v.
21. APK, SAKr, 1033/IV K 200/50.
22. APK, SAKr, 994/IVK/6/50, deposition of Piotr Kruk.
23. Ibid., interrogation of Władysław Kempniński.
24. APK, SAKr, 1024 IV K 156/50, deposition of Władysław Bednarz. The authority of the section leaders was strictly territorial; peasants from other villages were under no obligation to follow orders of “alien” leaders.
25. APK, SAKr, 1034/IVK 204/50, deposition of Józef Boryczko called “*Mo trzy hektary*” [“Got Three Hectares”].
26. SAKr, 1001/IV K/44/50, testimony of Elder Olbrycht.
27. APK, SAKr 965/ K 122/49, k. 185, plea for pardon sent by Elder Stanisław Łat to President Bierut.
28. APK, SAKr 1023/ IV K/ 155/50, interrogation of Władysław Nagórzański, pp. 11–11v.
29. This awkward term, *Obywatel narodowości żydowskiej*, was very often used in postwar court official language.
30. AIPN, GK, 217/281, pp. 31–32, testimony of Jan Słoma. Quoted in Alina Skibińska, “Dostał 10 lat, ale za co?” Analiza motywacji sprawców zbrodni na Żydach na wsi kieleckiej w latach 1942–1944” [“He Got 10 Years, and for What?” Analysis of Motivations of Murderers of the Jews in the Kielce area, 1942–1944], in *Zarys Krajobrazu*, ed. Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów 2011), 318.
31. AIPN, collection of Gestapo-Zichenau, 148/1841, denunciation of Władysław Koniecki and others, June 1941.
32. APK, SAKr, 1045, IVK, 271/50, deposition of Jan Panek, p. 29.
33. APK, SAKr, 1014/IVK/118/50, pp. 6–7, interrogation of Władysław Okoński, February 9, 1950. Shortly after the war, Okoński threw his lot in with the victorious communists and joined the ranks of the Polish United Workers’ Party [PZPR].
34. APK, SAKr, 1014/IVK/118/50, p. 23, deposition of Andrzej Szypulski, 14 March 1950.
35. APK, SAKr 1021/ IVK/150/50, t. III, pp. 512–514.
36. APK, SAKr 1021/ IVK/150/50, v. III, p. 518v.
37. APK, SAKr 1021/IVK/150/50 v. 1, pp. 31–32, interrogation of Piotr Sułek.
38. APK, SAKr 1021/ IVK/ 150/50, v. III, p. 515, deposition of Melchior Pomierny.
39. Ibid., p. 512v.
40. APK, SAKr 1021/ IVK/150/50, v. III, p. 514, testimony of Jan Mitka.
41. APK, SAKr 978, 225/49, investigations into the activities of Łątka Melchior and others; interrogation of Franciszek Głąb.

42. APK, SAKr 978, 225/49, deposition Anna Kurzawa, dated February 26, 1945.

43. *Biuletyn Informacyjny*, October 22, 1942, quoted in Dariusz Libionka, “Polska konspiracja wobec eksterminacji Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim” [Attitudes of the Polish Underground toward the Extermination of the Jews in the Warsaw District], in *Prowincja noc. Życie i Zagłada Żydów w Dystrykcie Warszawskim*, ed. Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka (Warsaw: IfiS PAN, 2005), 453.

44. *Informacja Bieżąca* 39 (October 23, 1942). Quoted in Libionka, “Polska konspiracja,” 454.

45. APK, SAKr 1020/IV K/ 147/50, p. 8.

46. Adam Kazimierz Musiał, *Krwawe Upiory, Dzieje powiatu Dąbrowa Tarnowska w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej* [Bloody Phantoms: The History of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County under the Nazi Occupation] (Tarnów: Karat, 1993), 205.

47. SAKr 1041/ IV K/ 244/50 k. 5–6, pp. 129–36, deposition of Elder Józef Wójcik. According to the elder, Byczek was denounced by one Franciszka K., who owed him money: she said, “Take him, he is a Jew, he keeps wandering in the area and talks in Yiddish.”

48. Postwar trials of people accused of collaboration with the Nazis.

49. Aleksandra Bańkowska, “Las jako miejsce przetrwania Zagłady. Zjawisko ukrywania się Żydów w lasach w okresie okupacji niemieckiej w latach 1941–1945 na terenie II Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej” (MA thesis, University of Warsaw, Department of History, 2006), 65–66.

50. AIPN, GK 255\319, p. 4.

51. YVA, microfilm JM 3499 v. 6, pp. 135–137, deposition of Andrzej Wojtowicz, Municipal Court [*Sąd Grodzki*] in Strzyżowo, January 16, 1948. The dossier is included in the investigation files of the Polish Main Commission.

52. APK, SAKr 1023/ IV K/155/50, pp. 124–124v. According to witnesses, there were close to one hundred people involved in the hunt for the sixty-year-old man. The Jew managed to flee once, but was quickly apprehended again. Later, he was “rendered” into the hands of the Polish “blue” policemen, who shot him. After the war, the elder and several other peasants stood accused as accessories to murder. All of them were found innocent.

53. APK, SAKr 967/K 153/49, testimony of Adam Kmiec.

54. The description of the manhunt is based on the file APK, SAKr 964, IV K 115/49 (K 24/50).

55. APK, SAKr 964, IV K 115/49 (K 24/50), questioning of suspect Adam Koziół, November 18, 1948.

56. APK, SAKr 965, K 136/49.

57. APK, SAKr 965 136/49 SAKr 965. The case deals with a manhunt organized in 1943 to catch several Jewish families hidden in the bunkers. The interrogation is of Stanisław Baran, January 20, 1949.

58. Tadeusz S. Krasnodębski, *Policjant konspiratorem. Szesnaście lat na celniku gestapo i bezpieki* (Międzyzdroje–Kraków: Arkadiusz Wingiert, Projekt Galicja, 2008), 173–74.

59. AŻIH, 301/3866, p. 1, testimony of Dawid Wasserstrum.

60. Tadeusz Krasnodębski, *Policjant konspiratorem*, 174–75. I decided to omit the more self-congratulatory passages that stress the patriotism and courage of the author. A detailed description of a German-organized manhunt can be found in APK, SAKr, 961K 83/49.

61. AZIH 301/1145. Testimony of Helena Aussenberg, Kraków, October 5, 1945.

62. Żarówka is a small village located one mile east of the border of Dąbrowa County, close to the Dulcza forest complex.

63. VHF, testimony of Antoni Balaryn, index no. 48515. After the war, officer Jan Pielach was said to have moved to the north of Poland and allegedly became a manager of the port in Szczecin.

64. APK, SAKr 1019 IV p. 141/50, deposition of S. Sypek.

65. AŻIH, 301/3215, testimony of Helena Aussenberg, Kraków, June 1, 1947.

66. APK, SAKr 1046 IVK 276/50, p. 14, testimony of witness Andrzej Gawron.

67. VHF, testimony of Zofia Nowik (b. Bloch in 1922), index no. 28302.

68. Testimony of Adam Merz, VHF, index number 46249.

69. In 2009, I tried to gain access to the archives of the Lublin diocese, in eastern Poland. The late Józef Życiński, archbishop of Lublin (and one of the more enlightened members of the Polish episcopate) turned down my request, explaining that: “Stochastic miracles happen rarely in ecclesiastical archives.” This was to imply that an open search of the Lublin diocese’s archives was out of the question; letter of Archbishop J. Życiński, September 29, 2009, in author’s possession.

70. “Bóg z instrukcją obsługi ‘Użyj i wyrzuć’” [“God with Handling Instructions: ‘Use and Discard’”], interview with Zbigniew Mikołajko conducted by Aleksandra Klich, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, December 25, 2010.

71. *Polacy Ratujący Żydów w Latach II Wojny Światowej, Teki Edukacyjne IPN* [Poles Saving the Jews during World War II: Educational Dossiers of the IPN] (Warsaw, IPN, 2008).

72. Jan Grabowski, *‘Je le connais, c’est un Juif!’ Varsovie 1939–1943. Le chantage contre les Juifs* (Paris: Editions Calmann-Lévy, 2008), 53–59.

73. Surprising as it may seem, the Germans prosecuted the *szmalcowniki*. Some were arrested and tried for bribing German officials, others for personifying Gestapo agents, and some faced the court for blackmailing “Aryan” Poles, having mistakenly taken them for Jews. In these cases, Poles reported the unlucky blackmailers to the police, triggering an official investigation.

74. Emmanuel Tanay, *Passport to Life: Autobiographical Reflections on the Holocaust* (Ann Arbor: Book Clearing House, 2004), 112–13.

75. Leszek Grzybowski, *Robotnicy w PZPR* [Workers in the PZPR] (Warsaw: K i W, 1979), 56; and Benon Dymek, *Geneza i działalność Polskiej Zjednoczonej*

Partii Robotniczej (1948–1954) [The Origins and the Activity of the Polish United Workers' Party] (Warsaw: ANS PZPR, 1988), 321.

7. IN THE DULCZA FOREST

1. In 1942, Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) fell on September 21.
2. Testimony of Herman Amsterdam, no. 881, filed with the Warsaw Central Jewish Historical Commission (CòKH). Cited in Jan Ziobroń, *Dzieje Gminy Żydowskiej w Radomyślu Wielkim* [History of Jewish Community in Radomyśl Wielki] (Radomyśl Wielki, n.p., 2009).
3. AŻIH 301/1145, testimony of Helena Aussenberg.
4. According to Jan Ziobroń, local historian from Radomyśl Wielki, the bandits were, most probably, members of Wojciech Idzik's band. Some time later another notorious bandit, Kosieniak, also showed up in the area. See Ziobroń, p. 64.
5. AŻIH, 301/ 3215, Testimony of Helena Aussenberg, p. 9.
6. Ziobroń, 66.
7. AŻIH, 301/3215, testimony of Helena Aussenberg.
8. AŻIH, 301/3215, p. 4.
9. AŻIH, 301/3215, p. 6.
10. AŻIH, 301/3215, testimony of Helena Aussenberg, p. 7.
11. AŻIH, 301/ 2342, Testimony of Cyla Braw.
12. Kosieniak was later killed with an axe by another peasant, in an unrelated incident.
13. AŻIH, 301/3866. Testimony of Dawid Wasserstrum.
14. It might well have been Paweł Szacher, son of Pinkas Szacher from village Wyrębiska. Pinkas Szacher had three sons: Paweł, Izaak, and Lejb. All four Szachers were killed in the Dulcza-Radgoszcz forests, in 1943 and 1944.
15. Interview with Regina Goldberg, Givat Ram, Israel, June 18, 2011.
16. VHF, testimony of Hela Lewi (Chaja Rosenblatt), born in 1921, index no. 9617. Interview with Mrs. Rosenblatt-Lewi, Paris, May 19, 2012. Interestingly, this manhunt was noted by the previously quoted Melania Weissenberg, who observed in her diary written in hiding, in Dąbrowa: "November was full of suffering. November 11 they brought a score of Jews to Dąbrowa."
17. Memoir of Rivka Shenker; copy of the manuscript in the possession of the author, pp. 72–73.
18. Interview with Regina Goldberg (b. Goldhut), Tel Aviv, Israel, June 18, 2011.

8. THE GERMAN POLICE

1. BAL, B 162/2151, p. 953.
2. BAL, B 162/2148, p. 83, testimony of Heinrich Hamann, April 7, 1960. "At the time Tarnów was considered the Jewish city, i.e. the city with the largest

number of Jewish inhabitants” [*Tarnow gilt damals als die Judenstadt, d.h. die Stadt mit den meisten jüdischen Einwohnern*] and that is why—according to the investigated policeman—especially brutal methods were required.

3. A list of German policemen from Tarnów can be found at the end of this book; BAL, G 162 file 2148, p. 143. In the 1960s and 1970s, German prosecutors from Bochum, Dortmund, and Düsseldorf conducted a number of investigations targeting the officers of the Tarnów SIPO and SD. The investigations, for the most part, were fruitless, but in a few cases the trials ended with lengthy sentences.

4. Palten died a free man, in Germany, in 1958.

5. V. Malottki died in Germany in a POW camp, in 1948.

6. Kastura was sentenced to death in Poland, in 1948. Rommelmann was also handed over to the Poles by the Americans. He was sentenced to death and executed in Tarnów, in 1948. For more about the trial of Rommelmann, see Bogdan Musiał, “NS-Kriegsverbrecher vor polnischen Gerichten, *Vierteljahrshefte für Jahrsgeschichte* 47 (1999): 48–53. In wartime documents and postwar investigations, one finds the names of other officers of the Tarnów SIPO: Unger, Ernst Hofer, Bernhard Willi, Maier, and SS-Scharführer Jakob Springer. Also mentioned in the SD (*Aussenkommando SD Tarnow*) are Eugen Arend and SS-Untersturmführer Schosstak; see BAL, B 162\2150, p. 420.

7. BAL, B162\2149, pp. 202–206 and 224, deposition of Eстера Landau.

8. BAL, B 162/2148, pp. 165–70.

9. Oppermann had personally executed the wife and the cousins of Bernard Stanisław Mond, a Polish general of Jewish descent who was at that time held in a POW camp in Germany. In 1943 his wife had been denounced to the German authorities and sent to the Tarnów ghetto; B162\2163, p. 3819. To learn more about the wartime crimes of Oppermann, see Andrzej Mężyk, *Karl Oppermann—kat ziemi tuchowskiej*, [Karl Oppermann—Butcher of the Tuchów Area] (Tuchów: Stowarzyszenie Miłośników Skołyszyna i Okolicy, 2001), 72–74.

10. AŽIH, 302\318, testimony of Chaja Rosenblatt (b. Garn).

11. BAL, B162\2149, p. 363. The Tarnów Kripo was headed by *Kriminaldirektor* Fleischer from Kraków.

12. BAL, B162\2149, p. 383.

13. One of the most active members of the *Sonderdienst* in the Dąbrowa area was Henryk Bau, who later worked for the Tarnów SD. AIPN, GK/164 file 6066, testimony of Paweł Piwowarczyk, April 29, 1946.

14. BAL, B 162\8732, p. 76.

15. Adam Kazimierz Musiał, *Dzieje powiatu Dąbrowa Tarnowska w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej* (Tarnów: Karat, 1993), 231–32.

16. Even today Guzdek’s name is remembered with horror by the older inhabitants of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County. His nicknames “Bloody Phantom” or “the Butcher” aptly reflect his wartime accomplishments. Guzdek was killed, in

unclear circumstances, probably by a member of the Polish underground, in August 1943.

17. Robert Jahn lived with a Polish woman, and used the identification of her husband, whom he had killed during the war, BAL, collection B 162\2164.

18. BAL, B 162 dossier 8940, the case of Rottwachtmeister Richard Keter (born in Jelanki or Witow). After the war Keter was sought by the police in connection with thirteen murders.

19. BAL, B 162\2151 p. 1258, hearing of Karl Christian Dörrschuck, the chief of Dębica gendarmerie detachment.

20. Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), 125–28.

21. *Ibid.*, 131.

22. Bundesarchiv (Berlin, Lichterfelde), BAB, R 20/87. The reports sent to Gendarmerie *Hauptmannschaft* Warschau.

23. APK, SAKr 1025, K IV 163/50, p. 3, deposition of witness Jan Sierak.

24. *Ibid.*, 15, hearing of Piotr Miłoś. After the war, Keter was unsuccessfully sought by the German authorities.

25. The gendarmerie reports can be found in collection R 20/ 87 of the Bundesarchiv (Berlin). In most cases the reports cite the dates, names of the police detachments involved, and the numbers and genders of executed Jews (for instance: *4 männliche u. 2 weibliche Juden*).

26. AIPN, GK/255/591, the hearing of Jan Stiekiel, a “blue” policeman. The Sanok area, although a part of the Kraków District, had a somewhat different ethnic composition, but the police practice remained the same.

27. APK, SAKr 991/IV K/1/50, deposition of Michalina S. from Dąbrowa Tarnowska. The victims of Michalina S. and the gendarmes were Sala Drelich and sisters Rywka and Maria Einhorn. In the same file is the testimony of Pinkas Drelich, July 1, 1946.

28. APK, SAKr, 1017/IVK/130/50, deposition of Michał Baczyński, pp. 55–56.

29. In the beginning of 1942, the police authorities requested that the gendarmes stationed in the *Generalgouvernement* fill in special forms, which would ascertain that they had no family ties to the local Polish population. An exception was made for former Polish citizens who held *Volksdeutscher* status. The interesting case of Gendarme Otto Lapsch illustrates this point. Lapsch, who was born in Pabianice, Poland, signed the *Volksliste* in 1939, joined the German police forces, and later in the war was stationed in Tarnów. Lapsch spoke better Polish than German. To make matters even more confusing, Lapsch's brother, as a Pole, served with the Polish armed forces in Italy. See the confidential report of Walter Stricker, April 2, 1961, YVA, TR 10/ 3762/5, p. 606 and AIPN, GK\104\207, pp. 50–51v, *Verwendung von polnisch versippten Pol.—und SD-Angehörigen in den eingegliederten Ostgebieten und im Generalgouvernement*.

30. SAKr 1025 IV K 164/50, p. 12.

31. Detailed reports were produced by the *Rollkommandos* from the Krasnystaw area (Lublin District); see AIPN, the collection of *Kommandeur der Gendarmerie Lublin*, GK\104 files 3 and 4. The *Rollkommandos* were used frequently during the increased antipartisan warfare, at the end of 1943 and in the beginning of 1944. Between February 14 and March 10, 1944, in the Lublin District alone, more than fifty-two gendarmes and policemen (including one major, four captains, and two lieutenants) were killed in action against “Bolshevik bandits.” AIPN, GK 104\24 *Sonderbefehl* of March 19, 1944, p. 28.

32. Bolesław Michał Nieczuja-Ostrowski, *Inspektorat AK “Maria” w walce* [Home Army Area “Mary” at War] (Warsaw: Bellona, 1995), 200–201. These *kommandos* created for special purposes were sometimes known as “police action groups.” See APK, SAKr 979/IVK/230/49, p. 14.

33. AIPN, GK 164\6066 k. 1, testimony of Stanisław Misiaszek, April 15, 1946. See also Adam Kazimierz Musiał, *Krwawe upiory. Dzieje powiatu Dąbrowa Tarnowska w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej*. Tarnów: Karat, 1993, 182–83.

34. According to several testimonies, however, Guzdek has been accidentally shot by his own colleague, another German gendarme.

35. IPN (Kr) 07\2592, trial of Wilhelm Rommelmann.

36. IPN (Kr) 07\2592, trial files of Wilhelm Rommelmann, pp. 9–9v. On March 25, 1948, the Tarnów District Court sentenced Rommelmann to death. He was hanged in Tarnów on November 9, 1948.

9. THE POLISH “BLUE” POLICE

1. APK, SAKr 1011 IV K 102/50, p. 26.

2. Adam Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski, rzecz o policji “granatowej” w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie* (Warsaw: PWN, 1990).

3. The areas in question were, in the south: Silesia (Schlesien), in the north: Pomorze (Pommern) and, in the west: Wielkopolska (Warthegau).

4. Tadeusz, S. Krasnodębski, *Policjant konspiratorem. Szesnaście lat na celowniku gestapo i bezpieki*. Międzyzdroje–Kraków: Arkadiusz Winięgiert, Projekt Galicja, 2008, 132.

5. AŽIH, 302/318, testimony of Chaja Rosenblatt (b. Garn).

6. Adam Kazimierz Musiał, *Krwawe upiory. Dzieje powiatu Dąbrowa Tarnowska w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej*. Tarnów: Karat, 1993, 38.

7. APK, SAKr 1025 IVK 164/50.

8. Mark Verstandig, *I Rest my Case* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2002), 187.

9. The plague of denunciations in Kraków was commented upon by Edward Kubalski, a prominent citizen of that city and author of a diary of everyday life under the occupation. According to Kubalski, the epidemic of denunciations in the capital city of the *Generalgouvernement* took on such proportions that it started to overwhelm the German institutions. During special meetings, German officials called in Polish priests and *voits* and ordered them to use their

influence with the Polish population, in order to stem the flow of anonymous letters to the police. See Edward Kubalski, *Niemcy w Krakowie* [Germans in Kraków] (Kraków: Austeria, 2010), entry for May 23, 1941. For more about denunciations in Warsaw, see Barbara Engelking, *Szanowny Panie Gistapo* (Warsaw, IFiS PAN, 2003).

10. APK, SAKr, 1013 IV K 109/50.

11. APK, SAKr, 1014/IVK/ 116/50, pp. 10–10v.

12. Ibid., 11–11v. The dead included three Jews named Spokojny and one more person whose name was not known.

13. This term was originally coined by Helen Fein in her important book *Accounting for Genocide: Victims and Survivors of the Holocaust* (New York: Free Press, 1979).

14. APK, SAKr, 1042/IVK/252/50.

15. APK, SAKr, 967 IVK 158/49, deposition of Wojciech Salej.

16. APK, SAKr, 967 IVK 158/49, testimony of witness Józef Kozub.

17. Archive of the IPN [Warsaw], AIPN, SOKr, 552, trial of Zbigniew P.

18. Memoir of Regina Goldfinger (b. Rivka Shenker).

19. Ibid., 81.

20. AŻIH, 301/1908, testimony of Aleksander Kampf.

21. It was not infrequent to see the murderers of Jews join the communist security apparatus. Membership in the “Peoples’ Militia” guaranteed a degree of immunity and often gave license to commit further act of violence. For a particularly heinous crime committed by local peasants, soon to become officers of “Peoples’ Militia,” see the deposition of Baruch Mehl, concerning the murder of his entire family in July 1944. YVA, 033 dossier 1943.

22. APK, SAKr 1034/ IV K/ 204/50, pp. 9–9v.

23. Ibid., 4–4v; 8–8v, “The policeman came to me with a loaded carbine and said, ‘You keep Jews!’ So I told him that I didn’t, but then another policeman came to me and said, ‘You are sheltering Jews!’”

24. Personal account obtained from Stuart Fischman, son of Berl Fischman.

25. SAKr 1025 IV K 164/50. “In July of 1942 they took away my cow, which I had left for safekeeping with Stefan Dobrowolski in Radwan, commune Mędrzychów”—testified Benek Grün.

26. Tadeusz Markiel, “Zagłada domu Trynczerów” [The Destruction of the House of Trynczer], *Znak* 4 (2008): 133. Once the “Jewish items” had been retrieved, the peasants called in the gendarmes, who shot all of the eighteen Jews from Gniewczyzna on the main road, in full view of the inhabitants.

27. APK, SAKr 1020/ IV K/147/50, p. 8.

28. APK, SAKr 1034 IV K/204/50, p. 56v.

29. AIPN, SWWW, 318/322.

30. Tadeusz S. Krasnodębski, *Policjant konspiratorem, Szesnaście lat na celowniku gestapo i bezpieki* (Międzyzdroje–Kraków: Arkadiusz Wingiert, Projekt Galicja, 2008), 116–17.

31. Mendel Kapelner (b. 1887) was a wealthy Jewish merchant who had been hiding in the Siedliszowice area since the summer of 1942.

32. APK, SAKr 1023/IV K/ 155/50, deposition of witness Józef Dybała, pp. 6–6v.

33. Ibid., deposition of witness Józef Migał, pp. 7–7v.

34. APK, SAKr 1001/k IV/44/50.

35. AŻIH, collection 301/1365, transcribed at the District Jewish Historical Commission in Kraków.

36. APK, SAKr, 1014, IVK, 118/50, pp. 20 and 23. Service note by officer Henryk Dudak and the deposition of officer Andrzej Szypulski.

37. AIPN, SWWW, 318/293.

38. APK, SAKr, 1055 IV K 344/50. Apart from Szewczyk's testimony, we also have the deposition of Eugeniusz Niechciał, another policeman who is often mentioned in this text. See APK, SKKr, 1055 IV K 344/50, pp. 25–26. The Süß sisters managed to survive almost a year in hiding. Some more information about their life and fate can be found in APK, SAKr 1034/IV K/204/50.

39. Musiał, 197.

40. APK, K 122/49, SAKr 965, interrogation of the suspect, December 12, 1947.

41. Ibid., minutes of the sentencing proceedings, November 8, 1949.

42. Józef Górski, manuscript "Na przełomie dziejów," National Library, Warsaw, Manuscript Section, III 9776. An English translation of parts of Górski's memoirs appears in *Holocaust: Studies and Materials* (Warsaw: Polish Center for Holocaust Research, 2008), 300–312.

43. AAN, AK, 203/x-68, p. 31.

44. AAN, AK 203/X-69, report from June 1943.

45. APK, SAKr, 1014, IV K/116/50 p. 9v.

46. PK, SAKr 1055, IVK/344/50, p. 38.

47. APK, SAKr 1025 IV K 164/50, testimony of Beniek Grün, January 2, 1950.

48. APK, SAKr 1011 IV K 102/50, p. 26.

49. AIPN, Sąd Wojewódzki dla Województwa Warszawskiego, GK 318\574 k. 17, interrogation of Stefan Pragacz, December 17, 1954. For another description of a "drinking session" after the execution of Jews, see APK, SAKr, 1014, IV K/110/50, p. 11v.

50. APK, SAKr 967 K 153/49, pp. 77–78.

51. APK, SAKr, 1034/IVK 204/50, testimony of Bronisław Rajski.

52. APK, SAKr, 1022, IV K, 151/50.

53. AŻIH, collection 302/66, testimony of "Maria Steczko," February 25, 1946.

54. Dariusz Libionka and Paweł P. Reszka, "Święto Zmarłych w Rechcie" [Feast of All Saints in Rechta], *Karta* 46 (2005): 131.

10. THE BAUDIENST

1. The only study devoted to the *Baudienst* was published nearly thirty years ago. See Mściśław Wróblewski, *Służba Budowlana (Baudienst) w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1940–1945* (Warsaw: PWN, 1984).

2. BAL, B 162\ 2151, p. 944, interrogation of Alfred Eckmann, head of *Baudiensthauptstelle* Tarnów.

3. *Górale* [mountain people]; in Polish a term describing the population living in southern Poland, in the Tatra Mountains area. During the war, the Germans tried to transform the residents into a separate nationality, the so-called *Goralenvolk*, in order to fracture the unity of the Polish society. See USHMM, selected records from the Polish State Archives in Tarnów, collection RG-15.020M (Tarnów City Records), microfilm reel no. 11.

4. Max Freiherr Du Prel, *Das Generalgouvernement* (Würzburg: Triltsch, 1942), 69.

5. Police raid (Ger).

6. BAL, B 162\2150 k. 711, December 7, 1961, deposition of Therese Messerer, the owner of a transport company living in Tarnów, 1941–1945.

7. BAL, B 162\ 2151, pp. 945–46. See as well the testimony of Franz Irrgang, B 162\ 2151, p. 1245.

8. BAL, B 162\2151, p. 1153, testimony of soldier Heinrich Anlauf.

9. BAL, B 162\43191, pp. 15–18. Investigation against the gendarmes from Dąbrowa, opened in 1948 by the UN War Crimes Commission—based on the testimony of Ludwik Zajac and Alter Milet. A copy of the deposition made by witness Józef Surowiec from Gruszów Mały whose wife had been shot by Dąbrowa gendarmes for stealing from Jewish houses. Also, see p. 18, the deposition of Piotr Chmura from Gruszów Mały, February 16, 1947.

10. T. Krasnodębski, *Policjant konspiratorem. Szesnaście lat na celowniku gestapo i bezpieki*. [A Policeman and a Resistance Fighter. Sixteen Years at the Gunpoint of the Gestapo and the Communist Secret Service] (Międzyzdroje–Kraków: Arkadiusz Wigiert, Projekt Galicja, 2008), 110.

11. The great synagogue in Dąbrowa Tarnowska was also turned into a storage depot. See VHF, testimony of Harold Brand (b. 1927), index number 43549. VHF, testimony of Antoni Balaryn, index no. 48515.

12. Fire-sales of “post-Jewish” goods were reported from the liquidated ghettos in Warsaw, Kraków, and Tarnów.

13. Joseph E. Tenenbaum, *Legacy and Redemption: A Life Renewed* (Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2005), 105.

14. *Ibid.*, 110.

15. AŻIH, 301/788, testimony of Chaim Ehrlich.

16. AŻIH, 301/4600, p. 5, testimony of Józef Kornilo.

17. AŻIH, 301/2040, testimony of Giza Beller (Landau), b. June 5, 1932 in Tarnów.

18. AŻIH, 301/818, testimony of Izrael Izaak from Tarnów. The full text of this powerful account is found at the end of this book.

19. Ibid.

20. AŻIH 301/2053, testimony of Lila Wider from Tarnów.

21. AŻIH, 301/2059, testimony of Blanka Goldman from Tarnów.

22. Interrogation of Gustav Pochert, the driver for the Tarnów Gestapo, BAL, B 162/2151, p. 955.

23. AŻIH, 301/1077, testimony of Mojżesz Teller.

24. AŻIH, 301/2058, testimony of an anonymous Polish “blue” policeman, a.k.a “Stefan.”

25. AŻIH, 301/3263, testimony of Henryk Herstein.

26. Bogdan Musiał, “Zbrodnicza perfidia czy umiejętne działanie,” *Rzeczpospolita* (March 19, 2011).

27. AAN, collection of the *Regierung des Generalgouvernements, Hauptabteilung Innere Verwaltung, Abteilung VIII Baudienst*, file 536/8, pp. 14–15.

28. Okręgowa Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce (Kraków), v. 612, pp. 258–77. Quoted in Wróblewski, *Śłużba Budowlana*, 158–59.

29. The letter of Archbishop Sapieha to “His Excellency Mr. Governor General and Minister of the Reich, Dr Frank.” The full text of this memorandum is found in Jerzy Wolny, *Arcybiskup Adam Sapieha w obronie narodu i kościoła polskiego w czasie drugiej wojny światowej*, in *Księga Sapieżyńska*, ed. Jerzy Wolny, v. II, (Kraków, n.p., 1987), 43.

11. THE LAST MONTHS OF WAR

1. Additional information about this issue appears in Henryk Kotarski, “Działania wojsk regularnych na terenie powiatu Dąbrowa Tarnowska podczas II Wojny Światowej” [The Activities of Regular Troops on the Territory of Dąbrowa Tarnowska County during World War II], in *Dąbrowa Tarnowska. Zarys dziejów miasta i powiatu*, ed. Feliks Kiryk and Zygmunt Ruta (Warsaw–Kraków: PWN, 1974), 641–53, 646–50.

2. Additional details about Pagos are found at the end of this book, in the chapter devoted to the righteous helpers.

3. YVA, 03\2020, testimony of the Weit brothers.

4. Unlike shelters located in villages, the precise location of hideouts that were built in the forests was difficult to pinpoint. Most of these bunkers have been located in the large Radgoszcz-Dulcza forest, parts of which—as it has been earlier noted—lay in the neighboring Mielec County.

5. AŻIH, 301\3866, p. 2, testimony of Dawid Wasserstrum.

6. Kotarski, 646.

7. AŻIH, 301\3866, p. 2. One of the “forest Jews” captured by the Germans and taken for a fugitive peasant was immediately sent to dig trenches.

8. It is impossible to say whether Cyla's group was identical to the group described earlier by Helena Aussenberg. Quite possibly it was another group of Jews who were trying to break through the front.

9. AŻIH, 301/2342, testimony of Cyla Braw (b. 1935), February 1947. The testimony was filed with the Jewish Regional Historical Commission in Kraków.

10. See Jan Ziobroń, *Dzieje Gminy Żydowskiej w Radomyślu Wielkim* [The History of the Jewish Community in Radomysl Wielki] (Radomyśl, n.p. 2009).

11. Interview with Regina Goldberg, Givat Ram, Israel, June 2011.

12. From the diary of Melania Weissenberg. A copy is in the author's possession.

13. VHF, witness Ann Shore, index no. 39906.

14. VHF, testimony of Adam Merc [Majer Künstlich], no. 36249–42.

15. Similar phenomena of "last-minute murders" have been noted by Omer Bartov, who conducted in-depth studies of Buczacz, a small town in District Galizien. See Omer Bartov, "Wartime Lies and Other Testimonies: Jewish–Christian Relations in Buczacz, 1939–1944," *East European Politics and Societies* 25, no. 3 (August 2011): 486–511. On other "late murders" in the Dąbrowa area, see APK, SAKr, 963/IVK 98/49; SAKr, 1022/IV K151/50; AIPN, GK 376/50 (376 PSAKr/50). For a similar pattern (a Jewish family of four who were killed a few days before the arrival of Red Army) in the nearby Mielec community, see AIPN Rzeszów, collection of Rzeszów Appellate Court (SAR), IPN Rz 353/72; quoted in Andrzej Krempa, *Zagłada Żydów Mieleckich* (Mielec: Biblioteka Muzeum Regionalnego, 2012), 101.

12. DIFFERENT KINDS OF HELP

1. APK, SAKr 1001 K 44/50, testimony of witness Adela Gądek.

2. Jan Grabowski, "Rural Society and the Jews in Hiding: Elders, Night Watches, Firefighters, Hostages and Manhunts," *Yad Vashem Studies* 40, no. 1 (2012): 1–26.

3. Among the most important studies devoted to this issue are Emanuel Ringelblum, *Polish–Jewish Relations during the Second World War* (Evanston, Ill., Northwestern University Press, 1992); Teresa Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie, 1942–1945* (Warsaw: PIW, 1982); Nechama Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi–Occupied Poland* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Władysław Bartoszewski *Ten jest z Ojczyzny Mojej* [He, Who Is of My Homeland] (Warsaw, Świat Książki, 2007); Marcin Urynowicz, "Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej exterminowanej przez okupanta niemieckiego w okresie drugiej wojny światowej" [Organized and Individual Help of Poles to the Jewish Population Exterminated by the German Occupier during World War II], in Andrzej Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką, 1939–1945* [Poles and Jews under the German Occupation] (Warsaw, IPN, 2006).

4. Tec, 90.

5. Urynowicz, 253–54.
6. Bob Moore, “The Rescue of Jews from Nazi Persecution: A Western European Perspective,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 5, no. 2 (June 2003): 295.
7. Zuzanna Schnepf-Kołacz, “Pomoc Polaków dla Żydów na wsi w czasie okupacji niemieckiej. Próba opisu na przykładzie Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata” [Poles Helping Jews in the Rural Areas during the German Occupation: The Case of the Righteous among Nations], in *Zarys krajobrazu, Wieś polska wobec zagłady Żydów, 1942–1945*, ed. Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2011), 204.
8. Christopher R. Browning, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), 255. Postwar court records show several investigations into the murders of Jewish escapees from labor camps. One such case deals with mass murder committed on thirty–forty Jews (women and men) who had fled the Skarzysko-Kamienna camp in August 1944. On August 17, the Jews were intercepted in the forest by a sixty-man-strong unit of the Home Army [AK], and were executed. See Jerzy Mazurek and Alina Skibińska, “Barwy Białe’ w drodze na pomoc walczącej Warszawie. Zbrodnie AK na Żydach” [“White Colors” Detachment on Its Way to Help Fighting Warsaw: Home Army (AK) and Its Crimes against the Jews], *Zagłada Żydów* 7 (2011): 422–66. In June 1944, a group of twelve Jews fled the Strachowice labor camp. In early July 1944, while making their way through the forests, they encountered a unit of the Peoples’ Army (Armia Ludowa; AL) and volunteered to join the left-leaning partisans. The partisans took the Jews aside, stole their valuables, and then murdered all of them. See Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, “Proces Tadeusza Maja. Z dziejów oddziału ‘Świt’ AL na Kielecczyźnie.” [The Trial of Tadeusz Maj. from the History of the “Dawn” Detachment of AL in the Kielce Area], *Zagłada Żydów* 7 (2011): 170–213.
9. Yitzhak “Antek” Zuckerman, *A Surplus of Memory: Chronicle of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 421.
10. YVA, o3/ 681, testimony of Jakub Glatztern.
11. Oskar Pinkus, *The House of Ashes* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993), 164–65, quoted in Barbara Engelking, *Jest Taki Piękny Dzień*, 136.
12. VHF, testimony of Hela Levi (Rosenblatt), index no. 9617.
13. Hersz Buch who, in early 1944, lived in Oleśno, close to Dąbrowa, paid his host \$30 per month for shelter but also noted: “It was really a very low price; [the hosts] had no great expectations.” YVA o3/2865 r, testimony of Hersz Buch (born in Tarnów, 1909).
14. Interview with Chaja Rosenblatt-Lewi, Paris, May 19, 2012.
15. Anna Bikont, “Puścić Żyda na zającza” [To Send Jew as Bait], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, February 20, 2011.
16. The profits were, indeed, considerable. Adam Borsa, quoted above, said: “I know that the Jews were very rich. One gave my father 40 *morgi* (approximately 50 acres) of land. Another Jewess gave my mother a large house in Tarnów, with

10–15 apartments; after 1989 I recovered the title to this house, and sold it.” See Bikont, “Puścić Żyda.”

17. During the war these transfers were illegal. By the fall of 1939, the Germans had decided to put all transactions involving Jewish real estate on hold. These measures helped the German authorities to seize the Jewish property at their will and eliminated attempts of Jews to transfer ownership to their “Aryan” friends.

18. AAN/AK s 203/x-73, p. 13.

19. APK, SAKr 1036/ IV K/219/50, pp. 23–23v.

20. In 1943, in Warsaw, a monthly payment for a Jewish shelter was evaluated at 2.5–3,500 zlotys. See Grabowski, *Rescue for Money: Paid Helpers in Poland, 1939–1945*, Search and Research Series, Yad Vashem (Jerusalem, 2008), 25–28.

21. AIPN, GK 376/53 (376 PSAKr/53), Prosecutor’s Office, Kraków Appellate Court. The files contain testimonies of Jewish survivors: F. and B. Grün, pp. 113 and 230 (some pages without numbers).

22. APK, SAKr 965 K 122/49.

23. AIPN, Gestapo Zichenau, dossier 148/3031, June, 23, 1943. Providing the Gestapo with a detailed, itemized, list of valuables was, of course, intended as a last form of revenge on the treacherous helper. The interrogation of Miriam L. Szejna was conducted by Krim.-Skr. Henze from the police border detachment (*Grenzkommissariat*; Greko) in Ostrołęka. Once the investigation was completed, Szejna was sent to Auschwitz.

24. APK, SAKr, 1055/IVK/344/50, p. 29, deposition of Bronisław Rajski.

25. Memoir of Rivka Shenker, in the author’s possession.

26. AŻIH, 301/3215, testimony of Helena Aussenberg.

27. APK, SAKr 1018/IV K/ 135/50, pp. 15–15v. Questioning of S. Szargan.

28. APK, SAKr 975/ K212/49, p. 12–13v. In 1949, the Kraków Appellate Court sentenced Nosek to death. The sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court, but the president of the Polish Republic, Bolesław Bierut, commuted it to life in prison. Nosek left prison in 1956.

29. VHF, testimony of Leo Drellich (b. 1913), index no. 51138.

30. VHF, testimony of Antoni Balaryn, index no. 48515.

13. THE RIGHTEOUS

1. Nechama Tec, *Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland*, chapters 3 and 4 in particular.

2. In 1945, a County Jewish Commission was formed in Dąbrowa Tarnowska. The commission was composed of ten members, and produced lists of survivors who had made their way back to the city. The commission still existed in the spring of 1946. See AŻIH, collection of CKŻP, 303/V/492.

3. Just recently, in 2012, with the generous help of the European Union, the Dąbrowa synagogue was rebuilt and restored.

4. The discussion was best summarized in an article by Dariusz Libionka: “Polskie piśmiennictwo na temat zorganizowanej i indywidualnej pomocy Żydom (1945–2008)” [Polish Writing about the Organized and Individual Help Given to Jews, 1945–2008], *Zagłada Żydów* 4 (2008): 18–80.

5. Artur Domosławski, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, May 18, 2001.

6. This extraordinary story is described in detail in a recent book devoted to the issue of saving Jews; see Jacek Leociak, *Ratowanie. Opowieści Polaków i Żydów* [Rescuing: Stories of Poles and Jews] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2010), 94–122.

7. Marcin Urynowicz, “Chaim Berman’s Life and Death: From the History of Rescuing the Jews,” in “*Kto w takich czasach przechowuje Żydów?*” *Polacy niosący pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie okupacji niemieckiej* [Who Would Keep the Jews in Times Like These . . . ? Poles Who Saved the Jews Under the German Occupation], ed. Aleksandra Namysło (Warsaw: IPN, 2009), 260.

8. Mateusz Szpytma, *The Risk of Survival: The Rescue of Jews by the Poles and the Tragic Consequences for the Ulma Family from Markowa*. (Warsaw: IPN, 2009).

9. Yad Vashem Archive, Department of the Righteous, file no. 2340.

10. See Tadeusz Markiel, “Zagłada domu Trynczerów” [The Destruction of the House of Trynczer], *Znak* 4 (2008): 119–51.

11. Jan T. Gross, “‘Ten jest z Ojczyzny mojej . . .’, ale go nie lubię” [He Is of My Homeland . . . but I Do Not Like Him], *Aneks*, 41–42 (1986): 13–36. Gross’s article was reprinted in 2007 in his *Upiorna Dekada. Eseje o stereotypach na temat Żydów, Polaków, Niemców, komunistów i kolaboracji, 1939–1948* [Horrible Decade: Essays about the Stereotypes Concerning Jews, Poles, Communists, and Collaboration, 1939–1948] (Kraków: Austeria, 2007). Regrettably, this poignant and hard-hitting essay has been either dismissed or otherwise ignored by other scholars. Subsequently, Gross expanded on these issues in his books, including *Neighbors, Fear*, and, most recently, *Golden Harvest*.

12. APK, SAKr, 985, K 244/49, deposition of Józef Stopka, December 18, 1945, pp. 231–31v.

13. Izrael Gutman and Szmul Krakowski, *Unequal Victims: Poles and Jews during World War Two* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1986).

14. *Ibid.*, 196.

15. Jan Grabowski, “*Je le connais, c’est un Juif!*” *Varsovie 1939–1943. Le chantage contre les Juifs* (Paris: Éditions Calmann-Lévy, 2008), 57–64.

16. From the diary of Melania Weissenberg. In 1991, following the recommendation of Molly Applebaum [b. Melania Weissenberg], Wiktor Wójcik and Emilia Kułaga were awarded medals of Righteous Among Nations by Yad Vashem.

17. Adam Kazimierz Musiał, *Krwawe Upiory. Dzieje Powiatu Dąbrowa Tarnowska w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej* (Tarnów: Karat, 1993), 195.

18. Before the war, there was only one Jewish family in Szarwark, but in nearby Brnik the Jews were more numerous (the 1921 national census found thirty-seven Jews in Brnik).

19. APK, SAKr 967, k. 153/49, k. 35, testimony of Samuel Metzger, May 19, 1948.

20. This was not the first altercation between Wieczorek and Metzger. In August 1940 Wieczorek and his neighbor, Władysław Rzepka, stood accused of having beaten up Metzger and telling him “to go to work, and not to buy livestock.” See APK, Tarnów, collection of the Municipal Court [Sąd Grodzki] in Dąbrowa Tarnowska, investigation against Władysław Rzepka and Adam Wieczorek, July–August 1940.

21. APK, SAKr 967, 153/49, pp. 61–63, letter of November 17, 1948.

22. One of the rare cases illustrating the participation of local AK in anti-Jewish violence involved Jan Musiał, an AK commander in Dąbrowa Tarnowska. In 1950 he stood accused of capturing a young Jewish woman and delivering her to the Polish police. This case, from several points of view, deserves mentioning. Józefa Mędryś, Musiał’s aunt, testified in court: “One day Józef Kordyl brought to my house a Jewess, which he had earlier caught in Nieciecza . . . he then said to Jan Musiał: ‘I caught a Jewess, let’s take her to Otfinów [to the Polish “blue” police station]. A moment later they took the Jewess and escorted her toward Otfinów. They paid no attention to her pleas to let her go.’” In her subsequent deposition, Mędryś provided more details: “She [the Jewish woman] said to them: ‘Gentlemen, what did I do to you? Please, let me go!’” In April 1950 the authorities heard from several other witnesses, including the cart driver, who had been forced to deliver Musiał, Kordyl, and their Jewish captive to the police. Musiał himself explained: “The policemen took the Jewess off our hands and three days later they shot her. On the way the Jewess kept begging us to let her go, because she wanted to live, but I and Kordyl we told her to have no fear because the policemen would send her to the ghetto. But I knew very well that the ‘blue’ police and the Germans shot all captured Jews right away.” Over the course of the next few months the testimonies and statements made by people involved in Musiał’s trial changed dramatically. Witnesses and the accused revised their previous statements, and blame was put squarely on the shoulders of Józef Kordyl (who had died in an accident at work, in 1943). The cart driver also had a change of heart and now testified to Musiał’s innocence, naming Kordyl as instigator and villain. On October 14, 1950, after six months of investigation, the Kraków Appellate Court declared the accused not guilty. Kordyl—for obvious reasons—was not there to defend himself. To add insult to injury, Musiał accused Rozalia Abramówna (the Jewish victim) of being “a German spy who acted against the interests of the Home Army (AK).” Abramówna, for obvious reasons, was unable to defend her good name. Shifting the blame onto the dead became a pattern in many cases involving the murdered Jews, and the courts went along with this charade. It is striking that the judges acted this way even when leaders of the local anticommunist underground were involved. Finally, several murders of Jews

(some of them killed just days before the arrival of Soviet forces) committed by units of Home Army were reported from neighboring Mielec County. See Andrzej Krempa, *Zagłada Żydów Mieleckich* (Mielec: Biblioteka Muzeum Regionalnego w Mielcu, 2012), 93–99.

23. APK, SAKr 967, 153/49, p. 73, deposition of witness Grabka, January 24, 1949.

24. APK, SAKr 967, 153/49, p. 37, interrogation of Elder Stanisław Bartosz.

25. APK, SAKr 967, 153/49, p. 18, interrogation of Adam Kmiec, October 18, 1948. “The elder told us to take these Jewesses to Franciszek Owsiak’s house and to watch them until the morning. So we obeyed his order, took the Jewesses to Owsiak’s house, and guarded them the whole night.”

26. APK, SAKr 967, K. 153/49, pp. 77–79, testimony of Piotr Skrzyniarz, January 24, 1949.

27. At the time, the Restghetto (“secondary ghetto”) still existed in Tarnów, although its inhabitants were successively executed or removed to the Płaszów concentration camp.

28. APK, SAKr 967, K. 153/49, p. 41, testimony of Stanisław Bartosz, October 14, 1948.

29. AIPN, GK/255/319 [SOKr], pp. 11–12.

30. APK, SAKr 967, K IV. 153/49, p. 78.

31. Ibid., 25, interrogation of Józef Pieprz.

32. Ibid., 30, deposition of Jan Kmiec, October 15, 1948.

33. Ibid., 50, deposition of Piotr Skrzyniarz, October 16, 1948.

34. APW, SAKr, 967, K IV 156/49, p. 2, testimony of W. Salej, December 22, 1947.

35. The Jagdkommando responsible for the massacre in Szczurowa included (in addition to the German gendarmes) the “blue” policemen Szewczyk, Niechciał, Matryka, Walkowski, and others. See interrogation of Jan Szewczyk, SAKr 1055/IVK/344/50, pp. 36–37.

36. In 1970, the authorities questioned Jan Sitka, who was the elder of Szarwark during the war. According to Sitka, after the murders, the Germans ordered him to load the firewood belonging to the victims, and to deliver it to the police station, in Dąbrowa: “When we loaded the logs, I saw Jewish books and journals, which would suggest that Jews were hiding at Mendala’s place.” See BAL, B 162/8732, p. 102.

37. All testimonies can be found in BAL, collection B 162/8732.

38. BAL, B 162/8732, p. 105.

39. Ibid., 110.

40. Marian Suda, “Sprawiedliwy Józef Gibes” [The Righteous Józef Gibes], *Kurier Dąbrowski*, 1995 [n.d.], p. IV. This article can be found on the website of Wietrzychowice parish. See <https://166731883908173467-a-1802744773732722657-sites.googlegroups.com/site/cmeto2009/home/wojna-1939-45/ukrywanie-zydow-w-jadownikach-mokrych/2.jpg>.

41. VHF, testimony of Adam Merc [b. Majer Kuenstlich], no. 36249–42.
42. Krempa, 102.
43. Mark Verstandig, *I Rest my Case* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2002), 205. Cited in Krempa, 109.
44. In 1947, engineer Bolesław Sroka was appointed director of the local agricultural college.
45. ŻIH, 301/1571, testimony of Fela Grün, Kraków, June 12, 1946.
46. Later, under the occupation, the same forest ranger murdered one of the Grün sisters.
47. AŻIH, 301/1571.
48. Ibid.
49. APK, SAKr, dossier 1030 IV K 181/50.
50. APK, SAKr, dossier 1025 IV K 164/50, testimony of Fela Grün.
51. APK, SAKr 1025, IVK, 164/50 pp. 103–103v, interrogation of Stanisław Młynarczyk, a “blue” policeman from Radgoszcz, March 1, 1950.
52. Harald Welzer, *Sprawcy. Dlaczego zwykli ludzie dokonują masowych mordów* (Warsaw: Scholar, 2010), 125–27.
53. Leociak, 259–61.
54. YVA, 03/2020, testimony of the brothers Abram and Awigdor Weit. Also see the testimony of Rosa Weit (b. Szlezynger), Awigdor’s wife, who survived in the camps. YVA 03\2176.
55. Ibid., 13.

CONCLUSION

1. Małgorzata Niezabitowska and Tomasz Tomaszewski, *Ostatni, Współcześni Żydzi Polscy* [The Last Ones: Contemporary Polish Jews] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1993), 150.
2. Ibid., 148.

APPENDIX

1. Erev Rosh Hashanah—Eve of Jewish New Year 5701—fell on September 14, 1939.
2. Reference to the Totenkopf, or “skull and bones” insignia of the SS.
3. In fact, Tisha b’Av, i.e., the 9th day of the month of Av (the day commemorating the destruction of both the First Temple and Second Temple). In 1942 it fell on July 23rd. The deportation action in Dąbrowa began on July 17th.
4. The stamps (“work permits”) put by the Germans on the identity papers indicated that a person was useful and could avoid deportation, for the time being.
5. Most probably the author refers here to a woman who, for some reason (smuggling, personal) entered the ghetto. Poles were forbidden from crossing

into the “Jewish quarter” and, during and after the “Actions,” unlawful entry carried the penalty of death.

6. SIPO (*Sicherheitspolizei*)—Security police.

7. Should be 1942.

8. Gravestone in Hebrew.

9. Heinrich Hamann, the chief of Gestapo in Nowy Sącz.

10. After the deportations of the fall of 1942 the Tarnów ghetto had been divided into two areas: “A” and “B.” The division lasted until the September 2, 1943 *Aktion*.

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State Archive in Kraków [Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie (APKr)]

Court files dealing with cases from Dąbrowa Tarnowska and the surrounding areas, used in this book:

Kraków Appellate Court [Sąd Apelacyjny w Krakowie (SAKr)]

954, IV K 51/49

964, K 114/49

970, K 178/49

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964, IV K 115/49

973, K 199/49

956, IV K 58–61/49

(K 24/50)

974, K 206/49

960, IV K 72/49

964, K 118/49

974, K 209/49

961, K 82/49

965, K 136/49

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965, K 134/49

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984, IV K 239/49

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991, K 1/50

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| 995, K 9/50 | 1013, IV K 111/50 | 1036, IV K 219/50 |
| 995, K 10/50 | 1013, IV K 114/50 | 1042, IV K 250/50 |
| 995, K 16/50 | 1014, IV K 118/50 | 1043, IV K 256/50 |
| 999, K 33/50 | 1015, IV K 122/50 | 1044, IV K 265/50 |
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| 1000, K 39/50 | 1018, IV K 135/50 | 1050, IV K 294/50 |
| 1000, K 40/50 | 1019, IV K 141/50 | 1051, IV K 301/50 |
| 1001, K 44/50 | 1019, IV K 142/50 | 1051, IV K 312/50 |
| 1001, K 49/50 | 1020, IV K 147/50 | 1051, IV K 313/50 |
| 1002, K 51/50 | 1022, IV K 151/50 | 1053, IV K 327/50 |
| 1002, K 54/50 | 1022, IV K 151/50 | 1054, IV K 336/50 |
| 1004, K 66/70 | 1023, IV K 155/50 | 1055, IV K 343/50 |
| 1005, K 70/50 | 1024, IV K 156/50 | 1055, IV K 344/50 |
| 1006, K 74/50 | 1025, IV K 163/50 | 1055, IV K 350/50 |
| 1006, K 75/50 | 1025, IV K 164/50 | 1056, IV K 359/50 |
| 1009, K 92/50 | 1028, IV K 175/50 | 1057, IV K 364/50 |
| 1009, K 94/50 | 1028, IV K 178/50 | 1034, IV K 204/50 |
| 1009, K 95/50 | 1029, IV K 180/50 | 1029, IV K 180/50, |
| 1011, IV K 102/50 | 1030, IV K 181/50 | 1021, IV K 150/50 |
| 1011, IV K 104/50 | 1032, IV K 191/50 | 1046, IV K 278/50 |
| 1013, IV K 109/50 | 1033, IV K 200/50 | 1053, K 326/50 |

Urząd Wojewódzki w Krakowie, Powiat Dąbrowa Tarnowska [Kraków Voievodship Office, County Dąbrowa Tarnowska], UWKr II 3173, Spis nieruchomości żydowskich i poniemieckich [Index of Post-Jewish and Post-German Real Estate]

State Archive in Kraków, Tarnów branch [Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie Oddział w Tarnowie]

Municipal Court in Dąbrowa Tarnowska [Sąd Grodzki w Dąbrowie Tarnowskiej]

Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw (AŻIH)

Testimonies (1945–1947)

301/767, Testimony of Michał Pinkas from Dąbrówka and Radomyśl Wielki

301/772, Testimony of Adeli Gold z Ryglie pod Tarnowem

301/788, Testimony of Chaima Ehrlicha z Książa Wielkiego

301/818, Testimony of Izaaka Izraela z Tarnowa

301/1571, Testimony of Feli Grün z Radgoszczy

301/1591, Testimony of Erny Landau z Dąbrowy Tarnowskiej

301/1637, Testimony of Izaaka Stieglitza z Dąbrowy Tarnowskiej

301/1908, Testimony of Aleksandra Kampfa z Dąbrowy Tarnowskiej

301/2040, Testimony of Gیزی Beller (Landau)

- 301/2342, Testimony of Cyla Braw from Dulcza Wielka
 301/2348, Testimony of Altera Mileta z Dąbrowy Tarnowskiej
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 301/3419, Testimony of Izaak Stieglitz from Dąbrowa Tarnowska
 301/3866, Testimony of Dawid Wasserstrum from Dąbrowa Tarnowska
 301/4600, Testimony of Józef Kornilo
 302/30, Diary of Stanisław Żemiński
 302/66, Testimony of "Maria Steczko"
 302/318, Testimony of Chaja Rosenblatt (b. Garn)
 211, Jewish Self-Help [Żydowska Samopomoc Społeczna], file 340 [Dąbrowa Tarnowska]

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Sondergericht Lemberg, R 77

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington (USHMM)

RG 15.020 M, Selected Records from the Polish State Archives in Tarnów

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 03/2176, Testimony of Rosa Weit (b. Szlezynger)
 03/2227, Testimony of Anker Jecheskiel
 03/2363, Testimony of dr. Jehuda Schindel
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| B 162/2150 | B 162/2162 | B 162/8732 |
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 Harold Brand, index number 43549
 Leo Drellich, 51138
 Hela Levi (Chaja Rosenblatt b. Garn), index no. 9617
 Joseph Matzner, index no. 24113
 Adam Merc, 36249–42
 Zofia Nowik (b. Bloch), index no. 28302
 Ann Shore (b. Goldman), index no. 39906
 Leon Silber, index no. 5251
 Morris Suss (index no. 27618
 Rae Weitz (b. Goldman), index no. 40783
 Carl Willner, index no. 01899

2. *Unpublished memoirs, diaries*

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