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

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Collaboration with the Germans in occupied Poland is a topic that has not been adequately explored by historians. Holocaust literature has dwelled almost exclusively on the conduct of Poles toward Jews and Germans, ignoring or ignoring to the point of neglecting the role of Poles in collaboration with the occupying forces. Some recent works on this theme, such as Tadeusz Piotrowski’s *The Fighting of the Second Republic, 1918–1947* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), have addressed the topic of collaboration, but often in a fragmented manner, with little attention paid to the broader context.

2. This is a much expanded work in progress which builds on a brief overview of this topic that appeared in the collective work *The Story of Two Shetels*, Biańsk and Epszczki: An Overview of Polish-Jewish Relations in Northeastern Poland during World War II (Toronto and Chicago: The Polish Educational Foundation in North America, 1998), Part Two, 231–40. The examples cited are far from exhaustive and represent only a selection of documentary sources in the author’s possession.
has often arrived at sweeping and unjustified conclusions. At the same time, with a few notable exceptions such as Isaiah Trunk\(^4\) and Raul Hilberg,\(^5\) whose findings confirm what Hannah Arendt opined about the Jewish councils,\(^6\) Holocaust historians have shied away from the topic of Jewish collaboration with the Germans. With few exceptions, Holocaust survivors are also in denial about this phenomenon.\(^7\) This dark chapter of the wartime history of Jews is one that merits closer scrutiny.

This study has gathered together hundreds of examples illustrating various forms of cooperation, collaboration and betrayal that turned Jews into a source of danger for fellow Jews, and less often for Poles, and facilitated the machinery of the Holocaust. (By and large, it makes little sense to speak of economic collaboration in the context of occupied Poland, since that very term implies at least some degree of mutual profit, and that possibility was excluded for both Jews and Poles from the outset. However, in other countries, such as Hungary and Romania, Jewish factory and mine owners earned fabulous sums from

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\(^5\) Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Third edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 3 volumes. Hilberg arrives at the following conclusions about the detrimental role of the Jewish councils: “From now on, their activities were going to be supplemented by another, quite different function: the transmission of German directives and orders to the Jewish population, the use of Jewish police (styled Ordnungsdienst) to enforce German will, the delivery of Jewish property, Jewish labor, and Jewish lives to the German enemy. The Jewish councils, in the exercise of their historic function, continued until the end to make desperate attempts to alleviate the suffering and to stop the mass dying in the ghettos. But, at the same time, the councils responded to German demands with automatic compliance and invoked German authority to compel the community’s obedience. Thus the Jewish leadership both saved and destroyed its people, saving some Jews and destroying others, saving Jews at one moment and destroying them at the next. … As time passed, the Jewish councils became increasingly impotent in their efforts to cope with the welfare portion of their task, but they made themselves felt all the more in their implementation of Nazi decrees. With the growth of the destructive function of the Judenräte, many Jewish leaders felt an almost irresistible urge to look like their German masters. … In short, the Jewish councils were assisting the Germans with their good qualities as well as their bad, and the very best accomplishments of a Jewish bureaucracy were ultimately appropriated by the Germans for the all-consuming destruction process. … The Jews did not always have to be deceived, they were capable of deceiving themselves. … The Jewish repressive mechanism was largely self-administered, and it could operate automatically, without any misleading statements or promises by German functionaries or their non-German auxiliaries.” Ibid., vol. 1, 219 and vol. 3, 1112–15. Hilberg describes the sordid reality of ghetto life in these terms: “Patronage, favoritism, and outright corruption became inviting possibilities and soon enough were commonplace. … The Warsaw Ghetto, for example, had a formidable upper class composed of bureaucrats, traders, and speculators. These privileged groups were large enough to be conspicuous. They frequented nightclubs, ate in expensive restaurants, and rode in man-drawn rikshas.” Ibid., vol. 1, 232, 262. Hilberg also notes that, seeking salvation through labour, Jews became an important, dependable, and even irreplaceable labour reserve for the German war effort: “Gradually, however, the army emerged as the most important purchaser of ghetto products, crowding out other buyers. The ghettos thus became an integral part of the war economy, and this development was to cause considerable difficulty during the deportations. The Germans came to depend on the output of the Jewish labor force. … The zeal with which the Jews applied themselves to the German war effort accentuated the differences of interests industry and armament inspectorates against the SS and Police, but the Germans were resolving their conflicts to the detriment of the Jews.” Ibid., vol. 1, 263 and vol. 3, 1109.


producing goods for the German army.\(^8\) This compilation, which is far from comprehensive, is not intended to demonstrate that such behaviour was somehow representative of the Jewish population, or that Jews (or Poles for that matter) had a particular propensity for such conduct. Rather it is meant to show that the actions of a tiny minority of the Jewish population were instrumental in inflicting significant, perhaps enormous, losses on the Jewish population.

The actions of these individuals, often carried out in extreme conditions and under duress, facilitated the Holocaust much more than the activities of their Polish counterparts. The latter are all too frequently blown out of proportion, while the former are glossed over. Far more Jews fell victim to the misdeeds of their fellow Jews than to those of Poles. Jews played an incomparably larger role than Poles in the ghettoization of the Jews, the day-to-day functioning of the ghettos, and their liquidation.\(^9\) The role of Jewish collaborators (councils, police) in the actual liquidation of the ghettos, however, was probably smaller than that of collaborators from among the non-Polish population, primarily Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and Latvians, who were active in occupied Poland. Poles, and in particular the Polish police, did not take part in the liquidation of any of the larger ghettos on prewar Polish territories such as Warsaw, Łódź, Lwów, Wilno, Białystok, Lublin, Sosnowiec, Będzin, Kraków (Cracow), Kielce, Piotrków Trybunalski, Radom, Częstochowa, Grodno, and many other cities, nor did Poles serve as guards at the death and concentration camps built on Polish soil. The Germans, it should be underscored, built their largest death and concentration camps in occupied Poland for purely logistical reasons, as that was where the largest number of intended victims resided and the camps were far removed from possible attack. No major Holocaust historian—not Raul Hilberg, not Yisrael Gutman, not Lucy Dawidowicz—accepts the notion that the decision to locate the camps in occupied Poland had anything to do with alleged Polish anti-Semitism or anticipated collaboration. Notwithstanding, such a charge is frequently encountered in Holocaust literature.

The Poles did not play a pivotal, or even significant, role in the Holocaust of the Jews. Half a million Jews in the Warthegau and Eastern Upper Silesia, which were incorporated directly into the Reich, were eliminated without virtually any Polish participation as there was no Polish police or officials in those areas. This is in stark contrast to the situation that existed in almost every other occupied country, for example the Baltic States, Holland, Norway, France, Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine and Hungary, where the Germans relied very heavily on local collaborators (police, officials, military and paramilitary formations) to carry out the round-ups of Jews, deportations, and even mass executions. Many, if not most Polish Jews,


\(^9\) For example, during the massive deportation of some 265,000 Jews from the Warsaw ghetto in the summer of 1942, “Jewish police delivered 7,000 victims for transport to Treblinka [on July 25] and from then on delivered them at a minimum daily rate of 10,000. The average Jewish policeman in the Warsaw ghetto sent two thousand Jews to their death, in order to save his own life.” See Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski, *Jews in Poland: A Documentary History* (New York: Hippocrene, 1993; Revised edition–1998), 115. The Jewish police, whose numbers had swollen from 1,600 in December 1941 to nearly 2,200, made itself notorious by its cooperation with the Germans in rounding up Jews. Emanuel Ringelblum wrote (in December 1942): “The Jewish police had a bad reputation even before the deportation. Unlike the Polish police, which did not take part in the abduction for the labour camps [from spring 1941], the Jewish police did engage in this dirty work. The police were also notorious for their shocking corruption and demoralization.” See Abraham Lewin, *A Cup of Tea: A Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto* (Oxford and New York: Basil Black in association with the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, Oxford, 1988), 17, 19.
were readily distinguishable from Poles, even to Germans,¹⁰ by reason of their distinctive dress, beards, physical appearance, and lack of knowledge of the Polish language. Jews tended to live among fellow Jews and their homes bore mezuzahs so there was no particular need for Poles to point them out. The creation of ghettos and deportation of Jews to death camps were not dependent on Polish collaboration. These tasks were assigned for the most part to the German-appointed Jewish councils (Judenräte—Judenrat in the singular) and the Jewish ghetto police (the so-called order police or Ordnungsdienst—OD).¹¹ Jewish officials compiled accurate and detailed list of Jews in a particular town, carefully noting such matters as their wealth, residency status, age, sex, and occupation, with changes of residency being reported monthly.¹²

The indictment against the ghetto police, authored by historian Isaiah Trunk, is particularly damning: The Jewish police collected cash contributions and taxes; they assisted in raiding, guarding, and escorting hungry, mentally exhausted people on their way to places of forced labor; and it was the ghetto police who often were ordered to enforce discipline in the presence of German officials. The ghetto police sentries formed the inside guard at the ghetto fences. Both the Germans and the councils used the ghetto police to carry out confiscation of Jewish property and to combat smuggling, the only means of overcoming constant hunger in the ghettos. The Jewish police carried out raids against and arrests of inmates for offenses against draconian ghetto rules. Last but not least, in the final stages of the ghettos the Jewish police were called upon to assist in “resettlement actions.”¹³ The liquidation of the ghettos was overseen by the Germans who employed numerous German forces, the Jewish police, and auxiliaries of various nationalities (Ukrainian, Polish, Slovak, Hungarian, and Romanian), often using the ghettos police as executioners.

¹⁰ A Jew from Warsaw recalled the arrival of the Germans in September 1939: “Long lines of people were standing for hours to get water. I remember waiting in line one morning, when a German guard approached me and asked, ‘Bist du ein Jude?’ (‘Are you a Jew?’). When I replied, ‘Yes, I am,’ he said to me, ‘I don’t care how long you’ve been standing in line, Jews must go to the end of the line. Do it right now. That is where Jews belong.’ This was my first encounter with the German occupation forces.” See Abraham Alpert, A Spark of Life ([United States]: n.p., 1981), 2–3.

¹¹ Yehuda Bauer has acknowledged that in the larger ghettos, it was the Jewish councils that provided the Germans with lists and cooperated in the handing over of victims. According to that historian, the Jewish police played a “major role” in the deportation of the Warsaw Jews to Treblinka in the summer of 1942, with similar roles being played by the Jewish police forces in Łódź, Kraków, and elsewhere. See Yehuda Bauer, Rethinking the Holocaust (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 143–44, 154. The ghetto in Grodno followed a typical pattern: “The Judenrat was compelled to prepare lists of names, transfer Jews from one ghetto to another, and declare that the deportees were, supposedly, being sent to places of work. … Very severe criticism of the Jewish police was lodged by the survivors of the Grodno ghetto for their attempt to save themselves by fulfilling their duties in a most meticulous manner. Only a few policemen refrained from collaborating with the Germans … even during the February [1942] Aktion some policemen uncovered hiding places and turned in Jews to the Germans.” See Shmuel Spector, ed., Lost Jewish Worlds: The Communities of Grodno, Lida, Olkieniki, Vishay (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), 161–62. The same pattern held true in the smaller ghettos as well. The Jewish community of Suwałki was charged by the Germans, already in September 1939, with the task of compiling a list of all the Jews of that city. See Yehezkel Berlson, “The Destruction of Suwalk,” in Leslie Sherer and Arthur Leonard, eds., Jewish Community Book: Suwałk and Vicinity (Tel Aviv: The Yair–Abraham Stern–Publishing House, 1989), 50.

¹² Krzysztof Urbański, Zagłada Żydów w Dystrykcie Radomskim (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Pedagogicznej, 2004), 74.

¹³ Trunk, Judenrat, 499. For example, the Jewish police were used to expel Jews from their homes and during their execution in the cemetery in Skala near Kraków. See Ireneusz Ciesiło, Olgierd Dziechcziarz and Krzysztof Kocjan, eds., Olkusz: Zagłada i pamięć: Dyskusja o ofiarach wojny i świadectwa ocalałych Żydów (Olkusz: Olkuskie Stowarzyszenie Kulturalne “Brama”, 2007), 305, 306.
Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian) brought in for that purpose. The involvement of the Polish “blue” police was, in the assessment of leading Jewish historians such as Szymon Datner and Raul Hilberg, marginal.  

There is no question that Jews had to contend with Jewish collaborators far more frequently than with Polish ones. Jews who did not venture out of the ghettos—and the vast majority did not—in all likelihood never encountered a Polish collaborator or denouncer. They were far more likely to be robbed or swindled by fellow Jews than by a Pole. Generally speaking, there were four significant sources of danger for Jews confined in ghettos: the Jewish council and its agencies, the Jewish auxiliary police, Jewish agents and informants, and miscellaneous Jewish betrayers and criminal elements. The moral choices and dilemmas that individual Jews who cooperated, collaborated or betrayed, faced in these circumstances is a topic that falls outside the scope of this study. From the victims’ perspective it mattered little whether collaboration or denunciation was forced or voluntary, or something in between. Without a recognition of this phenomenon, any treatment of wartime Polish-Jewish relations is seriously flawed.

The fate of Polish Jews was not dependent on the Poles, nor were Polish attitudes something that the Germans troubled themselves with. As Raul Hilberg notes, “There was no imperative to be mindful of the

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

15 Like most Polish collaborators, who were either opportunists or who became entangled with the Germans because they were blackmailed after being caught in compromising situations, few Jewish collaborators were actually ideological supporters of Nazi Germany. Florian Majewski (Moshe Lajbcygier), who survived the war as a member of the Home Army, where he served in a unit that pursued collaborators, describes several operations directed at Poles who had been “recruited” into the service of the Germans in the latter manner, yet the Polish underground did not hesitate to order their execution. Majewski does not record any activities by the Home Army or Polish collaborators directed at Jews. See Florian Mayevski with Spencer Bright, *Flame without Smoke: The Memoirs of a Polish Partisan* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003), 91–109.
welfare of Poles,” and thus “no need for precautions whenever anti-Jewish measures could have painful repercussions for the non-Jewish population.”16 Contrary to what is often claimed, the Polish population was not supportive of German policies towards the Jews. General Johannes Blaskowitz, commander of the Eighth German Army during the September 1939 campaign and subsequently Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Territories, wrote to Field Marshal Walter von Brauchitsch, the Commander-in-Chief of the German Army, in his report of February 6, 1940: “The acts of violence carried out in public against Jews are arousing in religious Poles [literally, “in the Polish population, which is fundamentally pious (or God-fearing)’] not only the deepest disgust but also a great sense of pity for the Jewish population.”17

The Germans played a large part in encouraging and exploiting friction between the conquered peoples, and pitting them against each other. In November 1939 in Łódź, the Germans conscripted some Jews to help destroy the Kościuszko monument in Wolności Square. The Germans then set fire to two synagogues and blamed the Poles for burning them down in retaliation for the destruction of the Kościuszko monument by the Jews.18 (The Germans, of course, were actually responsible for the destruction of the monument.) In the spring of 1941, the Germans ordered the Jews to demolish the Catholic church in Sanniki. They took photographs of this and used the incident to foment anger among the Poles against the Jews.19 In Piotrków Trybunalski,

On September 6, [1939] the Germans set fire to a few streets in the Jewish quarter and shot Jews trying to escape from their burning houses. … Those still hiding in their homes soon noticed that the Germans were interested primarily in their property. Both individually and in groups, the latter had invaded the Jewish community and confiscated virtually everything they could—clothes, linen, furs, carpets, valuable books, etc. They often invited the Poles in the streets to take part in the looting, after which they would fire bullets into the air in order to give the impression that they were driving away the Polish “thieves”. These scenes were photographed by the Germans to demonstrate that they were protecting Jewish property from Polish criminals.20

Theodor Oberländer, a principal Nazi strategist, advocated a “divide and conquer” strategy for Poland by pitting the country’s national groups against one another. In many towns and villages, Poles were evicted

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18 Shimon Huberband, Kiddush Hashem: Jewish Religious and Cultural Life in Poland During the Holocaust (Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav Publishing House, and Yeshiva University Press, 1987), 323; Janina Hera, Polacy ratujący Żydów: Słownik (Warsaw: Neriton, 2014), 87 n.191. The Jewish community petitioned the insurance company for 1,000,000 złoty, the amount for which one of the synagogues was insured, but the claim was rejected.
from their homes and farms to make room for displaced Jews.\textsuperscript{21} Since many Poles were indebted to Jewish creditors, and were for the most part rather poor, the Germans wanted to win them over by cancelling those debts and allowing some looting of Jewish property.\textsuperscript{22} (It is important to bear in mind that looting accompanies war and civil strife worldwide, and is not an ethnically determined activity.) But this policy was followed only to a limited degree, however, because almost all property of value was handed over or confiscated by the Germans themselves. The “divide and conquer” strategy was employed in a variety of ways. In the early months of the war, Jews were employed—as described later on—in the executions of Poles. Historians Tatiana Berenstein and Adam Rutkowski write:

> The Nazis contrived in every way possible to provoke resentment and animosity between the national groups. For example, in February 1941 the warders for a Jewish labour camp were recruited from among Poles and Ukrainians, while early the same year the occupation authorities in Będzin employed Jews in compiling the registers of Poles liable to deportation from the town. Again, in the spring of 1942, five Jews were assigned for wholly clerical duties to the Treblinka I labour camp for Poles. Expedients like these all made for a continuous embitterment and vitiation of relations between Poles and Jews.\textsuperscript{23}

These examples could be multiplied. For instance, in the hard-labour camp for Poles in Płaszów, many functions—including hanging Polish inmates—were assigned to Jewish prisoners from the adjoining concentration camp.\textsuperscript{24} In Auschwitz, newly arrived Polish inmates were processed by Jews and vice versa.\textsuperscript{25}

The Germans also unleashed a torrent of anti-Semitic propaganda that played into the prejudices of some Poles and fostered anti-Polish sentiments among Jews. As one Jewish survivor recalled,

> The Polish population was incessantly under the pressure of anti-Jewish propaganda. I recall the posters that were put up everywhere. To this day, I remember their text … I quote, “Stop and read, dear onlooker, how Jews beset you. Instead of meat, chopped rats, dirty water added to milk, and dough with worms, kneaded by foot.” Next to the text were drawings: a repulsive unshaven crooked-nosed Jewish butcher held a rat by the tail, which he was sticking into a meat grinder. Another drawing presented a milkman pouring water from a washtub, adding it to a can of milk.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{21} See, for example, Dean, \textit{Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945}, vol. II, Part A, 65 (Kowale Pańskie), 161 (Sławków).


\textsuperscript{23} Tatiana Berenstein and Adam Rutkowski, \textit{Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945} (Warsaw: Polonia Publishing House, 1963), 19.

\textsuperscript{24} Franciszek J. Proch, \textit{Poland’s Way of the Cross, 1939–1945} (New York: Polish Association of Former Political Prisoners of Nazi and Soviet Concentration Camps, 1987), 50. Confirmation of the hanging in Płaszów in June 1942 by Jewish policemen of of 12 Poles and Jews can be found in the testimony of Fajwel Kornberg, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 4117.


\textsuperscript{26} Wiktoria Śliwowska, ed., \textit{The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak} (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern
Historians Berenstein and Rutkowski comment on the scope of this divisive tactic:

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

The impact of German propaganda on Jewish attitudes is not widely acknowledged, however, it was significant. According to one Jewish survivor, “We also did not think about why they [the Germans] wanted to kill us. We knew that we were like rats. Their propaganda not only influenced the Gentiles, it also influenced us Jews. It took away from us our human dignity.”  

The German-sponsored Polish-language press claimed that the closure of ghetto in Warsaw “was the wish of the majority of inhabitants of Warsaw.” Jews played into this strategy by spreading anti-Polish propaganda, going so far as to claim that the Poles were inciting the Germans. In a wartime report, a resident of the Warsaw ghetto wrote of his efforts to convince fellow Jews “about the feelings in Polish society towards the Jews. They are inciting the occupier against the Jews, in order to save themselves by this stratagem.” He also questioned the sincerity of the Polish democratic opposition and preached about the “abject baseness of behavior among the Poles.”  

Not surprisingly, as Emanuel Ringelblum notes in his wartime journal, hatred towards Polish Christians grew in the Warsaw ghetto because, incredible as it may seem, it was widely believed that the Poles were responsible for the economic restrictions that befell the Jews. A jealousy built on false premises and traditional contempt for Poles set in. Many Jews could not comprehend why it was they, rather than the Poles, who were suffering the brunt of the German brutality. This caused deep resentment toward Poles. Stories spread in the ghetto that Poles were leading “normal lives” outside the ghetto: “Everything there is brimming with life. Everyone eats and drinks until they are full. … On the other side, the houses are like palaces … there is freedom to the full … complete safety … justice reigns.”


27 Berenstein and Rutkowski, Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945, 19. On German propaganda see also Jan Grabowski, “German Anti-Jewish Propaganda in the Generalgouvernement, 1939–1945: Inciting Hate through Posters, Films, and Exhibitions,” Holocaust and Genocide Studies, vol. 23, no. 3 (Winter 2009): 381–412. Unfortunately Grabowski’s study is rather skewed: he cites reports about Polish society very selectively (e.g., Jan Karski’s report of February 1940 which described Jewish collaboration under the Soviet occupation) and ignores many favourable reports (e.g., the reaction of Poles to the Warsaw ghetto uprising); he pushes negative stereotypical generalizations about Poles (e.g., “many Poles construed anti-Jewish activities as fundamentally patriotic”, etc.); and he does not appreciate the demonstrable inefficacy of German anti-Jewish propaganda (e.g., it did not inhibit widespread trade with Jews).


29 Andrzej Zbikowski, “Antysemityzm, szmalcownictwo, wsólpraca z Niemcami a stosunki polsko-żydowskie pod okupacją niemiecką,” in Zbikowski, Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945, 446.


32 Diary of Jehoszua Albert cited in Marcin Urynowicz, “Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Warszawie w okresie okupacji
Jew who witnessed the expulsion of the Poles after the failed Warsaw Uprising of August 1944 recalled: “I must admit that we even derived a certain schadenfreude from seeing Poles treated like Jews, driven like cattle through the streets the way Jews had been herded, beaten down and hardly saying a word. … This was so reminiscent of when we had first been evicted from our home and forced into the crowded ghetto more than two years before. How ironic. For the first time we were equal … Poles now [sic] also had a taste of what it was like to be at the receiving end of Nazi brutality and retribution.”\(^{33}\) (As if Poles had not experienced mass expulsions and executions before!) Paradoxically, for many Jews ghettization had a silver lining, as Noah H. Rosenbloom explains:

> Paradoxically, ghettoization, notwithstanding the turmoil, misery and hardship if caused to thousands, evoked a glimmer of hope and even a sense of security. Some Jews initially believed that the term Wohngebiet der Juden, as the ghetto was euphemistically referred to by the Germans, truly reflected the German intentions, to establish a racially segregated “District of Jewish Residence”. While the prevailing conditions there were far from enviable, they hoped that this dismally imposed socio-cultural structure would permit them a limited measure of religious, social, and cultural autonomy, a questionable thin silver lining on an otherwise dark, foreboding, stormy and thunderous cloud. … The Germans, understandably, made no effort to dispel this optimistic Jewish notion, born in part of wishful thinking and in part subtly fostered by the Germans.”\(^{34}\)

Well-informed Poles could sense this resentment. It was not without some justification, therefore, that Zofia Kossak-Szczucka, one of the founders of Żegota, the underground Committee for Aid to Jews, wrote in her 1942 pamphlet “The Protest”: “we realize they [the Jews] hate us more than they hate the Germans and that they make us responsible for their misfortune.” Even Jews who left the ghetto and knew it was otherwise, endorsed resentment against Poles. Shlomo (Stanisław) Szmajzner admits candidly: “we could not experience any feeling about the fact that the Polish were suffering in their own flesh the same horror that the Germans had been practicing on us and which they used to applaud.”\(^{35}\) After escaping from Sobibór, Szmajzner took refuge with a Polish family and survived the war. He settled in Brazil. On his sixth visit to Germany, Szmajzner said the following in a 1983 interview given in German: “I will never return to Poland, ever. Had the Poles been different, more like the Danes, the Dutch or the French, I think 70, 80 or possibly even 90 per cent of the Jews would still be alive today. Because the Germans had no idea who was Jewish and who wasn’t. … I don’t want to speak Polish and I don’t want to return to Poland.”\(^{36}\) Many Polish Jews in fact had distinctive appearances and dress, so they were not difficult to detect, and were

hitlerowskiej,” in Zbikowski, Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945, 563.
34 Yitzhak Katzenelson, The Song of the Murdered Jewish People (Tel Aviv: Ghetto Fighters’ House/Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1980), 104.
required to wear identifiable armbands. As mentioned, it was the Jewish councils who were charged with the task of registering the Jews, not the Poles. Depending on occupation conditions, the fate of Jews in Western Europe was no better. Almost eighty percent of Dutch Jews were murdered by the Germans with considerable Dutch collaboration. Most of those who attempted to hide were betrayed. Many survived simply because they were exempted from Nazi genocidal measures.

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

I remembered the order to assemble on the lawn in front of the Judenrat headquarters in Grabowiec, the announcement that all the Jews of Grabowiec would be ‘resettled’ in Hrubieszow [Hrubieszów], where the SS officer had told us, the Jews would live and work together in a miniature ‘Jewish state,’ protected by the kindly German authorities from the wrath of the local Gentile populace.\(^{37}\)

In Słonim,

As soon as the Jews were enclosed in the ghetto, the head of the German gendarmerie … and his deputy … called all the Jews to a meeting, where they were assured there would be no more Aktion. They said the previous Aktion had been a Polish provocation, and that as long as Jews worked hard, they would survive the war.\(^{38}\)

In view of the constant bombardment of such propaganda it is not surprising that some Poles succumbed to it, just as some Jews resorted to anti-Polish barbs and spiteful accusations.\(^{39}\)

Some activities, though morally questionable, did not constitute collaboration, for example, taking payment for providing hiding places and upkeep or false documents. The Danish underground and boatmen who transported Jews to Sweden exacted huge sums of money from the Jews, even though that rescue entailed no real risk because it was carried out with the connivance of the local German naval command.\(^{40}\)


\(^{38}\) Testimony of Mordechaj Jonisz, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 302, number 141.

\(^{39}\) A Polish woman from Chmielnik recalled a popular Jewish saying: “Gdy przyjdzie Ruski zabraknie na was powróżki,” which translates roughly as “When the Russians arrive there won’t be enough rope [to hang the Poles]” or “When the Russians come, they will run out of halters for all of you.” See Marek Maciągowski and Piotr Krawczyk, *Żydzi w historii Chmielnika* (Kielce: F.P.H.U. XYZ, 2006), 194; Marek Maciągowski and Piotr Krawczyk, *The Story of Jewish Chmielnik* (Kielce: XYZ and Town and Municipality Office in Chmielnik, 2007), 190. A Jew in the Warsaw ghetto recorded how his Jewish friends had attempted to malign and turn him away from his Polish acquaintance. See Marta Markowska, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Dzień po dniu Zagłady* (Warsaw: Ośrodek Karta, Dom Spotkań z Historią, and Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2008), 141.

\(^{40}\) Until the fall of 1943 Danish Jews were unmolested. SS general Dr. Werner Best, the German in charge in Denmark, gave a free hand to Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, the maritime attaché at the German embassy in Copenhagen, to do whatever was necessary to derail the planned deportation of the Jews. Duckwitz flew to Sweden, where he secretly met with President Per Albin Hannson. The Swedish president assured him that should the action against the Danish Jews take place, Sweden would in principle be ready to admit them. When the round-up of Jews was about to begin, Duckwitz alerted the Swedish government to be ready to admit the fleeing Jews. The local German naval command warned the Danish underground of the impending fate of the Jews, disabled the German harbour patrol, and turned a blind eye to the rescue operation. The Jews who were transported to Sweden by Danish boatmen were allowed entry.
Since the rescue operation took place with the connivance of the local German naval command, there were no casualties either among the Jews or among the boatmen. During the initial stages of the rescue operation, only well-to-do Danish Jews could afford the short passage to Sweden. Private boatmen set their own price and the costs were prohibitive, ranging from 1,000 to 10,000 kroner per person ($160 to $1600 U.S. in the currency of that period). Afterward, when organized Danish rescue groups stepped in to coordinate the flight and to collect funds, the average price per person fell to 2,000 and then 500 kroner. The total cost of the rescue operation was about 12 million kroner, of which the Jews paid about 7 million kroner, including a 750,000 kroner loan which the Jews had to repay after the war. See Mordecai Paldiel, The Righteous Among the Nations (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: Collins, 2007), 105–109; Leni Yahil, The Rescue of Danish Jewry: Test of a Democracy (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1969), 261–65, 269. While the Danish rescue is constantly extolled without reference to the minimal risk it posed for the rescuers and the handsome compensation they took, conversely, the Polish rescue effort is depreciated without reference to the death penalty the Germans imposed on the Poles for providing any form of assistance to Jews and the fact that hundreds, if not thousands, of Poles paid with their lives for helping Jews.

41 Several examples from Warsaw are cited in Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski, “Żydów łamiących prawo należy karać śmiercią!”: “Przetępczość” Żydów w Warszawie 1939–1942 (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2010), 120–32. A Jew from Skalat recalled: “With the help of Yitzhak Bekman, a draftsman and engraver, we copied various official stamps, removed old photos from the documents, replaced them with new ones, and applied the proper stamps. In that way we set up a factory for false papers. During the course of three months we created papers for over five hundred Jews. They came from Tarnopol, Czortkow [Czortków] and even from Lwow [Lwów]. They came from all over eastern Poland. With the large volume of work I found it necessary to return to the Town Hall [to get more documents] a few more times. Every document required tax stamps from the town government, for which I paid the town official, Czapkowski, 250 złotys [złoty] each. For my part, I accepted from 500 to 1,000 złotys for a complete set of papers, although in many cases I gave them away for free.” See Abraham Weissbrod, Death of a Shitet, Internet; <http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Skalat1/Skalat.html>, translation of J. Kaplan, Es shartbi a shtetl: Megiles Skalat (Munich: Central Historical Commission of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the U.S. Zone of Germany, 1948), 34–35. In Strj: “Two well dressed young fellows, who did not look like Jews, entered the Ghetto from the Aryan Quarter. They came from Warsaw and with them they brought the Aryan document plague. They sold birth certificates, documents of the Meldungsamt (Registration Office) and the ‘Arbeitsamt’ Labour Office in Warsaw. All the client had to do was to give them any Polish name he chose, two photographs and a down payment. Five days later they brought false Aryan papers from Warsaw. A number of persons, particularly those who did not have a Jewish appearance and spoke Polish well, purchased these bargains, and carefully learned the Christian Paternoster by heart. For if they were not certain of anyone they caught, the Police would tell him to say five times the amount the farmer charged for the shelter and upkeep. See Grzegorz Berendt, “Cena życia—ekonomiczne uwarunkowania egzystencji Żydów po ‘aryjskiej stronie’,” in Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały, vol. 4 (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, IFiS PAN, 2008): 132.

42 Natan Gross from Kraków refers to Jewish intermediaries who profited handsomely from finding farmers to take in Jews. See the testimony of Natan Gross, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 578. The Yad Vashem Archives record the case of a Jew who demanded from fellow Jews he brought to his hiding place five times the amount the farmer charged for their shelter and upkeep. See Grzegorz Berendt, “Cena życia—ekonomiczne uwarunkowania egzystencji Żydów po ‘aryjskiej stronie’,” in Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały, vol. 4 (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, IFiS PAN, 2008): 132.
[in 1945] and I repeat it today: to cause the death of one hundred Jews, all you needed was one Polish denouncer; to save one Jew, it sometimes took the help of ten decent Poles, the help of an entire Polish family; even if they did it for money.”

Jews who hid outside the ghettos faced a myriad of risks. One of the risks was blackmailers, known as “szmalcowniks”, who were particularly active in Warsaw. Relatively few Jews actually perished on their account. Like Jewish extortionists inside the ghetto, they were primarily interested in extorting money and valuables. Even more dangerous were Gestapo agents and informers of various nationalities, especially Jews. As was the case in Berlin, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Italy, and Greece, Jewish Greifers or “catchers” played an ignominious role in hunting down and betraying Jews who tried to hide or pass as Poles. Many examples are cited later in the text. The German authorities also brought in Germans and Austrians to track down Jews. One survivor described how men in leather coats and Tyrolean hats stopped suspicious people in Warsaw’s main train station and examined their papers.

The Polish underground reacted by condemning acts of collaboration including betrayals of Jews, whether committed by Poles or others, and also by punishing the transgressors by death. The repeated warnings issued by the underground authorities regarding assisting the Germans in persecuting Jews, as well as the severe punishment imposed by those authorities, made it clear that such conduct was outside the acceptable norms of behaviour and was so viewed by a significant majority of Polish society. There is no

record of any political or popular backlash against these measures taken by the underground authorities. Although the underground passed a number of death sentences against informers and suspected Gestapo agents, they did not manage to carry all of them out because many practical difficulties stood in the way, such as collecting evidence and actually carrying out the executions. One of the most famous collaborators the Polish underground did manage to execute was Igo Sym, a popular interwar actor of Germanic origin (he was born in Innsbruck, Austria).

The Polish underground authorities set up a special, accelerated investigative and legal apparatus in 1943 to deal with those who preyed on Jews and others. (Often those who took part in anti-Jewish activities were also involved in other transgressions that victimized Poles.) It is estimated that about 30 percent of the 70 death sentences passed against confidants and collaborators by the Special Civilian Court in Warsaw in 1943–1944 were directed at persons who primarily harmed Jews. (Confidants, or Vertrauensmänner; are commonly referred to as “Gestapo agents” in anecdot al literature. Confidants were employed by various agencies such as the Kripo or Criminal Police, by other branches of the Sicherheitspolizei such as the Gestapo, as well as by the Abwehr and Bahn schutz.) Many of the underground sentences were not carried out, however, because of the attendant risks and complications. Often the informers or blackmailers were elusive or part of the criminal underworld, and even the most carefully executed sentence exposed underground members to personal danger and retaliations. As one historian noted:

Investigating cases of blackmail was a highly complex process. The special courts needed evidence, and getting evidence was difficult, at times almost impossible. Agents could not work in the open; it was impossible to interrogate people accused of blackmail, or to confront them with evidence.

When a blackmailer learned that he was being investigated he could place himself under German protection or betray the identity of the agents working on the case. Agents, therefore, had to be extremely cautious and discreet in their investigations. After they were sentenced, blackmailers often moved, disappeared, or changed their names to escape execution. Implementation of sentences, therefore, often had to be delayed or abandoned.


49 Strzemboś, Rzeczpospolita podziemia, 107–8. Strzemboś points out that Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Jews were often employed in these functions, and that Jewish agents also worked outside the ghettos.

Moreover, the Germans introduced severe retaliations, executing ten Poles for every informant eliminated by the underground, which led to lesser forms of punishment being meted out to collaborators. Therefore, in many cases, accounts were to be settled in full after the war.\(^{51}\)

Stefan Korboński, who, as chief of Civil Resistance in occupied Poland from 1941 organized underground courts to try collaborators, and others have identified a number of Poles executed by the Polish underground for betraying or persecuting Jews as well as their Polish benefactors.\(^{52}\) Often these

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

Informers were often prosecuted before a Polish underground tribunal. In one such instance, two Polish women—one of whom was a Gestapo agent—were indicted for handing Jews to the Gestapo. The underground sentenced them to death and carried out the sentence.\(^5^3\)

A Jew from Radom passing as a Pole was drawn into an extortion ring consisting of a policeman and a prostitute, who tracked him down and made him reveal the identities of other Jews hiding in Lwów. This group was eventually broken up by the Polish underground who provided the Jew with a safe shelter.\(^5^4\)

These measures did not, of course, eliminate all or even most of the collaborators and informers, whether Poles or Jews, nor did they put an end to the many risks from various sources that threatened the safety of Jews in hiding. The threat of betrayal—sometimes motivated simply by a desire for self-preservation (Poles were punished collectively for helping Jews)—was an ever-present fear for many Jews. Holocaust historians attribute the source of such lurking danger almost exclusively to the conduct of Poles and Polish


\(^5^4\) Eliasz Bialski, *Patrząc prosto w oczy* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation, 2002), 114, 139–47.
anti-Semitism, and some Jews have claimed after the war that they feared Poles more than the Germans. However, the testimonies from those times gathered here present a different, much more complex picture.

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

Near the ghetto one always found a crowd of Poles looking at the Jews who were going to work. After leaving the ghetto gate one of the Jews might leave the work column, remove his armband, and steal away. Among the crowd of several hundred Poles there would always be one, two, perhaps three betrayers who would apprehend the Jew … The entire crowd, however, did not act that way. I didn’t know who among the crowd was a betrayer … One has to remember that there were not a thousand or five hundred betrayers; there were maybe five of them. It was the same way with neighbours; one didn’t know if the neighbour was upright. We lived on Leszno Street and across from us there was a suspicious dwelling. Ours was also suspect. After the uprising [of August 1944] broke out, it turned out that that dwelling was an AK [Home Army] station. The mistress of the house had been afraid of us and we of her.55

Fear of the unknown was pervasive, but very often misplaced. Luba Lis, who was sheltered by a Polish woman in Przemyśl, was fearful of the neighbours in the tenement building. Only after the war did she learn that another Polish family who shared the same staircase was hiding Jews.56 Another Jewish account speaks of an entire street in that city being aware of a Jewish hideout, but not betraying it.57

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

Our block was surrounded by SS and other Nazi units. … The search started in another house on our block. Some Jews were found and dragged away. They were not necessarily the escapees, but a Jew was a Jew. … The Nazis were not searching all the apartments systematically, they just entered homes at random. But once in the [small] apartment, they conducted a thorough search, opening closets and other potential hiding places.58

On April 6, 1944, some 3,000 Germans were deployed from four in the morning to nine in the evening in a search for Jews in hiding in Warsaw. In all, seventy “non-Aryan” men and thirty-one “non Aryan”

55 “To się dzieje dzisiaj,” (a conversation with Marek Edelman), Tygodnik Powszechny (Kraków), April 18, 1993.
women were seized: all of them were executed five days later.\textsuperscript{59} A Jewish woman sheltered in the Żoliborz district of Warsaw recalled a door-to-door hunt conducted by the Germans looking for Jews and arms.\textsuperscript{60} On Good Friday, April 7, 1944,

A cordon of troops was thrown around the selected area [i.e., Żoliborz], and the police went in and searched each house thoroughly from cellar to attic for Jews in hiding, caches of weapons, etc. In the course of this raid, in which a total of 3,000 soldiers and police were deployed and which lasted from 4 a.m. to 9 a.m., 250 persons were arrested including 30 women. Among them there were, of course, Jews and those who had given them shelter.\textsuperscript{61}

All this in one city in the course of two days. By way of comparison, the entire German occupation forces, including administration, needed to keep Denmark in line amounted only to a few hundred, and in France there were only 3,000 German occupation troops stationed in the entire country.

Germans organized intensive hunts for Jews and members of the underground throughout Poland. A young Jewish woman who lived in Kraków recalled: “One morning, the Germans surrounded the streets around the block where I lived with Grandma, demanding to see everyone’s documents. … there were so many SS soldiers everywhere that it was impossible to do anything but comply. … ‘What do they want?’ a woman asked. … ‘They are trying to catch Jews,’ someone answered.”\textsuperscript{62} Another Jew who passed as a Pole in Kraków recalled:

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

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

 Barely one week later I experienced another round-up. I was sitting in a café in Jan Street. … The café was already surrounded. Mme Herfort led me to a hiding-place where I concealed myself, whilst the Germans checked everyone in the café, closely inspecting papers and arresting suspects.\textsuperscript{63}

A misguided sense of “duty” to the German authorities also played into their diabolical plans and facilitated the destruction of the Jewish population. When the Germans ordered the chairman of the Jewish

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{berenstein1939} Berenstein and Rutkowski, \textit{Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945}, 43.
\bibitem{taubenschlag2001} Taubenschlag (Townsend), \textit{To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland}, 30–31.
\end{thebibliography}
council in Kowale Pańskie near Turek to prepare lists of all ghetto inhabitants incapable of working, including all children under the age of 13 and all elderly persons over 65 years of age, the council was reluctant to obey this order. The chairman turned to four rabbis who were among the deportees for their opinion. After deliberation and prayer, the rabbis decided that, according to religious law, a decree of the government was obligatory and had to be obeyed. Sometimes the interests of Jewish religious authorities and the Nazi oppressors overlapped. In April 1941, the Germans declared the Sabbath, and not Sunday, to be the official day of rest in the Warsaw ghetto. When it became clear that many people were not complying with this, pressed by Orthodox leaders in the ghetto, the religious department of the Judenrat suggested the establishment of a “Sabbath patrol” and courts to deal with offenders, for which they required an official permit from the German authorities.

Conduct that was defiant of the compliant and corrupt Jewish authorities could inadvertently turn lethal for Jews as well as Poles. In February 1941, some Jews in the Kutno ghetto organized a riot against the Jewish council, accusing it of misappropriation of funds, and assaulted the head of the financial department when the protest turned violent. The German police intervened to halt further unrest. As a result of this incident, various smuggling operations were uncovered, and several people were arrested, including a Pole. All of the prisoners were sentenced to death and hanged in Włocławek.

There was a pervasive reluctance to allow families with children into hiding places and Jewish children were often sacrificed to save adults. Moshe Maltz records his wife’s account of being turned away from hideouts during an Aktion in Sokal, near Lwów, because she had two children with her. Desperate, she concealed their 5-year-old son in a woodpile and then hid in an attic with their year-old daughter. The girl’s crying alerted a German soldier, who ordered a member of the Judenrat into the building to investigate. The Jewish man located them and persuaded the mother to hand over her child. According to one member of the extended Maltz family, this story exemplifies the “philosophy of ghetto. … You save yourself. If you have to give away a child, if you have to give away a mother … you save yourself because you have to survive and bear witness.”

In Sokal, just as in every other Jewish ghetto, snitches could be found that turned against their own people:

Everything the Jews had owned was no longer theirs. The Germans, together with their Ukrainian partners, were looking for new ways to rob Jewish property. A Jewish snitch told the Gestapo that silverware belonging to the Belz Rebbe was hidden somewhere in Sokal. The Gestapo arrested

67 Sara R. Horowitz, “‘If He Knows to Make a Child…’” Memories of Birth and Baby-Killing in Deferred Jewish Testimony Narratives,” in Norman J.W. Goda, ed., Jewish Histories of the Holocaust: New Transnational Approaches (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2014), 135–51, here at 148. As this family member tells it, the sacrifice of the child is not an example of the degeneration of morality—the valuing of one’s own life above the life of others—but a painful choice on behalf of the collective: “… the Jewish race has to survive.”
three Jews who were supposed to know where the hiding place was. Even though they pointed at the exact hiding place inside the synagogue, the Germans shot them after taking the silverware.

Another demonstration of German evil and cruelty was what happened to Risha Kindler, the baker. She operated the only bakery in Sokal—which was clandestine and illegal, of course. Risha bribed the Ukranian police, who knew about her activity, with weekly payments. She too fell victim to a snitch. One very early morning, the Gestapo burst into the bakery, took the baker with two girls who worked for her, and sealed the house. After a few days it became known that Risha and the girls had been tortured by the Gestapo. 68

Meier Lencow, then a teenager in Sokal, recalled having to hide during raids conducted by the Jewish police. The Jewish police would seize Jews for labour and physically mistreat them in the presence of the Germans. The Jewish police participated in the round-up of Jews, and the search for those in hiding, during the deportations to camps. 69

There are abundant examples of Jews being implicated in the betrayal of hundreds of fellow Jews hiding among Poles, with dire consequences for their Polish benefactors. Sometimes Jews threatened to denounce Gentiles concealing other Jews. Often these Jews acted out of fear or under duress, latching on to the faintest hope, however unrealistic, that they might save their own skins at the expense of others. While not necessarily constituting collaboration in the true sense of the word, the outcome of their deeds was the same: it was lethal. A fear of fellow Jews was something that constantly accompanied Jews in hiding, and thus unnecessary contacts with Jews were avoided at all costs. As one Jew who lived in the Aryan part of Warsaw recalled, “We knew that [the empty room] would eventually be rented by a Jew … We prayed that it would be someone with ‘good looks’. Only after the war did we learn that one of the people who had contemplated renting that very room was a pretty blond girl from my class at school, Irka H. When she caught a glimpse of me and Jerzyk, she hurriedly withdrew.” 70

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

Then one day I met my old history teacher, Mrs. Dinces, who was also the wife of the director of my gymnasium. Mr. Dinces had changed his faith and become a Catholic, but that wouldn’t keep his wife safe. She spoke Polish, not Yiddish, and her Polish was so beautiful it was like music, yet now she was running away with her daughter. She had blond hair with very thick braids in the back. When she saw me I almost went over to her to say hello, but she got so scared that she crossed the street and ran away from me. I don’t blame her—she was afraid of me, she didn’t know who I was. 71

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69 Testimony of Meier Lencow, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), record group 301, number 805.
Solidarity among Jews in hiding, as well as in camps, was in short supply. When he went into hiding in Siennica after the liquidation of the Otwock ghetto, a rabbi from Otwock was denounced. When a Jewish teenager was sent back to Warsaw from the countryside by her mother, her escort avoided her as much as he could:

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

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

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

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

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

And again in that same source:

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

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71 Zosia Goldberg, as told to Hilton Obenzinger, *Running Through Fire: How I Survived the Holocaust* (San Francisco: Mercury House 2004), 75.
A Jewish family from Chodecz who was banished to the Łódź ghetto recalled their ordeal at the hands of a relative:

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

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

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

Emanuel Tanay recorded:

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

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

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78 His testimony is recorded in Carol Rittner and Sondra Myers, eds., *The Courage to Care: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 53.
One day the Germans were going house to house looking for somebody and we hid in the garden behind the house. To our surprise we found the people living next door also hiding. We immediately recognized each other as Jews and became friends. Mostly Jews didn’t want to know each other. Everyone had false papers and changed names. It was better not to know in case the Gestapo came looking. I once jumped off a running streetcar because I spotted somebody I knew in school. He was a Jew but I didn’t know if he worked for the Gestapo. Later, after the war, I met him in Warsaw and he told me he jumped off too because he was afraid of me. That was how it was. Some people didn’t want even their family to know where they were.\(^{80}\)

A Jewish woman passing as a Pole in Kraków did not dare take a job in a factory where many Jews were employed in key positions for fear of being betrayed: “the factory was an outpost of the small ghetto in Kraków … The secretary at the desk, the foreman, the office manager, and all the other workers were Jewish. The only Poles were the teenagers out front. When I saw this, I knew I didn’t dare take that job. No one can spot a Jew faster than another Jew.”\(^{81}\) A Jewish woman in the Płaszów camp outside Kraków begged her daughter’s benefactors not to bring her child to visit her in the camp “because people were jealous” that the child was still alive and she feared someone might denounce the child.\(^{82}\)

Nika (Bronisława) Kohn Fleissig, a native of Wieliczka who was survived with the assistance of a number of Poles, recalled:

I learned that one cannot generalize: I was once endangered by a nasty Jewish woman, who sent a policeman to arrest me to free herself. I met a number of Christians who saved my life when they could have turned away. So there were good people and bad ones. In tough times, one discovers the truth about people, and it has nothing to do with religion.\(^{83}\)

Jews passing as Christians were also extorted by fellow Jews under threat of denunciation:

The family of Felix Brand, who moved to Suchedniów under an assumed Polish identity, had to flee the town after they were recognized as Jews and blackmailed by some members of the Jewish Police.\(^{84}\)

Chil Rozenberg, the chairman of the Jewish council in Legionowo near Warsaw, surrendered another Jew to the Germans when his son was caught outside the ghetto, because he wanted to save his son. Not surprisingly, because the policemen enjoyed certain privileges and were excused from forced labour, wealthier Jews paid Rozenberg money yo get their sons into the force.\(^{85}\)

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\(^{82}\) Testimony of Janina Ekier in Isakiewicz, *Harmonica*, 247.


Two Jewish sisters from the Netherlands, Surry and Suzanne Polak, had a bitter recollection of their experiences in the Trawniki camp:

There was tension between the Dutch and the Polish Jews in the labour camp. The Polish girls ‘called us anti-Semites. We did not know the Jewish language, and therefore we could not be Jews.’ The Dutch girls were also annoyed at the hypocrisy of the Polish Jews, who professed to be very devout. But ‘we almost never got anything from them. Only if they saw you were on the brink of death, then they might give you something, but if they saw you were doing OK, then they were terribly jealous.’ Suze and Surry also observed that there was a big difference between the Jews from the ghettos and the Jews from the cities. ‘The Jews from Warsaw were very different. Those people were more cultured.’

Artur Diamant recalled that ghetto dwellers in Zawiercie, Upper Silesia, were afraid of admitting to the help they received from Poles because of their Jewish neighbours who might leak this information to German agents.

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

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

There was also an older lady working there, an invalid, limping with one club foot. She was Oriental looking and she claimed to be an Arab. She avoided everyone. One day the older lady disappeared and a few days later the young woman was arrested as a Jewess. I never saw her again.

Much later I found out that the older lady had been Jewish herself and had denounced the young woman as a Jewess under interrogation n. She had done this to save her own life. The Germans had promised to let her go free if she denounced another Jew. Later, she also denounced me to the Germans. The Germans had obviously used her as bait.

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

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

87 Ariel Yahalomi, Przeżyłem… (Będzin: n.p., 2007).
The rest of the story Alina told me after the war: he had been thrown in jail, then released on the condition that he denounce more Jews in hiding in the city. Niedzwiecki was one of his intermediate informers. When the war ended, Szwarcenberg-Czerny was caught by a couple whose daughter he had denounced; she had been killed on the spot. They handed him over to be tried in Krakow [Kraków]. Alina had been in the court.\(^8^9\)

Another victim of a Jewish informer in Kraków was Celina Drelich, who paid with her life when apprehended by the Germans.\(^9^0\) Wilhelm Tropp, who was passing as Christian in his hometown of Kraków, was more fortunate. He was betrayed to the Gestapo by Frender, who in turn was being blackmailed by Pemper, a Jewish policeman and informer working for the Gestapo. Frender exposed Tropp’s cover for the release of his own brother. Tropp managed to slip away by a ruse when he was apprehended the Gestapo, and survived the war with the help of Poles, as did his two brothers. The Frender brothers became informers for the Germans but were killed when they outlived their usefulness. Pemper survived and left Poland after the war.\(^9^1\)

After leaving Lwów, Anna Weissberg took refuge in Kraków where she posed as a Christian. In May 1944, she ran across Sylwia Szapiro, an employee of the Arbeitsamt in Lwów and a known Gestapo confidante, who wanted to know her place of residence. Weissberg threatened Szapiro with retaliation from well-placed individuals, which was a bluff, and managed to get away safely.\(^9^2\)

A Jew from Przemyśl who took refuge in Kraków recalled:

I was … in the Cracow Ghetto. I was not there a long time because my husband’s two sisters had a friend, a Jewish girl, who reported us to the Gestapo. She was living with a Gestapo officer at the time. So they sent all of us to Auschwitz and I was in Birkenau. I survived there three years until the war was over. How I survived I don’t know. It was a miracle.\(^9^3\)

According to Jewish testimonies from Przemyśl,

When the war broke out in Brzeżany [in June 1941] … we returned to Przemyśl. But an aunt who was angry with us remained in Brzeżany and had the German police descend on us in Przemyśl. They searched our home. They knew where to look. Immediately they asked for our coats, mine

\(^{89}\) Thon, I Wish It Were Fiction, 58.
\(^{91}\) Testimony of Wilhelm Tropp, dated January 20, 1947, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), record group 301, number 2321.
\(^{92}\) Testimony of Anna Weissberg, dated July 2, 1945, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), record group 301, number 432.
and my sister’s, and ripped open the collars where everything [i.e., valuables] was sown in. They threw everything upside down and beat everyone. Our house was surrounded by the police.⁹⁴

There was a certain Luśka Lett who lived in the Legionów Square and was a “Polonia” sports club fan. Bolek Czternastek, who was a goalkeeper in “Polonia,” and knew her well … one day she asked him to ‘do something about’ her paralyzed mother who was not fit to live in the Ghetto. Two labor brigade men carried her downstairs in her chair. There, in the gateway, Bolek approached a German soldier and asked him to shoot her. In this way they didn’t need to take her to the Ghetto and Luśka went there by herself. … It once happened that a Jew took his mother out of the basement and denounced her, saying that he was not going to lose his life because of “the old witch.”⁹⁵

Once the ghetto was liquidated, the remaining Jews went into hiding, mostly in bunkers and cellars in the ghetto area. Many of these hiding places were discovered by the Gestapo …

The Nazi police never found the Kraut bunker, and they remained hidden there for three months with several other Jews. …

At the end of three months, they were betrayed by another Jew who had left the bunker and was caught by the Nazis. When they heard the Germans coming, they all rushed to an alternate exit that led into town, with Kraut leading the way. He managed to escape, but his wife and two nephews were caught and killed.⁹⁶

After attacking a Gestapo officer named Reisner, Majer Krebs and his two accomplices fled from the ghetto in Przemyśl. The Germans seized fifty hostages and threatened to kill them unless the Jewish fugitives surrendered. Two of the three Jews were caught. The wife of one of the hostages learned of Krebs’ hiding place and betrayed it to the Judenrat. The Jewish police surrounded the building, apprehended Krebs, and gave him a severe beating. The three assailants were hanged publicly by the ghetto police, while the Germans filmed the ordeal. Afterwards, twenty-five of the hostages were executed in the Jewish cemetery.⁹⁷

A young Jewish woman from Lubaczów named Zisa Stein, the daughter of a rabbi, was sent into the countryside by the Germans, who held her son as hostage, to search out hidden Jews. She had turned over a number of victims to the Germans for a reward before she was apprehended by a Jewish partisan group and executed.⁹⁸ Four Jews passing as Poles—two young girls and two young men—were apprehended by the

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⁹⁴ Testimony of Fryda Einsiedler (later Frieda Stieglitz), Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 1348.
⁹⁵ Hartman and Krochmal, I Remember Every Day..., 207.
⁹⁸ Maurie Hoffman, Keep Yelling!: A Survivor’s Testimony (Richmond, Victoria: Spectrum Publications, 1995), 123.
Gestapo in a restaurant in Wola Okrzejska near Łuków. They were tortured to divulge the names and whereabouts of relatives in hiding and of partisans. As a result some Jews in hiding were also captured.  

A Jew was seized by the Jewish committee in Warta near Sieradz for labour after being duped by a ghetto policeman. He recalled the event as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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received a chilling letter delivered by one of the children of the family hiding my uncle. The letter said, “We know there are Jews hiding here. If they do not leave at once, they will all be killed.” The letter was signed by Ukrainian partisans. … What my mother learned after the war was that the threatening letter had actually been written by another Jew who was also being hidden by the farmer. This Jewish man had learned that my uncle was hiding in the barn. He wrote the letter hoping to scare my uncle away. He feared that if my uncle was found in the barn, he and his family would also be discovered.¹⁰³

After escaping from the Janowska concentration camp in December 1941 and making his way back to the ghetto in Lwów, William Koenig went from place to place in the ghetto trying to find a place to spend the night. People were afraid to take him in. He was fortunate enough to find a cousin of his mother’s who took him in even though it would mean great danger for him.¹⁰⁴

Lila Flachs, a survivor from Lwów, recalled the risks of venturing outside the ghetto: “There were many Jews from the ghetto who caught Jews for the Gestapo.”¹⁰⁵ Janina Kroch lived with her parents in Lwów outside the ghetto. They passed as Christians on the strength of false papers supplied by Zdzisław Strański, the prewar vice-mayor of the city. Her father was recognized as a Jew by Jewish policemen and arrested. Despite meeting their demands for a bribe of 20,000 złoty for his release, they handed him over to Gestapo and he perished in unknown circumstances.¹⁰⁶ After a Jewish woman, the mother of a policeman was denied access to an overcrowded hiding place, she betrayed the hideout. Her son came with some Jewish policemen and Germans, but the Jews were let go in exchange for a large bribe.¹⁰⁷

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

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

The Jewish police were, I thought, proof of this. Although nominally charged with maintaining order in the Jewish community, they were also employed as instruments of repression. In this capacity they were usually involved in the actions, helping SS troops and Ukrainian militiamen in

¹⁰³ Ibid., 260.
¹⁰⁶ Testimony of Janina Kroch, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 362. See also Marek Jóźwik, Teresa Mahorowska, and Apolonia Umińska, eds., Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz: Archiwum ZIH IN-B, zeszyt 301: Nr. 1–900 / Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue: Jewish Historical Institute Archives, Record Group 301: No. 1–900 (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 1998), vol. 1, 134. Janina Kroch was later sheltered by Anna Holdenmajer of Brody and survived, as did her mother.
¹⁰⁷ Testimony of Salomon Goldman, January 20, 1946, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301,
their efforts to round up Jews for deportation to the labor camps and, later, to the death camps as well.

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

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

Adela Fiszer found employment in the kitchen of a Catholic convent in Lwów thanks to the help of a priest, Rev. Jan Sokolowski, to whom she had been introduced by her Polish Catholic friend. She lived in the convent for about one year. In November 1943, she was arrested by the Gestapo and Ukrainian police after Bronia Dimand, a friend Jewish to whom she had confided her whereabouts, was herself arrested and under torture betrayed the hiding places of other Jews. The nuns’ insistence that she was a Catholic was of no use.

Ignacy Goldwasser recalled that the leader (Lubiankier) of one of the forest bunkers near Borysław was captured by the Germans and, under torture, betrayed several bunkers. Jews who scattered were refused admission into other bunkers. Gina Wieser recalled how an elaborate bunker built in the ruins of an electric plant in Borysław was betrayed by one of the Jews who ventured out. The German police who came for the sixty Jews who had taken shelter there knew the secret password.

Another Jew, Szaler, who left his bunker was also apprehended by the Gestapo and betrayed its whereabouts. When the Gestapo came to raid the bunker they were accompanied by the Borysław police commander Eisenstein and a Jewish engineer named Weintraub.

Another survivor from Borysław, Frieda Koch, confirmed that the Jewish police Borysław

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

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109 Testimony of Adela Fiszer, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 2525, as cited in Michał Czajka, Maria Młodkowska, and Apolonia Umińska-Keff, eds., *Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz: Archiwum ZIH IN-B, zespół 301: Nr. 2001–3000/Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue: Jewish Historical Institute Archives, Record Group 301: No. 2001–3000* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2001), vol. 3, 216. Adela Fiszer was sent to work in a factory where she met a Pole who smuggled her out and took her to Hungary. In Hungary, she met the brother of another Polish friend of hers from Lwów who provided her with his deceased sister’s Soviet passport. Adela Fiszer was then registered as a Pole. She survived the war and returned to Poland.
110 Ajzensztajn, *Ruch podziemny w ghettach i obozach*, 23.
112 Testimony of Frieda Koch in *Yalkut Moreshet: Holocaust Documentation and Research* [Tel Aviv], vol. 2 (Winter 2004): 178.
As in most other towns, the Jewish police took part in the Aktions to capture Jews in the ghetto: “This action was conducted by Germans with the assistance of the Ordnung and the Ukrainian police. They pulled people out of their hideouts and apartments.” Another Jewish survivor, Marcus Mordecai, also from Borysław, recalled:

The fifth Aktion took one month. The job of catching the Jews was given over to the Jewish police. They were animals like the Germans. When they caught Jews in a hiding place they demanded a bribe. Whoever did not have the means was taken to the coliseum, a holding pen for deportees. When a person was let go due to a bribe, they had to find a replacement, a process that took about a month. I remember Valek Eisenstein was one of these. They made a lot of money, would play cards, and drink.

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

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

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

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

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115 Trunk, Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution, 80.
Some families who paid Poles or Ukrainians for hiding places did not want to allow Jews who did not pay into their hiding places. The spaces were usually small, making crowds too difficult to control. …

A young girl in Boroslaw was not permitted into an elaborate hiding place prepared by the Judenrat for their families. When she was caught by the Gestapo she led them right to this place, and all the wives and children of the Judenrat members were deported. They all died.117

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

One night when all three of us were already in bed, we heard a knock at the door. A Ukrainian and Jewish policemen were there. As they entered the room I threw the covers over my mother’s head and jumped out of bed … The two policemen examined my passport. … We learned what caused the search much later. The husband of my first roommate, Lusia [a Jewish woman], had been caught by the Gestapo. When beaten, he revealed the previous address of his wife. The police were therefore looking for her and not me. It was a miracle that they did not subject me to interrogation.118

When Helene Kaplan enlisted for work in Germany, in the waiting room she was harassed and nearly exposed by another young Jewish woman posing as a Pole.119

Dziunia Steinberg (later June Friedman), a young girl who was sheltered by a Polish couple, Filip and Zuzanna Kowal, recalled how she was betrayed by a Jewish informer in Borysław but miraculously avoided being killed.

One day, after work, I went to town to buy something on the open market place. I was stopped by a Jewish man, (few that were still left) that worked as an informer for the Gestapo, all the others were killed or shipped to working camps around the area. He somehow recognized me. He stopped his bike and started to ask me if I am Steinberg’s daughter. I said no. Then who are you? I said my name is Kowal. He wanted my address and I gave it to him. I went my way, but he was standing there observing me. I remember buying something and even haggling with the merchant, so I will not be suspicious, but my heart was in my throat the whole time and I had a feeling he will give me away.

My parents always told me to be careful and never confess about my past life to anyone. After returning home I told Susan [Zuzanna] about my experience and she said get ready, “they” will be here soon. She was right. That afternoon a man in a leather coat came to arrest me. I was crying and so was Susan, but they took me anyway. Susan said over and over again that I was her daughter, but all in vain. They kept me in a cell for 3 days and 3 nights (with 2 other “criminals” like me – political prisoners, older women who did something against the Germans) they kicked me in the

117 Ibid., 63.
118 Ibid., 69–70.
lower back as I was too small to be kicked any place else, I suppose. They came at night with the Jewish traitor, woke me up and talked to me in Yiddish, a language I did not know then, and I used to wake up and start praying in Polish crossing myself etc. etc. All that time Susan was coming and begging to let me out, as I am not a Jew but her daughter that looks like someone else.

On the third day, in the morning, they let me out and told me to go home. I was sore, dirty and tired, and I did not know if this was a trick or they really did let me go. I stood there, outside not moving, and when I looked up I saw they are all standing there in the window and looking at me. This was my luck. If I would start running, they would shoot me right then and there knowing I must be Jewish, but this way, I was just another child being afraid and crying, so they left me alone. After a few minutes I started walking toward home slowly, still crying loudly. After a few blocks I looked back but nobody was following me so I started running home. I ran for a mile or more until I got home. After arriving I was shaking so hard that I could not hold a spoon in my hand. It took me a few weeks to calm down.  

Eva Hoffman, whose family hails from Założe, north of Tarnopol, acknowledged:

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

Zelda Machlowicz-Hinenberg was passing herself off as a Ukrainian in Rawa Ruska, fearful of being detected. It turned out, however, that although she was recognized by a Ukrainian policeman, he protected her. Later, she was denounced by a fellow Jew and deported to the Belzec death camp. Fortunately, she was able to escape from the train and, although shot and wounded, was found by a Ukrainian family who took her for a Ukrainian and nursed her back to health. When a group of Jewish partisans, dressed in German uniforms, staged a raid on the jail in Borszczów in November 1943 to release its 50 inmates,

We told the prisoners that we are Soviet partisans and have come to free them. The prisoners all ran off but the Jews didn’t want to go because they recognized us. They remained and later betrayed us.
David Landau’s escape from the Warsaw ghetto to the Aryan side proved to be precarious because of Jewish collaborators he encountered:

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

This policeman knew that they had been waiting in the entrance to the first house outside the ghetto, and had been prepared to send me to my death for a small part of the bribe.124

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

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

From that day on I was sure that my suspicion was correct, and that as well as being a Jew he was also a spy.125

On other occasions, Jews apprehended by the Germans betrayed other Jews in hiding under threat or duress or when promised respite of some nature for themselves. When she fell into the hands of the Gestapo in Warsaw, a young woman by the name of Celina betrayed her friend, Wanda, and they were both executed in Pawiak prison.126

Since most Jews who were denounced and apprehended by the Germans perished without recording their fate, these stories represent the tip of the iceberg. Often the Polish benefactors would be caught in the web. When a Polish family by the name of Drobnicki in the village of Posuchów near Brzeżany told their Jewish charges, Roza Goldman and her daughter Bela, that they could not keep them anymore, the Goldman women threatened to turn them in to the Germans if they had to leave. The Drobnicki family later took in two Jewish men during the final months of the German occupation, which caused a lot of bickering as the two Jewish women were against the idea of keeping these men.127 Irena Bakowska, who was sheltered by Christians in Warsaw, recalled what her benefactor had told her: “Elterman had come to see her husband and offered him a substantial amount of money if he got rid of me and took her mother and her instead. Zofia was outraged and promised that she would never let me go, no matter how much money Mrs. Elterman was willing to pay her husband.”128 Fruma Bregman, another Jewish woman from Warsaw, recalled that when she rented a room from a Polish woman posing as a Pole, another tenant—a Jew

125 Ibid., 285–86.
126 Kołacińska-Gałązka, Dzieci Holokaustu mówią..., vol. 5, 135.
128 Bakowska, Not All Was Lost, 181.
pretending to be a French national—urged the Polish woman to evict the other tenants because they were Jews.  

Blackmailing Polish rescuers was not an infrequent occurrence. A Polish rescuer from Stanisławów, in Eastern Galicia, who is credited with saving 32 Jews, reported: “I even took in some Jews who had threatened to denounce me and their kinsmen whom I was hiding if I didn’t help them.”  

Two Jewish charges from well-to-do families found shelter with an impoverished Polish family in the village of Brzozdowce near Chodorów, in the province of Lwów. They threatened to turn in their benefactors, who could barely make ends meet, unless they provided them with more food.  

A Polish Christian from Warsaw recalled:

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

Stefania Podgórńska, who rescued thirteen Jews in Przemyśl, faced threats from a Jew who wanted admission into her home where she was sheltering Jews.

One day Stefania received a letter delivered by two street urchins, who demanded that Stefania read it, sign it, and return it to them so they could be paid. The letter was from a Jewish woman in the ghetto; it named all the people she had in hiding and threatened to tell the Gestapo everything unless Stefania took in the author of the letter and her children.  

Angrily, Stefania accepted them. A Jewish family in Drohobycz accepted another Jew into their hideout because they were fearful he would denounce them.  

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134 Testimony of Stella Kreshes in Isakiewicz, Harmonica, 57.
A Jew in the hiding in the forests in the vicinity of Sokoly near Białystok urged two brothers to separate from their group to increase their chances of receiving help from local farmers.

The Todras boys did not want to listen to what I said. They threatened that if I would not allow them to come with me, they would cause such a scandal that my son would be driven out and his hiding place exposed to everyone.\textsuperscript{135}

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

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

Vichta and Leibush had no choice. The Stubs would remain, but that raised the number to eight … Eight Jews, six of whom had no money, in a tiny cottage attic near the main road. Impossible. … After three weeks. Leibush and I were forced to leave Vichta’s home and joined a group living in the forest. Froim and the Stub brothers remained at Vichta’s house until the liberation. … The Stub brothers behaved brutishly, bullying their way into the security of Vichta’s home.\textsuperscript{136}

Some Jews were hostile to the idea of accepting into their places of refuge other Jews who might put them at risk,\textsuperscript{137} and Jews were often taken in by Polish benefactors over the protest of their other Jewish charges. Bella Bronstein, an orphan from Drohiczyn, recalled the reception she received when she arrived in a strange village: the church warden “suggested that we go in to see the priest who might take me in as help to his housekeeper. It turned out later that the priest’s housekeeper was also a refugee Jewish woman who was not too anxious to have another Jewess around … (not unusual in those terrible days).”\textsuperscript{138}

Issur Wondolowicz, who was hiding in the forests near Sokoly, recalled: “There was a struggle among our group. Simply, they did not agree that the girl and I would join them.”\textsuperscript{139} Jews hiding in a bunker in the Garbów forest northwest of Lublin refused to take in even one additional, wounded Jewish partisan on the run.\textsuperscript{140} A Jewish woman from Lublin who went to Warsaw to obtain false identity documents ran into a Jewish friend of her father’s who was already installed on the Aryan side: “He tried to seduce my wife, at

\textsuperscript{135} Michael Maik, \textit{Deliverance: The Diary of Michael Maik. A True Story} (Kedumim, Israel: Keterpress Enterprises, 2004), 127.

\textsuperscript{136} Norman Salsitz with Stanley Kaish, \textit{Three Homelands: Memories of a Jewish Life in Poland, Israel, and America} (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 134–35.


\textsuperscript{138} David Shotofish, ed., \textit{Sefer Drohiczyn} (Tel Aviv: n.p., 1969), 26ff. (English section).

that time not my wife yet. Tell [sic] her he would help her only if she would stay with him. Of course, she rejected the whole thing and she left him.”

Lena Küchler, who hid in Warsaw, was abandoned by her husband for a German woman because he thought his chances of surviving with his wife, given her appearance, were not good. The teenager Dora Brick (Kislowicz) was not accepted in the house where her Jewish friend’s family was hiding, and later she encountered her brother, who was hiding with a group of Jews near Zamość, but he too would not let her stay with them despite her pleas. Golda Ryba, a 12-year-old girl from Sokolów Podlaski, was allowed to stay in a farmer’s barn where she found several Jewish families hiding. No one took the slightest interest in her and they would not even share a blanket for protection against the cold. Luba Bat was hiding with a former teacher of hers, when a friend knocked on the door and asked to stay. Luba Bat confronted him: “For heaven’s sake, how can you say such a thing?” “But I have no place where to go and I’m not going to move,” the friend retorted. Luba Bat replied: “For heaven’s sake, do you realize that it’s terribly unethical what you’re doing?” Her landlady let the friend stay for a few days while she made other arrangements for him.

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

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

Regina Biesam recalled her experience while hiding in Sosnowiec and the attitude of her Polish benefactor and fellow Jews.

Stanisława Cicha … at the risk of her own life gave shelter to sixteen Jews in her home. I myself was among those she concealed. It was 1943. … When I found myself in her home I discovered that I was not the only one she was rescuing. Anyone who came at night to tap at the window of her

140 Samuel Gruber, as told to Gertrude Hirschler, I Chose Life (New York: Shengold, 1978), 74.
141 Interview with Felix Horn, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, dated July 19, 1994, 12 74.
143 Nahum Bogner, At the Mercy of Strangers: The Rescue of Jewish Children with Assumed Identities in Poland (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2009), 84–85.
144 Bogner, At the Mercy of Strangers, 84.
house was sure to find shelter. Some of the Jews rebelled and grumbled that too many people were there already, which might lead to discovery. Mrs. Cicha replied that everybody wants to live.147

Another such case is recorded by a rescuer from Brzeżany, in the Tarnopol region, whose decision to bring in more Jews met with anger on the part of her Jewish charges. Previously, these charges had insisted adamantly that no other Jews were to be brought to the hideout.148 A similar story from the Lublin region is recorded by survivor Thomas Toivi Blatt.149 A Polish rescuer from Miechów faced stern protests from two of his Jewish charges when more Jews arrived.150 Jews hidden by the Beck family in Żółkiew protested the arrival of two young children to be with their aunt:

During this period, 16 fugitives were concealed in the hideout. In April 1943, during the final liquidation of the ghetto, seven-year-old Zygmund Orlender and his four-year-old sister also sought refuge in the Becks’ home, and despite the opposition of those already hiding in the bunker, who protested against the increased overcrowding, the Becks stood firm and took in the children.151

When some Jews reached the house of a Polish forest ranger in Koniński, in Volhynia, who gladly took them in, they “found other Jews from our town, but we could see that they were not pleased at our coming, fearing the Germans would discover our coming.” After a few days, they were taken to a different hiding place.152 When some more Jews arrived,

We joined Moshe Rosenfeld, a man of 60, after Slovik [Slowik, the ranger] instructed him to take us to the group of Jews. … Moshe Rosenfeld hesitated to bring us to join the group and started to argue with Slovik. Rosenfeld, of course, gave in in the end and did not stop us from going on. …

Our arrival caused arguments and anger over whether we were entitled to join the group. Sensing we had food with us, the men took it from us, sat down, and finished it. This was like a bribe for permission to stay with them. … Slovik’s son, Kazik … would also bring a bit of food, but not one bit of this reached the small, weak ones in the group.153

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147 Iranek-Osmecki, He Who Saves One Life, 128. See also Bartoszewski and Lewin, Righteous Among Nations, 441.
150 Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej, 712.
151 Gutman and Bender, The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations, vol. 4: Poland, Part 1, 83. See also Bartoszewski and Lewin, Righteous Among Nations, 443–44.
153 Ibid., 194.
A Jewish policeman from Sandomierz named Morgen persuaded a Polish farmer to take him in for a substantial payment on condition that the farmer evict a large group of Jews he was sheltering. Marcus David Leuchter recalled his experiences in Warsaw:

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

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

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

Leon Kahn (then Leib Kaganowicz) and his father sought refuge in the countryside near their hometown of Ejszyszki. An acquaintance of the family, named Rukowicz, gave them a warm welcome, but seemed somehow uneasy. “We were poised ready to flee when the reason for his uneasiness became evident: another Jewish family—Sholem Levo, his wife, two sons and a niece!” While Rukowicz invited the Kahns to share the Levo family’s quarters (an unfinished wing of the house), the Levos were not very enthusiastic about the arrangement and asked Kahn’s father to look for some other place to hide. A Jew who had arranged for his son’s escape a work camp in Nowogródek found that his plan was foiled when his brother, who was aware of these plans, prevented his nephew from leaving and sent his own son in his nephew’s place. The son later perished, and the nephew survived.

In Chęciny,

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154 Testimony of Zelman Baum (Waclaw Kozieniec), Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 2425.
156 Martin Gilbert, The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust (Toronto: Key Porter, 2003), 80.
158 George Lubow, Escape: Against All Odds. A Survivor’s Story (New York: iUniverse, 2004), 70. According to the author, “My uncle argued someone else should be given a chance to survive, since my father already had two children on the outside.”
Gutshe begged them to let her hide in one of the deserted Jewish flats, but the terrified Jews of Chintshin [Cheńciny] told her to hide somewhere else. “For God’s sake,” she said to them, “Why should a Christian hide a Jew if you yourselves won’t take him in?” “We won’t jeopardize our lives for you, and if you keep hanging around here, we will inform the Gestapo,” Abraham Ring, the Jewish militia captain, threatened.\textsuperscript{159}

The same source describes how a Jew fell into the hands of the Gestapo, was broken by torture, and betrayed his earlier Polish benefactor. The Gestapo later tortured the captured Pole to get him to betray names.\textsuperscript{160} Samuel Drix recalled how Icek Hoch, with whom he was hiding with a Polish family in Biały Kamień near Zloczów, refused to help his own father come to the safety of their hideout.\textsuperscript{161} Drix had also provided Hoch with a considerable amount of money which Hoch did not want to return to him when it looked like they were on the verge of going their separate ways.\textsuperscript{162}

The following examples are particularly disconcerting. After staging a revolt in the Sobibór death camp, hundreds of Jewish prisoners managed to break out. They decided to form smaller groups to increase their chances of survival. In the larger group that Toivi (Thomas) Blatt was first part of, each smaller group was asked to take with them a vulnerable escapee. One such person was Mendel, the head of the bakery in the camp, who proved to be helpless when he arrived in the forest. The escapees with whom he was to go, Shvartz and Karolek, first tried to leave without him and then broke Mendel’s leg so that he could not walk. The leader of the revolt, Aleksandr Pechersky, a Soviet officer, took with him all of the men who had weapons. He also took up a collection for money from the other Jews for the stated purpose of buying food supplies from villagers for the larger group. Pechersky and his armed men disappeared, leaving the other Jews behind without arms to defend themselves and little funds.\textsuperscript{163}

Some Jews contrast their treatment at the hands of fellow Jews with the kindness they experienced from Poles. A young Jewish woman recalled that she and her brother survived begging food from Polish villagers in the Lublin area after several bad encounters with fellow Jews.\textsuperscript{164} Then in her early teens, Dwojna Woszczyn, from the village of Korost near Stepań in Volhynia, managed to escape from a death squad and wandered through the countryside begging for food. One night she happened to encounter a Jewish doctor from Stepań hiding in the forest. When she awoke the next morning he had left taking her

\textsuperscript{160} Pat, \textit{Ashes and Fire}, 174.
\textsuperscript{162} Drix, \textit{Witness to Annihilation}, 204–5.
\textsuperscript{164} Sara Kraus-Kolkowicz, \textit{Dziewczynka z ulicy Milej: Albo świadectwo czasu Holokaustu} (Lublin: Agencja Wydawniczo-Handlowa AD, 1995), especially 36–37, 70. See also Gutman and Bender, \textit{The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations}, vol. 5: Poland, Part 2, 573.
food provision.\textsuperscript{165} When Rachel Shtibel was sheltered with her family in a bunker in a barn of a farmer near Kolomyja, she was repeatedly sexually molested by a family friend who hid with them.\textsuperscript{166}

Dwojra Frymet, from Włodzimierz Wołyński, born in 1930, often sneaked out of the ghetto to obtain food from Poles and worked on a farm herding cows, even though everyone in the village knew her to be Jewish. In the ghetto, a rich Jew had refused to give her any food and threw her out the door, and the Jewish police chased and beat her as she tried to sneak in and out of the ghetto through the wire fence.\textsuperscript{167} On one occasion, she was saved from the hands of a Jewish policeman who was administering a severe beating by a Ukrainian policeman.\textsuperscript{168}

A teenaged Jewish girl had wandered in the forests near Lublin and encountered Jews in hiding, but they would not let her join their group. She survived by working as a shepherd for local farmers. Afterward, she found her way to the home of a police officer where she worked as a nanny for the family’s little boy. When a representative of the Jewish community along came along with her aunt to remove her from the home after the war, the girl refused to go with her. She lashed back to the Jewish representative that the Jews had abandoned her in the forest, whereas the Poles had saved her, so she had no desire to return to the Jews.\textsuperscript{169} There are other accounts authored by Jews who turned to Poles for assistance after being turned down by fellow Jews.\textsuperscript{170}

Jewish indiscretion was also a source of danger. The cover of Bruno Shatyn (Bronisław Szatyn), a Jewish lawyer from Kraków who had been hired to work as an administrator of a Polish estate (and acquired the reputation of an anti-Semite even among Poles), was exposed by a Jewish girl, herself in hiding among Poles who knew her true identity. This Jewish girl could not resist gossiping even when other lives depended on her discretion. The employees, however, agreed to keep him on as their administrator, fully aware that in doing so they were endangering their own lives.\textsuperscript{171} Shatyn noted the following precautions taken by Jews who decided to pass as Christians:

Most important, other Jews should be avoided. By this time all Jews had been officially relegated to ghettos or concentration camps. Those we saw on the outside either were living on false papers like us—and so would also try to avoid running into friends from the past—or were working for the Gestapo as informers on other Jews.\textsuperscript{172}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[165] Stanisław Siekierski, ed., Żyli wśród nas...: Wspomnienia Polaków i Żydów nadesłane na konkurs pamięci polskożydowskiej o nagrodę imienia Dawida Ben Guriona (Płońsk: Zarząd Miasta Płońsk, Miejskie Centrum Kultury w Płońsku, and Towarzystwo Miłośników Ziem Płońskich, 2001), 118.
\item[166] Rachel Shtibel, The Violin (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 2002), chapter 27.
\item[167] Account of Dwojra Frymet in Grynberg and Kotowska, Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945, 608.
\item[168] Account of Debora Intertur (née Frymet), Internet: <http://www.sztetl.org.pl>.
\item[169] Bogner, At the Mercy of Strangers, 265. The girl was eventually removed from the home and taken to a Jewish children’s home.
\item[170] See, for example, Wroński and Zwolakowa, Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945, 307 (Radzymin, Jadów), 329 (Jedlicz).
\item[172] Ibid., 186.
\end{footnotes}
So, too, the cover a Jewish dentist who posed as a Pole in Piszczac, a small town near the Bug River, was exposed by a young Jewish woman soon after he arrived in town with his family. However, despite widespread rumours and suspicions among the Polish population, no one betrayed them. The unexpected arrival of a relative of this family from Kraków caused more turmoil: “‘When your father heard that I’d given Izio our address and that he was coming to stay with us, he could have killed me,’ my mother recalls. ‘How could you endanger us like that? How could you tell him where we were, when we agreed that nobody must know? He’ll be the death of us!’ Henek reproached her.”

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

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

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

A Jewish woman who had converted to Catholicism before the war was captured by the Germans and taken to the ghetto in Rzeszów. One night some Jews tried to persuade a tipsy Ukrainian guard to shoot her: “The Jews told him: ‘She is a convert! She has to be killed and shot!’ They said so in my presence. They didn’t care at all.’” But the Ukrainian soldier told the Jews that he had not received an order to shoot her. Instead he beat her in order to appease the Jewish mob. Dobka Sztrum, who had converted and married Pole, was denounced by a Jew; pregnant, she was executed by the Germans in front of her home in Uniszowa near Ryglice. Hatred and vengeance inspired a rabbi to denounce a Jew by the name of Jakubowicz who had converted to Catholicism and lived unmolested in Siedliska near Tuchów, south of

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174 Ibid., 311.
175 Bednarczyk, *Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta*, 308.
176 Ibid., 309.
177 Shiye Goldberg (Shie Chehever), *The Undefeated* (Tel Aviv: H. Leivick Publishing House, 1985), 166.
Tarnów. The Gestapo arrested the Jakubowicz family because one grandparent was a Jew.\(^ {180}\) As many accounts confirm, the general sentiment toward Jewish converts to Christianity and “assimilationists” living in the ghettos was one of loathing and hostility.\(^ {181}\) A snitch of Jewish origin in the Warsaw office of the


\(^{181}\) Assimilationists and converts were generally loathed in the ghettos. In his chronicle of the Warsaw ghetto Emanuel Ringelblum notes that Jewish nationalists were delighted that the Jews were finally separated from the Poles, albeit in ghettos, seeing in this the beginnings of a separate Jewish state on Polish territory. Hatred towards Polish Christians grew in the ghetto because it was believed that they were responsible for the economic restrictions and other hardships that befell the Jews. Moreover, many Jews embarked on a battle against the use of the Polish language in the ghetto, especially in Jewish agencies and education, and were opposed to Jewish converts occupying positions of authority. See Emanuel Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego: Wresień 1939–styczeń 1943* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1983), 118, 214–15, 531ff. Some Jewish nationalists simply did not permit the use of the Polish language in their homes. See Antoni Marianowicz, *Życie surowo wzbronione* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1995), 46; Antoni Marianowicz, *Life Strictly Forbidden* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004). That author also attests to the fact that converts were generally detested (p. 47), and to the pro-German attitudes of some Jews in the ghetto (pp. 66–67, 190). A Jewish memoir describes how children who did not speak Yiddish, which was a German-based language, were ostracized by Yiddish-speaking children in the Warsaw ghetto: they were disparaged as “Poles” and “converts” and were even pelted with rocks. See Małgorzata-Maria Acher, *Niewłaściwa twarz: Wspomnienia ocalalych z warszawskiego getta* (Częstochowa: Święty Paweł, 2001), 48. A Jewish woman who turned to a bearded Jew in Polish, since she did not speak Yiddish, recalled his hostile reaction: “I think he understood me, but he got very angry that I did not speak Yiddish, so he spat at me, ‘Du solst starben zwiischem goyim!’ I did not understand exactly what he said, so I went back to my apartment and repeated it to my mother. ‘What does ‘Du solst starben zwiischem goyim’ mean?’ She said, ‘Who cursed you like this?’ She explained to me that he had said, ‘May you die amongst the gentiles!’ He said this because if you do not speak Yiddish you were an outcast.” See Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 39; Rabbi Huberband lamented that he a group of Hassids in the ghetto who were “as drunk as goys.” See Huberband, *Kiddush Hashem*, 131.

According to one source, there were fewer than 1,600 Christian converts in the Warsaw ghetto; according to other sources, there may have been as many as 2,000 or even 5,000. See, respectively, Yisrael Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw, 1939–1943: Ghetto, Underground, Revolt* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1982), 59; Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City* (New Haven, Connecticut, and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 652—translated from the Polish: Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *Getto warszawskie: Przewodnik po nieistniejącym mieście* (Warsaw: IFIS PAN, 2001), which was followed by a second revised and expanded edition (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2013); Peter F. Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto: An Epitaph for the Unremembered* (Notre Dame Indiana: Notre Dame University, 2005), 66–68. Rabbi Chaim Aron Kaplan expressed tremendous rancor toward Jewish converts, to whom he attributed the vilest of motives, and rejoiced at their misfortune: “I shall, however, have revenge on our ‘converts.’ I will laugh aloud at the sight of their tragedy. … Conversion brought them but small deliverance. … This is the first time in my life that a feeling of vengeance has given me pleasure.” See Abraham I. Katsh, ed., *Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan* (New York: Macmillan; London: Collier-Macmillan, 1965), 78–79, 250 (Kaplan suggests that Jewish informers may have been behind their betrayal to the Germans). Traditionally, Jews viewed converts as particularly virulent “enemies of Israel.” See Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, 101. Even Jewish atheists openly declared their disdain toward converts. See Grace Caporino and Dianne Isaacs, “Testimonies from the ‘Aryan’ Side: ‘Jewish Catholics’ in the Warsaw Ghetto,” in John K. Roth and Elisabeth Maxwell, eds., *Remembering for the Future: The Holocaust in an Age of Genocide* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2001), vol. 1, 194.

For many accounts confirm, the general sentiment toward Jewish converts to Christianity living inside the ghetto was one of hostility and loathing. The Orthodox members of the Jewish council attempted to deny Christian Jews the rights and help given to Jews in the ghetto. See Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, 70. They were detested for everything: their betrayal of Judaism, their use of the Polish language, their education and social and economic status, their alleged air of superiority and anti-Semitism, and even the assistance they received from Caritas, a Catholic relief organization. Soon malicious, but false, stories spread that they had taken over the senior positions in the ghetto administration and controlled the Jewish police force. See Havi Ben-Sasson, “Christians in the Ghetto: All Saints’ Church, Birth of the Holy Virgin Mary Church, and the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto,” in *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 31 (2003): 153–73. This was so even though, according to one prominent researcher, many if not most of the converts were opportunistic and continued to consider themselves Jews, few of whom sustained any connection with their new religion, and “virtually all continued to donate to Jewish religious charities.” See Joseph Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland, 1919–1939* (Berlin, New York, Amsterdam: Mouton, 1983), 78. See also Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, 93; Marian Makowist, “Assimilationists and Neophytes at the Time of War-Operations and in the Closed Jewish Ghetto,” in Joseph Kernish, ed., *To Live With Honor and Die With Honor!…: Selected Documents from the Warsaw Ghetto Underground Archives* “O.S.” [“Oneg Shabbath”] (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1986), 619–34. (The memoir of Halina Gorcewicz, whose father
ostensibly converted to Catholicism when married her mother, illustrates that even Jews who had fully assimilated linguistically and culturally maintained a strong tribal-like attachment to fellow Jews—perhaps an embodiment of the lingering notion of the oneness of “the chosen people” they had inherited from Judaism. See Halina Gorlewicz’s memoir, *Why, Oh God, Why?*, posted online at: <http://www.treko.net.au/~jerry/why/whytoc.html>.) When Ludwik Hirszfeld, a renowned specialist and convert, started to give lectures for medical practitioners in the Warsaw ghetto, he was boycotted by Jewish nationalists. See Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, 122. The blatant hostility and humiliations faced by Christian converts in the Warsaw ghetto are documented by Alceo Valcini, the Warsaw correspondent of the Milan *Corriere della Sera*, whose diary was translated into Polish as *Golgota Warszawy*, 1939–1945 (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1973). Converts were repeatedly harassed when they left church after mass and, on occasion, even the German police had to intervene to protect them from enraged Orthodox Jews. Converts who did not figure in community lists were denied food rations and material assistance. Ibid., 235–36. Valcini’s portrayal is fully supported by a report filed by a Jewish Gestapo informer: Crowds of Jews would gather in front of the Christian churches on Sundays and Christian holy days to take in the spectacle of converts attending mass. At Easter in 1942, the crowd of onlookers was so large at the church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Leszno Street that the *Ordnungsdienst* (Jewish police) stationed a special squad there to maintain order and protect the converts. Cited in Christopher R. Browning and Israel Gutman, “The Reports of a Jewish ‘Informer’ in the Warsaw Ghetto—Selected Documents,” in *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 17 (1986): 263. Hostilities also occurred during the Sunday mass at All Saints’ Church, where a large mob of Hasidic youths gathered to shout down the converted Jews as they left church. The Jewish order police was called in to disperse the Hasidic pogromists. This incident is described in the memoirs of Stanisław Gajewski, which are found in the Yad Vashem archives. See Engelking and Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto*, 654; Dembowski, *Christians in the Warsaw Ghetto*, 85. A Pole who entered the ghetto recalled the caustic remarks made by onlookers about Jews who attended religious services at All Saints’ Church. See Waclaw Sledzinski, *Governor Frank’s Dark Harvest* (Newtown, Montgomeryshire, Mid-Wales: Montgomerys, 1946), 120. A Jew who was not a convert describes in her memoirs how Jewish scorn in the Warsaw ghetto harassed Jewish Christians who attended church services. See Ruth Aitbeker Cyprys, *A Jump For Life: A Survivor’s Journal from Nazi-Occupied Poland* (New York: Continuum, 1997), 32. This is confirmed by another Jew who observed Jewish youths standing outside in the street as converts walked to church services and calling after them “Good Yontiff!” See Gary A. Keins, *A Journey Through the Valley of Perdition* ([United States]: n.p., 1985), 86. A similar situation prevailed in Kraków: when priests and nuns would enter the ghetto to tend to the spiritual needs of converts, they were spat on and cursed by indignant Jews. “Converts were not popular in the ghetto. … We’re foreigners and they hate us.” See Roman Frister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 84, 89–90. Those who did not abide by religious traditions were also abused, especially by intolerant Orthodox Jews. A teenage girl from Łódź, who took refuge with her parents in Łosice, recalled the abuse hurled on her for performing a chore on the Sabbath. See Stella Zylbersztajn, *A gdyby to było Wasze dziecko?* (Łosice: Łosickie Stowarzyszenie Rozwoju Eukuś, 2005); Marek Jerzman, “A gdyby to było nasze dziecko,” *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 3 (March 2009): 59.

The fate of the downtrodden Gypsies, who were rounded up and sent to Jewish ghettos, was even harsher since they had no communal welfare organizations. They were universally regarded as intruders and thieves. See, for example, Katsh, *Scroll of Agony*, 294–95 (“they occupy themselves by stealing from the Jews”). There is no record of Jews displaying solidarity with or offering assistance to Gypsies, and it appears that most of the Gypsies in the Warsaw ghetto, who were beggars and forced to wear distinctive armbands, were rounded up and deported to the death camps in the summer of 1942. Gypsies apprehended in “Aryan” Warsaw were taken to the prison on Gęsia Street where they were guarded by functionaries of the Jewish police. See Institute of National Memory, Warsaw Regional Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against the Polish Nation, file no. S 5/20/Zn. Within the confines of the large Jewish ghetto in Łódź, the Germans built a smaller, isolated ghetto for some 5,000 Gypsies. Conditions there were even worse than those of the Jews and, without connections or any outside assistance (such as almost all Jewish ghettos received from the surrounding Polish community), the Gypsies were soon decimated by hunger and disease. Chaim Rumkowski, chairman of the Jewish council, argued with the German authorities about the arrival of the Gypsies: “We cannot live together with them. The Gypsies are the sort of people who can do anything. First they rob and then they set fire and soon everything is in flames, including your factories and materials.” See Alan Adelson and Robert Lapides, eds., *Łódź Ghetto: Inside a Community Under Siege* (New York: Viking, 1989), 173. A Jewish doctor from Łódź admits candidly: “There was no pity in the ghetto for Gypsies.” See Arnold Mostowicz, *Żółta gwiazda i czerwony krzyż* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1988), 25–27. That the Jews were indifferent to the fate of the Gypsies is confirmed in other sources: “The Jews shut their eyes to the fate of the Gypsies. Rumkowski was ordered to set up special barracks for them, to provide food and medical services, and to see that the dead were buried in the Jewish cemetery. A typhus epidemic, in which several Jewish doctors lost their lives, broke out in the Gypsies’ quarters. They were strictly quarantined during their short-lived existence in the ghetto. In December, 1941, they were deported. The Jews neither knew where nor cared. The Gypsies ended at the death camp of Chelmno.” See Leonard Tushnet, *The Pavement of Hell: Three Leaders of the Judenrat* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1972), 44. It should be noted that Jews in the Łódź ghetto did not starve, although their food rations were reduced from 1,600 calories in 1940 to 1,000 in 1942. In the analogous period, food rations for Poles in the *Generalgouvernement* were 736 and 400, respectively. See Grzegorz Berendt, “Cena życia—ekonomiczne uwarunkowania egzystencji Żydów po ‘aryjskiej stronie’,” in *Zagłada Żydów:
Main Welfare Council (Rada Główna Opiekuńcza), by the name of Stefan Idzikowski, is believed to have handed over to the Gestapo a list of Jewish Christians who remained outside the Warsaw ghetto.\(^{182}\)

Although historian Lucy Dawidowicz has stated that the Poles have only themselves to blame for the fact that the Germans executed so many Polish benefactors and their Jewish charges,\(^{183}\) examples of betrayals by Jews (including Gestapo agents\(^{184}\)) and by others (Ukrainians,\(^{185}\) ethnic Germans,\(^{186}\) Gypsies\(^{187}\)), often

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\(^{182}\) Dov Kutzovitch (Petach Tikva), “With the Partisans and in the Red Army,” in David Shlomfisz, ed., Members of Kibbutz Megiddo Who Survived the Holocaust in Israel and the Diaspora, 1990, Chapter 4, Internet: <www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/dokshitz/>. These attitudes were steeped in tradition: “Generally, Gypsies were treated with suspicion and disdain. My parents would never have permitted me to talk to them under ordinary circumstances. Bielsko’s mothers warned their children that a Gypsy woman could cast a spell on their souls; its fathers watched their wallets when Gypsies were nearby, it being common knowledge that they were born pickpockets. … Decent folk kept away from them.” See Frister, The Cap, or the Price of a Life, 277–78. However, sociologist Nechama Tec blames the Gypsies for the conflict. See Nechama Tec, “Resistance in Eastern Europe,” in Walter Laqueur, ed., The Holocaust Encyclopedia (New Haven and Yale: Yale University Press, 2001), 544. An inmate of the death camp at Belzec recalled: “the gypsies were tough and ruthless and stole whatever they could lay their hands on from us.” See Tuviah Friedman, Nazi Hunter (Haifa: Institute for the Documentation of Nazi War Crimes, 1961), 33. A survivor of Auschwitz claimed that, unlike the Jews, “If the Gypsies thought of anything besides food, however, it was certainly not of resistance or escape.” See Frister, The Cap, or the Price of a Life, 279. Gypsies could also turn on non-Gypsies, especially Jews. Zahava Glaz Wolfreiler recalled: “One day I decided to go to a suburb [of Kraków] called Prondnik [Prądnik], to look for work. On the way to Prondnik, there was a Gypsy camp. Some Gypsies attacked me and pulled off the cross and chain I was wearing around my neck in order to pass as a Christian.” See Denise Nevo and Mira Berger, eds., We Remember: Testimonies of Twenty-four Members of Kibbutz Megiddo Who Survived the Holocaust (New York: Shengold, 1994), 28. A survivor from Parczew wrote: “There were a few hundred [gypsies in the ghetto in Siedlce], and when a Jew from the outside arrived, the gypsies robbed him, taking away even the clothing he had on.” See Benjamin Mandelkern, with Mark Czarnecki, Escape from the Nazis (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1988), 68. Another Jew recalls that when Jews and Gypsies were hearded in a large courtyard near the train station in Belzec, the Jews had to “put up with a great deal of trouble from the Gypsies, being beaten by them, and being robbed of everything they had.” See David Ravid (Shmukler), ed., The Cieszanów Memorial Book (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 2006), 167.

\(^{183}\) See Lucy S. Dawidowicz, The Holocaust and the Historians (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Havard University Press, 1981), 117: “Indeed, it can be shown that many of the Poles whom the Germans murdered because they were protecting Jews had been betrayed by their bounty-hunting fellow Poles.” Dawidowicz apparently cannot fathom that Jews could also be a source of danger for fellow Jews and also Poles; in the case of the latter, she doubtless considers the phenomenon to be irrelevant, given the strident hostility toward Poles that permeates her “moralist” writings.

\(^{184}\) For example, after his arrest by the Gestapo, Mundek Erlich was released on payment of a substantial bribe. However, he was required to inform on Jews who were in hiding in Kraków under the cover of “Aryan” papers. His Polish benefactor, Jacek Stocki-Sosnowski, arranged to smuggle him out of Poland into Hungary. See Israel Gutman, ed., The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005), volume II (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010), 618. See also the rescuer’s autobiography, Jedno życie cztery świata (Kraków: Baran i Suszczyński, 1994).

\(^{185}\) A prominent example is the betrayal by a Ukrainian policeman of a bunker built by the Józefek family in Lwów. As a result all 36 Jews sheltered there were killed, as well as three members of the Józefek family. See Michal Grynberg, Księga sprawiedliwych (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1993), 224–25; Zajłączkowski, Martyrs of Charity, Part One, 177 (entries 281 and 283). A Ukrainian police inspector in Kolbuszowa was responsible for the execution of 38 Jews. See Naftali Salsitz, “The Holocaust in Kolbuszowa,” in I.M. Biderman, ed., Pinkas Kolbuszow (New York: United Kolbuszower, 1971), 55ff. (English section); Zimmerman, The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939–1945, 398 (a Jewish woman passing in Warsaw was recognized by a Ukrainian woman from Lwów who threatened to go to the Gestapo; the Home Army pronounced a death sentence on the Ukrainian woman and she was never heard from.
with fatal consequences for Polish rescuers, are plentiful. Jews who fell into the hands of the Germans were interrogated about their benefactors and frequently succumbed. Jews wrote letters to the German authorities denouncing Jews who had remained outside the ghetto or concealed their possessions, who were involved in illicit trade or in illegal political activities, and for other reasons. Jews also sent denunciations against Poles involved in the anti-Nazi conspiracy.

A Jew, illegally outside the ghetto in Warsaw, was caught by a German gendarme; in exchange for his own life, he offered to denounce other Jews on the “Aryan” side—scores of Jews were tracked down and executed in the Jewish cemetery as a result. A young Jewish woman by the name of Celina who was captured by the Gestapo disclosed the hiding place of another Jewish woman, Wanda, who had helped her find a placement in Warsaw. Both women were executed in the Pawiak prison. Waclaw Łada, who has been recognized by Yad Vashem, was betrayed to the Gestapo by a Jew named Heniek, to whom he provided false identity documents in Warsaw. He was sent to Auschwitz in April 1943, and luckily survived two years of incarceration in various German concentration camps. A Jew who was seized during a Gestapo raid on an apartment in Warsaw, where he was sheltered by a Pole, broke down under torture and betrayed another apartment where Jews were hiding. Another Jew, by the name of Natek, succumbed to torture and revealed to the Gestapo several apartment hiding places in Warsaw. Simha Rotem (Ratajzer or Rathaiser) recalled that, on a food smuggling expedition, upon joining a group of Jews who were returning from work on the Aryan side to the Warsaw ghetto, the Jews suspected I wasn’t Jewish, that I had been planted among them as a provocateur. They whispered among themselves about turning me over to the German [guard]. I begged them to believe that I was a Jew, and to prove it I started speaking in Yiddish and muttering prayers. Finally, they gave in …

For additional examples of denunciations of Polish rescuers and their Jewish charges by Ukrainians and of Polish rescuers who were killed by members of the Ukrainian nationalist underground for sheltering Jews, see Zajączkowski, Martyrs of Charity, entry 395 (Potok Górný near Tomaszów Lubselski); (Grynberg, Księga sprawiedliwych, 475 (Korolówka near Borszczów); Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej, 861 (Zawóz near Wolkowyska), 868–69 (Lovów); Henryk Komański and Szczepan Siekierka, Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie tarnopolskim 1939–1946 (Wrocław: Nortom, 2004), 744 (Busk); Na Rubieży (Wrocław), no. 90 (2007): 44 (Chłaniów near Krasnystaw). See, for example, Theresa Cahn-Tober, Hide and Seek: A Wartime Childhood (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 68 (a betrayal by a Volksdeutscher in Warsaw). See, for example, Bartoszewski and Lewin, Righteous Among Nations, 76 (a Gypsy informer by the name of Cabaj who was on the lookout for Jews and partisans in and near Kraków).


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

Żbikowski, Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945, 351. The entry for Waclaw Lada in Gutman and Bender, The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations, vol. 4: Poland, Part 1, 440, is silent about who betrayed Lada.


Rotem, Memoirs of a Warsaw Ghetto Fighter, 105.
Joseph Dattner, who was passing as Christian in Warsaw on Aryan papers, was fingered by Jews in the company of Gestapo men. He was seized and taken with three other Jews to a nearby cemetery where they were to be shot. Miraculously, the German officer who was assigned to execute Dattner, deliberately shot his gun into the air and Dattner survived.\(^{196}\) Ignacy Gottryd, who was passing as a Christian in Warsaw, was arrested after he was denounced by Jan Kasprzak, a Jew from Gdańsk, who was in the services of the Gestapo.\(^{197}\) Roman Kierszniewski, a Polish rescuer from Warsaw, recalled the fate of one of his charges:

I helped a Jewish man, Mieczysław Prożański, who concealed himself in a mechanic’s workshop on Leszno Street in Wola, next to the Warsaw ghetto. He hid in the garret, where he did the bookkeeping for the shop. Working in the same shop as a watchman, I often gave Prożański food or clothes. Once I even participated in an action to ransom him from the Jewish militia, which had seized him after he was denounced by another Jew in the ghetto. Prożański was seized and shot by the Germans on the second day of the Warsaw Uprising.\(^{198}\)

Franciszek Antczak built a bunker on his sister’s farm in the village of Nacpolsk, near Płońsk, where they hid two Jewish men, Mosze Kuperman and Józef Lewin. His widowed sister, Zofia Szkop, was assisted by her children. Kuperman was captured by the Germans in March 1944 when he left the bunker. Following an interrogation by the Gestapo, he led them to the hideout. All of the adult members of the family who had given refuge to the Jews were arrested. Franciszek Antczak was sent to a concentration camp from which he never returned. Kazimierz Szkop, Zofia’s son, received a death sentence and was executed in prison. Zofia Antczak was sentenced to three months imprisonment. Kuperman was shot to death while trying to escape, while Lewin was fortunate to flee from the Gestapo and survived.\(^{199}\) A group of Jews dug pits and bunkers connected by tunnels deep in the field belonging to a peasant woman by the name of Smoleski(?), near the village of Jastków northwest of Lublin. The woman, who had two sons, brought food to the Jews. A Jewish girl by the name of Slawa, said to be insane from typhus, left the bunker and ran to the Germans and disclosed the hideout. The Lublin military police was dispatched and killed the peasant woman and one of her two sons (the other, fortunately, was not at home) and burned down her house. The Jews managed to escape.\(^{200}\) A Jewish escapee from the Płońsk ghetto who found shelter with a Polish family in the nearby

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\(^{196}\) Interview with Joseph Dattner, dated December 20, 1988, Phoenix Holocaust Survivors’ Association in affiliation with the Cline Library of Northern Arizona University.


\(^{198}\) Lukas, *Out of the Inferno*, 90.


\(^{200}\) Goldberg, *The Undefeated*, 164–66. According to what appears to be another version of this story, a woman had given shelter to a girl from Lublin and other refugees. The girl caught typhus and went a little crazy from the fever, and wandered off. She went to the house of the district head and gave the Jews and their benefactor away. Fearful of trouble from the authorities, the district head informed the Germans. The Germans came and set fire to the house, in which Sever Rubinstein’s father and his hostess were burned to death. The other Jews managed to escape. See Gruber, *I Chose Life*, 96–97.
village of Naruszewo was caught by the Germans when he ventured out to inquire about his family. After betraying his benefactors, the Gestapo descended on their home and seized the husband and father of four young children. He was sent to Mauthausen where he was killed two weeks before the end of the war.201

Stanisława Olewnik, who lived in the village of Krzemień, gave shelter to the Mławski family after they escaped from the ghetto in Maków Mazowiecki. When the Mławski family was apprehended by the Germans in fall of 1943, one of the daughters divulged under torture that they had been hidden by Stanisława Olewnik. The Mławskis and their benefactor were deported to Auschwitz when they perished.202

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

A Polish and a Ukrainian woman were in for hiding Jews. The Polish woman had hidden a father and daughter in a crate, and three Jews in a space behind a wall. The police discovered the ones inside the wall, and then those Jews betrayed the father and daughter hidden in the crate. The Polish and the Ukrainian woman were jailed. The Pole took all the blame, i.e., accepted responsibility and was sent to Majdanek, and the Ukrainian was freed.203

When a Jew by the name of Mensch was caught in a village outside Żółkiew, under torture he disclosed the hiding places of three other Jews; all four Jews were executed.204 Some Jews apprehended by the Germans in Łaki Strzyżowskie near Frysztak drew sketches showing the location of Jewish hideouts in the forests during their interrogation.205 Witold Fomienko, a Polish barber in Łuck, Volhynia, and his many Jewish charges were more fortunate. When Esther Milner, one of his charges, was identified by a Ukrainian nationalist and interrogated, her connection with Fomienko was discovered. Formienko was tortured by the Gestapo, and it was only thanks to a German officer who was a client of his that he was released.206

Nine escapees from trains headed for Treblinka were sheltered by Józef Gondrowicz and his wife in the village of Droblin near Wodzisław, south of Jędrzejów. Carelessness on the part of one of the Jewish children led to the discovery of the hiding place in December 1944. David Braun and Shmuel and Alek Rubinek were killed on the spot while the remaining refugees managed to escape to a new hiding place arranged for them by Gondrowicz in a nearby village. Fearing arrest, the entire Gondrowicz family also went into hiding, until they felt it was safe to return.207

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

203 Testimony of Erna Klinger, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 1096.
204 Gerszon Taffet, Zagłada Żydów zółkiewskich (Łódź: Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna, 1946), 65.
205 Stanisław Zabierowski, Rzeszowskie pod okupacją hitlerowską (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1975), 198, 200.
207 Gutman and Bender, The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations, vol. 4: Poland, Part 1, 246.
The Kamienietzki sisters had given Aryan papers and their underground address in Warsaw to Miss Tisch of Miedzyrzec [Międzyrzec] … She was dark-haired and looked very Jewish. She was arrested on the train to Warsaw and taken to the Gestapo in Miedzyrzec. Under torture she revealed everything. A few days later the Gestapo man … arrived at the Kamienietzki’s apartment instead of Miss Tisch’s [sic]. He reminded the sisters of his warning. … he said he would not shoot them as he did Miss Tisch. He arrested them and sent them to the Pawiak prison in Warsaw. In the end it was the same. All the Jews in Pawiak were killed.208

The parents of Janeczka Kapral, a young Jewish girl who was sheltered by Polish nuns in Olsztyn near Częstochowa, were caught by the Germans and betrayed the whereabouts of their daughter and the Polish woman, a school teacher by the name of Kita, who had brought her to the convent. The young girl was seized by the Gestapo and the teacher was also arrested and killed. The nuns dispersed to avoid arrest.209

A Jew who was sheltered by a Polish family in Sambor ventured out of the home against the wishes of his benefactors, an elderly Polish couple. When he was caught by the Germans he betrayed the hideout causing the execution of the Polish couple as well as the Jewish couple they were hiding.210 The son of Henryk Bermer, a Jewish bookstore owner in Jasło, was hidden by Professor Król. The young man was discovered and executed. Professor Król and one member of his wife’s family (Dutkiewicz) were arrested. After a lengthy interrogation, they were released. Before the young man’s death, the Nazis confiscated his notebook. In it he had written the names of several Catholics from Jasło with whom he was in contact. The Gestapo interrogated them all.211

The carelessness of a friend taken in by Noemi K. of Lwów led to the friend’s arrest by the Gestapo and the loss of a safe place of residence for Noemi K.212 The carelessness of a Jewish woman, who tried to enter a hideout on Źródlana Street in Lwów, alerted the Germans, who apprehended 18 Jews.213 In Huziejów, a village near Bolechów, south of Stryj, some 40 Jews hidden by the local miller were exposed when one of the Jews hidden there went to his former home to pick up valuables out of the cache on hearing that the house was being dismantled. The miller and his wife also paid with their lives.214

208 Schupack, The Dead Years, 132.
209 Kurek, Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach, 84, 178–79.
210 Kurek, Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach, 228. The young daughter of the executed Jewish couple, Anna Henrietta Kretz, managed to escape from the German executioners who killed her parents and their Polish benefactors and took shelter in a local orphanage run by the Sisters of the Family of Mary. See Teresa Antonietta Frącek, “Ratowały, choć to groziła śmierć,” Nasz Dziennik, April 4, 2008.
211 Jakub Herzig, “Jasło: The Birth and Death of a Jewish Community in Poland from Its Beginnings to the Holocaust,” Internet: <http://home.earthlink.net/~jackherzig/jaslo/).
213 Testimony of Henryka Trauber, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), Record Group 301, number 1385.
A seven-year-old Jewish boy hidden by Polish family in Przemyśl carelessly revealed that he was Jewish and the Germans took him away. Following the boy’s arrest, the Germans discovered his parents’ hiding place and murdered them as well. Jewish children hidden in an orphanage in Przemyśl run by the Salesian Fathers were more fortunate. A Jewish boy who was sheltered there recalled the arrival of the Germans who came looking for Jewish boys. The Germans were accompanied by a Jew dressed as a priest. Fortunately, the Jewish boys passed the religious test they underwent.

A Jew in the Stanisławów ghetto fingered Jumko Mandel for hiding away some meat illegally. He and his wife were arrested and taken away by the Gestapo.

A Jewish woman from Stanisławów and her sister-in-law from Lwów, posing as Poles, were apprehended when they arrived in Warsaw and were leaving the train station. They were taken to a police station where they were questioned by two police interrogators:

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

We were finally freed after two hours of interrogation …

A large group of Jews hidden on a farm in Zamienie, in Polesia (Polesie), was betrayed by a 13-year-old Jewish boy whom the group was reluctant to take in because he was poor. The Jewish teenager reported the hiding place to the SS stationed in Lubieszów. The Jews and their Polish benefactors were executed and the farmstead was burned to the ground. The young Jew became a servant for the Germans until he was himself executed in April 1943, when the unit was transferred to Luboml. Jewish escapees apprehended by the Germans near Lubień, south of Piotrków Trybunalski, betrayed many farmers and gamekeepers who had assisted them, thus causing the execution of more than a dozen Poles.

Józef Rydzewski built a hiding place for the seven-member family of Abram Malczak on his farm in Budy Stawiskie near Łomża. One day Abram Malczak’s young son recklessly left the hiding place and was apprehended by German gendarmes patrolling the area. After a beating he led the Germans to the hiding place.
place. Rydzewski and the entire Jewish family were executed.\textsuperscript{221} For this same reason several Polish farmers were also seized by the Germans in a neighbouring village and never heard of again.\textsuperscript{222}

Władysława Blitzer sheltered several Jews in Kraków, among them, Ludwik Blitzer, whom she married in 1941. They were denounced by Józef Fas, a Jew. Ludwik Blitzer was executed in December 1942, while his wife was imprisoned.\textsuperscript{223} Władysław Łopatowski, who was active in the Council for Aid to Jews ("Żegota") in Kraków, was arrested by the Gestapo after his betrayal by a Jewish woman for whom he had obtained forged identity papers. The woman was caught by the Gestapo and under torture revealed his name, and was then shot herself. After a 10-month incarceration, Łopatowski was hanged in public on June 24, 1944, along with 49 other Poles.\textsuperscript{224}

Roman Blum, a member of the National Party (Stronnictwo Narodowe), obtained false documents from underground sources in the name of Jagusch or Jagusz for a Jewish woman, who was later stopped by the police. She disclosed the name of the person who provided her with the document. Roman Blum was arrested in Kraków in December 1943, but betrayed no one. He was deported to the Gross-Rosen (Groß-Rosen) concentration camps, and later to Flossenburg where perished in March 1945.\textsuperscript{225} Franciszka Zając, who was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile, rescued and assisted several Jews in Kraków. Unfortunately, one of those she had helped was caught and in his interrogation gave away her name. Zając was arrested by the Gestapo in 1943. She was interrogated and tortured, causing her permanent damage to her health. Despite this, however, she did not betray any of her wards. She was released after spending eight months in prison.\textsuperscript{226}

There were cases when Jews caught by the Germans while escaping from the ghetto in Rzeszów betrayed those who had helped them escape.\textsuperscript{227} Antoni Burek was executed in Gutanów near Grabów, after a Jew who was apprehended by the Germans betrayed his Polish benefactors.\textsuperscript{228} A 14-year-old Jewish boy from Modryń near Hrubieszów, who was apprehended during an excursion from his forest dugout, led a German search party to apprehend his Polish protector after beatings and false promises that he and his sister would be spared.\textsuperscript{229} A Jewish woman by the name of Boruch was apprehended and beaten by the German military police. Given a promise that her life would be spared, she revealed the names of the Poles who had

\textsuperscript{221} Waldemar Monkiewicz, “Za cenę życia: O ratowaniu Żydów w Białostockiem w okresie okupacji niemieckiej,” in Adam Dobroński and Waldemar Monkiewicz, eds., Bialostoccy Żydzi, vol. 2 (Białystok: Instytut Historii Filii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego w Białymstoku, 1997), 170.

\textsuperscript{222} Chodorska, Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny, Part One, 156–57.

\textsuperscript{223} Hera, Polacy ratujący Żydów, 146.

\textsuperscript{224} Henry Armin Herzog, ...And Heaven Shed No Tears (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1995), 268–69.

\textsuperscript{225} Źbikowski, Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945, 400–406.

\textsuperscript{226} Franciszka Zając, The Righteous Database, Yad Vashem, Internet: <http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=7037562>.

\textsuperscript{227} Franciszek Kotula, Losy Żydów rzeszowskich 1939–1944: Kronika tanitych dni (Rzeszów: Społeczny Komitet Wydania Dziel Franciszka Kotuli w Rzeszowie, 1999), 189, 193.


sheltered and helped her. As a result, seven Poles were executed in Majdan Nowy near Księżopol together with the Jewish woman.230

Józef Dybka, a member of the Home Army and employee of the municipal office in Nisko, provided false documents to the underground and those in need. He was arrested by the Gestapo in 1943 and executed the following year after a Jewish woman who had been apprehended by the Germans produced a document provided to her by Dybka.231 Jadwiga Wiśniewska, a Polish woman who acted as a courier for the Jewish underground, was captured by the Gestapo in June 1941, after she was fingered by a Jewish woman, who was falsely accused of being the owner of a suitcase containing underground publications which actually belonged to Wiśniewska. Luckily, Wiśniewska concocted an alibi and was able to deceive her captors with the help of the Polish Socialist underground, and thus miraculously survived the close call.232

Stanisława Olewnik of the village of Krzemień, a farm labourer and mother of two small sons, sheltered in her home the five-member Mławski family, who had escaped from the Maków Mazowiecki ghetto. She also provided her own documents to their daughter to facilitate her survival. When the Mławskis, who were hiding in the forest at the time, were apprehended by the Germans during a raid in the fall of 1943, under interrogation one of the daughters revealed their benefactor. Stanisława Olewnik and was sent to Auschwitz alongside the family she attempted to save. They all perished in 1944.233

The Łodej family, consisting of eight people—grandparents, parents, and four children ages 6 to 14, were executed by the Germans near Ilża in December 1942, after one of the 40 members of a Jewish forest group that was liquidated by the German police betrayed some Jewish hideouts and their Polish benefactors, the Łodej family.234

When a frightened Polish farmer near Łosice asked his four Jewish charges to leave their hideout under his pigsty, one of the Jews who was expelled went to the German police to report the farmer: “After he gave the Germans the facts, they led him back to the farm, killed the peasant and Aryeh [Lieberman]’s cousin, and set the house ablaze.”235 Twenty-eight Poles were executed by the Germans in the villages of Jagodne and Zastawie near Siedlce, after a Jew by the name of Gdala who was caught by the Germans pointed out those who had helped him.236

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235 Weinstein, *Quenched Steel*, 144; Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka*, 144. The peasant poured boiling water into the hideout to chase out the Jews he had been sheltering.
236 Edward Kopówka, *Żydzi siedlecki* (Siedlce: n.p., 2001), 68; Chodorowska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part Two, 65–66. This led to some villagers in nearby Trzcinec to kill Szmuel and Gieńka Krawiec; they were afraid that if the Krawiecs were arrested, they would divulge the names of the householders who had helped them.
A Jew by the name of Lejzor was apprehended by the Germans near Sokółw Podlaski, and betrayed those Poles who had offered him food and shelter.\(^\text{237}\) A Jew from Łuków betrayed his son, Lajbele Bomstein, his son’s girlfriend, and some other Jews who were sheltered by Poles. All of the Jews as well as the Polish family hiding them were killed by the Germans.\(^\text{238}\)

Rev. Romuald Świrkowski, the pastor of the parish of the Holy Spirit in Wilno, was betrayed by Jews whom he sheltered. He was arrested in January 1942 and executed in Ponary.\(^\text{239}\) A captured Jewish woman gave away the names of none Poles who had helped Jewish fugitives near Jawornik. In all, nine Poles and seven Jews were shot.\(^\text{240}\)

Rev. Edward Tabaczkowski, who sheltered and provided various forms of assistance to Jews, was executed after his betrayal to the Gestapo by a Jew from Tłumacz.\(^\text{241}\) A Polish couple, Maria and Bronisław Jarosiński, were arrested by the Gestapo and Ukrainian police in Stryj after being betrayed by a Jew whom they did not accept because of a lack of room (they were already sheltering a Jewish family consisting of five members). Their rescuers were soon executed, as doubtless were the Jewish charges.\(^\text{242}\)

Abraham Tracy (Trasawucki) was one of six Jews hidden in a barn on a farm belonging to the Oleynik family near the town of Skala Podolska. Since the only female among the group, Ruzie, caught a cold with a heavy cough, she was invited to stay in their house until she was feeling better.

On the third day after Ruzie had entered the house, several Ukrainian policemen entered the courtyard, accompanied by a fourteen-year-old Jewish boy. The officers demanded that the Oleyniks give up the Jews who were hiding on the property. Nikolai [Oleynik] denied hiding anyone, but this young boy insisted that there were Jews there, listing all of our names. I have no idea how he knew we were there, or why he was in the police station in the first place. Years later I tracked him down and attempted to question him, but he refused to discuss it.

Nikolai’s wife, seeing the soldiers in the courtyard, told Ruzie to crawl into the oven to hide. Ruzie curled into the oven, and Nikolai’s wife covered it, leaving her a little air to breathe. The officers stormed into the house, going through the rooms and searching for Jews.

As they were ransacking the kitchen area, one of them noticed the cover of the oven moving. Ruzie was dragged out of the oven, and they began to question her.

“Where are the others?” they yelled.

“There are no others,” she responded. Ruzie remained calm and steadfastly refused to admit to our existence. The officers beat her and continued to question her.

\(^{237}\) Chodorska, Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny, Part Two, 123.
\(^{238}\) Krzysztof Czubaszek, Żydzi z Łukowa i okolic (Warsaw: Danmar, 2008), 93; Mojsze Sznejser, as told to Jakub Rajchman, “Robiłem buty, odmawiałem kadzisz,” Rzeczpospolita, January 29–30, 2005.
\(^{239}\) Zygmunt Zieliński, ed., Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945: Metropole wileńska i lwowska, zakony (Katowice: Unia, 1992), 52.
\(^{242}\) Chodorska, Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny. Part Two, 164–65. An official German announcement of January 28, 1944 concerning the death sentence imposed on 84 people, five of them specifically for sheltering or otherwise helping Jews, including Bronisław Jarosiński (sic) of Stryj, is found in Wroński and Zwolakowa, Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945.
“Where are the others?”
“There are no others.”
“Where are the others?”
“There are no others.”

Seeing that they would not get information from her this way, they began to ask her other questions.

“How did you get here?”
“I was walking from the forest and I saw you approaching. I ran into this house to hide.”

The officers were skeptical. “Is that so? You don’t look like you were hiding in the forest. You don’t look cold enough or dirty enough. You have been hiding here for some time.” The officers continued to beat her. “You are lying to us! Tell us where the others are and we will leave you alone. You can stay in this house and we will do you no harm.”

The interrogation went on for some time, but Ruzie heroically stood her ground. The officers searched the entire house and barn, but were unable to find us, as we were hiding in the bunker. When they finally gave up their search, they harnessed their horses, threw Ruzie into their wagon, drove her to the fields and shot her to death.

We were still in the bunker several hours. We had heard the noises of what had happened in the house and we were still afraid to come out. The bunker was cramped and there was little air to breathe.

When darkness fell, Nikolai appeared in the barn with a hatchet in his hands. He was drunk and angry, and he smashed at the entrance of the bunker, breaking the boards that concealed us.

“Get out!” he yelled. “Get out of here!” Get off my property!”

We tried to talk to him, to plead with him, but we could not convince him, especially in his drunken state. In truth, I could not blame him, he had helped us for many long months, and we all owed him our lives. He had put himself and his family at great risk, and I understood his fear when he decided to throw us out.

No, Nikolai was not to blame. I could feel his pain and I was not angry with him for his actions. It was the young Jewish boy whom I could not forgive. …

The five of us left Nikolai’s property, thinking of Ruzie and her loyalty, and of this young boy and his betrayal.243

One has to wonder how many other Jews this Jewish boy must have betrayed in order to have been useful to the Germans and survived the war. The fact that the Oleyniks were Ukrainians likely spared them the fate they would have met had they been Poles.

Many examples of betrayal by Jews of Polish rescuers, who were put to death as a result, and their Jewish charges can be found in Waclaw Zajączkowski’s chronicle Martyrs of Charity.244 Będzin (entry 51);

442
Bobowa (entry 65); Boiska (entry 68); Busko-Zdrój (entry 93); Cezaryn (entry 95); Chmielnik (entry 98); Chotel Czerwony (entry 102); Czermna (entry 119); Częstochowa (entry 124)—Rev. Teodor Popczyk, vicar of St. Barbara’s parish, was shot by the German security police on June 16, 1943, after being betrayed, under torture, by a Jew to whom he had issued false identity documents; Głęboka near Gorlice (entry 158); Grzegorzówka (entry 173); Gunniska (entry 174); Hadle Szklarskie (entry 176); Jeziorko (entry 199)—two Polish families who had cared for Jewish fugitives were shot by the Germans after being denounced by a Jew captured during a raid; Kowel (entry 238)—according to another source, a Polish train conductor was seized by the German police after the Jewish police in Chełm Lubelski informed them that this Pole had sheltered and transported a Jew; a Jewish woman being smuggled from Lwów to Kraków lost her nerve during a random railroad search and betrayed herself and her Polish courier from the Żegota organization (entry 248); Kryg (entry 255) and Libusza (entry 262); Lipowiec Duży

245 Kalisz and Rączy, Dzieje społeczności żydowskiej powiatu gorlickiego podczas okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1945, 102. Dr. Jan Pietrzykowski was executed after his betrayal by a woman named Holender whom he had helped.

246 Sebastian Piątkowski, “Zbrodnie żandarmów z posterniku w Lipsku na Wiślą na Polakach udzielających pomocy Żydom (1942–1943),” in Aleksandra Namysło, ed., “Kto w takich czasach Żydów przechowuje?...”: Polacy niosący pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie okupacji niemieckiej (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komsija Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2009), 21; Aleksandra Namysło and Grzegorz Berendt, eds., Rejestr faktów represji na obywatełach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komsija Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2014), 386–87. (The last of these publications is available on the Internet at: <http://arch.ipn.gov.pl/ipfpamiec_ebooki/REJESTR_faktow_Represji.pdf>). Józef Krawczyk, his wife, Zofia, and their 5-year-old son, Adam, were shot to death by German gendarmes and their house was burned to the ground after a wounded Jew whom they had cared for betrayed them. Another family in the Lipsko area, also betrayed by a Jew whom they had sheltered, was spared, as was a Polish police commander from Ciepielów who had sold a rifle to a Jew. Namysło, “Kto w takich czasach Żydów przechowuje?...”, 19.

247 Namysło and Berendt, Rejestr faktów represji na obywatełach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej, 186.

248 After leaving his hiding place, Jankiel Kiwa was caught by German soldiers and, under duress, revealed his hideout with the Machul family. On July 3, 1943, the Germans searched their farmhouse and yard until they found a young Jewish woman in the hayloft. They immediately arrested Jan Machul and executed him together with his two Jewish charges in the nearby forest. Machul’s wife and teenage daughter managed to flee. See Gutman, The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005), volume II, 590–91; Namysło and Berendt, Rejestr faktów represji na obywatełach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej, 319–20.


250 Namysło and Berendt, Rejestr faktów represji na obywatełach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej, 394.

251 After being apprehended by the Germans, a 12-year-old Jewish boy betrayed the Garbuliński family of Czermna and Stanisław Owca of Święcany, who were sheltering a Jewish family, resulting in the execution of three Poles and three Jews. See Michał Kalisz, “Sprawiedliwi z Czermnej,” Buletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej, no. 3 (2009): 45–49.

252 Rączy, Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945, 113 n.62; Namysło and Berendt, Rejestr faktów represji na obywatełach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej, 354.

253 Musiał, Lata w ukryciu, vol. 1, 178 (after being caught, Winde, a Jew from Dębica, betrayed his Polish benefactors, the Zieliński family; Rozalia Zielińska, who was pregnant, was shot, while her husband was away); Rączy, Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945, 114.

254 Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, Prowincja noc, 501.

255 Wroński and Zwołakowa, Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945, 359.

256 After being apprehended by the Germans, Henryk Morgister betrayed his benefactors, resulting in the arrests of four Poles, three of whom perished. See Namysło and Berendt, Rejestr faktów represji na obywatełach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej, 361–62; Kalisz and Rączy, Dzieje społeczności żydowskiej powiatu gorlickiego podczas okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1945, 83.
Prospective victims of the death camp were not aware of its real nature. A foreign-born Jew, when lost in transport, even brought his own ticket there in order to join his group which allegedly was being shipped to a rural settlement. He was warned by a Polish conductor and ran away. On another

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257 For an account of the betrayal of a Polish family in Lipowiec Duży near Bilgoraj by their Jewish charge who wandered off and was apprehended by the Germans, see Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej, 867. See also Piłarska, Those Who Helped, 86 (entries 311, 312, 313), 112 (entry 531).

258 Kalisz and Rączy, Dzieje społeczności żydowskiej powiatu gorlickiego podczas okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1945, 80–81. In addition to two Polish benefactors, two other Jews they sheltered were captured and executed as well as a result of the betrayal of Jakub Hoffman.

259 Namysło and Berendt, Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej, 404. Eugeniusz Niedziela, the betrayed rescuer, was recognized by Yad Vashem in 1993.


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

262 Wroński and Zwolakowa, Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945, 348–49.

263 Namysło and Berendt, Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej, 412–13.

264 After the arrival in Pilica of Szymon Spitz, a Jewish Gestapo agent from Kraków, the Gestapo from Kraków and Miechów carried out arrests and executions of Poles and Jews. See Jerzy Diatłowicki, ed., Żydzi w walce 1939–1945: Opór i walka z faszyzmem w latach 1939–1945 (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny and Stowarzyszenie Żydów Kombatantów i Poszukowawców w II Wojnie Światowej, 2009), vol. 1, 307.

265 At least sixteen Poles were executed in Przewrotne in May 1943 for helping Jews, after the village was infiltrated by a Jewish Gestapo agent posing as a beggar. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej, 846–47.

266 Kalisz and Rączy, Dzieje społeczności żydowskiej powiatu gorlickiego podczas okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1945, 84–85. After being betrayed by their Jewish charge, Grosser, two Polish benefactors were executed.

267 Upon capture and interrogation by the Germans, a Jewish woman betrayed the Pole who had supplied her with false documents and who had directed Jews to the Baranek family in Siedliska. For an account of the execution the Baranek family, see Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej, 855–59. See also Namysło and Berendt, Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej, 352–53. Unusually, five members of the Baranek family were recognized by Yad Vashem in 2012.

268 Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, Prowincja noc, 501, n.234.
A Catholic farmer, Jan Samsel, who resided in the nearby village of Grady, was commissioned by the Polish Home Army to deliver arms to the Jewish inmates through the intermediary of a friendly Ukrainian guard. The Germans, however, probably though a Jewish informer known as “Ignac,” found out about the plan and arrested the entire Samsel family. All of them perished in the death camp.270

Szerzyny (entry 489)271; Uszew (entry 522)272; Warsaw (entries 536, 537,273 539, 567, 580, 582,274 596, 607,275 614); Ossów near Warsaw (entry 572); Wierzbiča (entries 625,276 626, 627, 628); Zagórzycze (entry

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271 In order to defend the rescuers, the police who apprehended the hidden Jews forged the report and stated that the Jews had just arrived at the farmer’s home; however, upon interrogation by the Gestapo in Jasło, one of the Jews said that the farmers had kept them for three months. Three weeks later the Gestapo sent its unit and executed Józef Augustyn and his wife Józefa on the spot. See Andrzej Zbikowski, “‘Night Guard’: Holocaust Mechanisms in the Polish Rural Areas, 1942–1945: Preliminary Introduction into Research,” East European Politics and Societies, vol. 25, no. 3 (August 2011): 512–29, here at 520.

272 Musiał, Lata w ukryciu, vol. 1, 196.

273 Unfortunately, not all the facts in this account are correct. Both Tadeusz Romaszewski and his sister, Maria Malicka, were employed in the chancery (record office) of the Warsaw cathedral parish of St. John the Baptist. As members of the extreme right-wing Szaniec group (a continuation of the interwar National-Radical Camp “ABC”), they issued scores of false baptismal and birth certificates to endangered Jews, as well as Poles. Maria Malicka was betrayed to the Gestapo by her brother’s fiancée, Irena Lis, who—unknown to the organization—was a Gestapo agent. The Gestapo arrested Maria Malicka and her husband, Marian Malicki, who was sent to Majdanek, where he perished. Maria Malicka was imprisoned in Warsaw, but survived the war. Tadeusz Romaszewski went into hiding. The information about the parson’s death has not been confirmed, and appears to be an embellishment. As a result of this one act of denunciation, scores of Jews and Poles were apprehended by the Germans. The Polish underground issued a death sentence against Irena Lis, but she escaped to Lwów. She was brought to trial after the war. See Damian Sitkiewicz, “Maria Malicka: O pomocy udzielanej Żydom przez organizację narodową Grupa ‘Szańca,’” Kolbojnik: Biuletyn Gminy Wyznaniowej Żydowskiej w Warszawie, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 28–31. For the older literature, see Bartoszewski and Lewin, Righteous Among Nations, 233, 235 (annotation); Prekerowa, Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie 1942–1945, 148.

274 Emanuel Ringelblum shared his hideout, a “bunker” on Grójecka Street in Warsaw, with 34 Jews. It was built by a Polish gardener named Mieczysław Wolski under his greenhouse. Discovered by the Germans on March 7, 1944, the Jews sheltered there, together with two their Polish rescuers (Wolski and his nephew, Janusz Wysocki), were executed in the ruins of the ghetto. See Bartoszewski and Lewin, Righteous Among Nations, 23–26, 35; Pilarska, Those Who Helped, 128 (entry 667). Teresa Prekerowa maintains that the denunciation was the work of Jan Lakiński (Łakiński), an 18-year-old informant who had also betrayed members of the Home Army. (On March 30, 1944, the Polish underground published a notice that Łakiński had been sentenced to death by a special underground civil tribunal for denouncing Jews and executed. The date of sentencing or execution is not given. However, other sources state the execution took place on February 24, 1944, which was before the hideout was raided, thus casting doubt on Prekerowa’s version.) See Prekerowa, Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie 1942–1945, 286; Prekerowa, Zegota, 247. According to another source, however, Łakiński was sentenced to death on March 30, 1944 by a special underground civil tribunal. According to another version, Wolski was betrayed by his ex-girlfriend, Chojecka, after a falling out. See Vlada Meed, On Both Sides of the Wall: Memoirs from the Warsaw Ghetto (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979), 210 (Meed does not record the fate of the Polish rescuers); Samuel Willenberg, Surviving Treblinka (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, in association with the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, 1989), 170; Celemskni, Elegy For My People. 191; Samuel D. Kassow, Who Will Write Our History? Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabbas Archive (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), 383; Testimony of Jerzy Gero, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 5714 (this testimony identifies the betrayer as Chojecka). Tadeusz Bednarczyk attributes the betrayal of Ringelblum’s hideout to a Jewish woman, possibly a Gestapo agent, who was refused shelter in that overcrowded hideout. See his Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta, 237; and his Obowiązek
A documentary book about Jewish and Christian lives under Nazi rule in the Warsaw ghetto: “On February 1, 1944, after weeks of planning, a platoon of Pegasus

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operation lasting scarcely a minute, Kutschera and several other Germans were killed, but four of the attackers, including Pietraszkiewicz, were killed.” See Lukas,
Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej, 1978, 172. Grunspan’s fictitious accounts parades around under the deceptive subtitle: “A documentary book about Jewish and Christian lives under Nazi rule in the Warsaw ghetto and in the non-Jewish region of Warsaw.” The author, an obvious charlatan, claims to have been part of a three-member hit squad called “Parasol” (Umbrella) which assassinated General Franz Kutschera, the head of the SS and police for the District of Warsaw, on “Aleja sucha” (sic, Szucha) in Warsaw. The book even contains a photograph showing a crude superimposition of a hand holding a machine gun with the following caption: “To the right you can see the punishing hand of the author with the machine gun that gunned down the Nazi lunatic.” (Ibid., 172, 177.) However, that well-discredited, Jewish version has Marczak’s wife reporting her husband and the Jews to SS General Franz Kutschera, the police leader in Warsaw, who had them all executed, including Mrs. Marczak. See Roman Grunspan, The Uprising of the Death Box of Warsaw (New York: Vantage Press, 1978), 172. Grunspan’s fictitious accounts parades around under the deceptive subtitle: “A documentary book about Jewish and Christian lives under Nazi rule in the Warsaw ghetto and in the non-Jewish region of Warsaw.” The author, an obvious charlatan, claims to have been part of a three-member hit squad called “Parasol” (Umbrella) which assassinated General Franz Kutschera, the head of the SS and police for the District of Warsaw, on “Aleja sucha” (sic, Szucha) in Warsaw. The book even contains a photograph showing a crude superimposition of a hand holding a machine gun with the following caption: “To the right you can see the punishing hand of the author with the machine gun that gunned down the Nazi lunatic.” (Ibid., 172, 177.) However, that well-known operation was carried out by the Home Army and bears little resemblance to the tale Grunspan has spun, and in fact preceded the execution of Ringelblum by more than a month. Historian Richard Lukas describes that famous event as follows: “On February 1, 1944, after weeks of planning, a platoon of Pegasus [Pegas], commanded by twenty-year old Bronisław Pietraszkiewicz, attacked Kutschera’s car on Ujazdowskie Avenue. In an operation lasting scarcely a minute, Kutschera and several other Germans were killed, but four of the attackers, including, Pietraszkiewicz, were killed.” See Lukas, The Forgotten Holocaust, 92.

The denunciation of Stefan Prokop by Gestapo agent Sztutman aka Pruszyński is described later in the text.

The Kucharski family agreed to shelter the six-member Jewish Wandelsman (Wandersman) family from their native village of Wierzbica near Miechów. When Naftul Wandelsman left the hideout in January 1943, he was captured by the Germans. He led the Germans to the farm of the Książek family, who were sheltering two Jews, and then to the farm of the Nowak family, where they found a Jew in the stable. Finally, he brought the Germans to the home of his rescuers, the Kucharski family. In total, the Germans executed 15 Poles, among them children, from three families. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945, 112 n.61.

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277 Rączy, Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945, 112 n.61.

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


280 Piotr Woźniak, From the Ashes of Sobibor, 201.

281 Bartoszewski and Lewin, Righteous Among Nations, 103.

282 Namyso and Berendt, Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej, 324.

283 Namyso and Berendt, Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej, 329.

284 Kalisz and Rączy, Dzieje społeczności żydowskiej powiatu gorlickiego podczas okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1945, 87.

285 Namyso and Berendt, Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej, 344.
Wójcik, who was awarded by Yad Vashem for rescuing several Jews, had to leave Węgrów after his betrayal by a Jewish boy.\textsuperscript{286}

In some cases, those accused of helping Jews were prosecuted in special German courts instituted in occupied Poland. Józef Herzig was caught by Ukrainians in Wyczków near Lesko and handed over to the Germans; upon interrogation, he betrayed the hiding place of five Jews in Hoczw, resulting in the execution of the brothers Tomasz and Jan Waclawski and the confiscation of their farm.\textsuperscript{287} When Mojżesz Strick fell into the hands of the Ukrainian police in Stryj, he betrayed the hideout of his companion Matylda Lauer, which led to the arrest of their former Christian benefactor, Adele Mazik, who was imprisoned and prosecuted for the offence of helping Jews.\textsuperscript{288} Eugeniusz Kędzierski, Franciszek Ożegalski and Władysława Seweryn of Lwów were arrested by the Germans in Lwów for aiding Jews and prosecuted, after they were betrayed by Leopold Manner when apprehended by the Ukrainian police. Ożegalski’s death sentence was commuted to five years’ imprisonment, whereas Seweryn was executed.\textsuperscript{289} When Mathilde Flecker was apprehended by the Ukrainian police in Lwów, she betrayed two Poles, Emil and Władysław Kleiner, who were part of a secret organization that provided Jews with false identity documents.\textsuperscript{290} Michał Szramek of Drohobycz was arrested after his address was found in the possession of Maurycy Rurhberg, a member of the Judenrat. Salomon Herzig, who was arrested at the same time, told the Germans that Szramek was aware that he was sheltering Jews, even though they were using a false identity, something which Szramek attempted to deny in order to exculpate himself.\textsuperscript{291} Upon arrest and interrogation, Estera Kuper identified three Poles in Kosów Lacki who helped her. All three of the Poles were arrested. Stanisława Barbachowska, who admitted to the “crime,” was sentenced to death by a German court, whereas Władysław and Stefania Wolosewicz, who denied helping the Jewish girl to avoid punishment, received sentences of 6 months in prison.\textsuperscript{292} Chawa Gener, who was sheltered in Warsaw, betrayed her Polish benefactors when she was arrested by the German police; as a result, three Poles were sentenced to prison terms of five to six years.\textsuperscript{293} One member of a large group of Jews sheltered by Polish farmers in the village of Widzówek near Częstochowa was apprehended by the Germans and betrayed his benefactors during

\textsuperscript{286} Gutman and Bender, The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations, vol. 5: Poland, Part 2, 884; Leociak, \textit{Ratowanie}, 39, based on the testimony of Władysław Wójcik, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 5267.

\textsuperscript{287} Żbikowski, \textit{Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945}, 340.

\textsuperscript{288} Namysło and Berendt, \textit{Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej}, 86.


\textsuperscript{290} Namysło and Berendt, \textit{Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej}, 96.

\textsuperscript{291} Namysło and Berendt, \textit{Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej}, 96.


\textsuperscript{293} Namysło and Berendt, \textit{Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej}, 107.
interrogation, leading to the arrest of Stanisław Widera, Walenty Kępa and Karolina Owczarek. All three were sentenced to death. The sentence of the two men was commuted to one year of prison, whereas the woman was executed. Historian Elżbieta Rączy identified a number of cases in the Rzeszów region where Jews apprehended by the Germans or Jewish agents provocateurs—as in the case of a group of Jewish prisoners from the Pustków labour camp sent into the countryside to search out Jews in hiding—betrayed fellow Jews and their Polish benefactors. Such acts of betrayal, lack of caution on the part of hidden Jews, deliberate denunciations (as was the case in Gumniska), and provocations were responsible for more than one third of the recorded cases of Jews on the run falling into the hands of the Germans. A Jewish partisan group led by Edmund Łukawiecki, which operated in the forests north of Lubaczów (Puszcza Solska), executed a young Jewish woman who had betrayed at least one family of Jews in hiding and tried to infiltrate the partisan group.

On February 24, 1943, two Jews, possibly agents provocateurs—one a refugee from Warsaw, the other a local Jew named Szymel Helman—came with a large punitive detachment of the SS and German gendarmerie to identify the Poles who had helped them and other Jews. A dozen Poles perished in the ensuing pacification in Paulinów near Sterdyń, not far from Sokolów Podlaski. A Jew from Wołomin named Rubin, who was captured by the Germans after joining up with a band of fugitive Soviet soldiers, betrayed numerous farmers who helped the Soviet partisans in that area. As a result, more than a score of Poles were executed in the villages of Brzóza and Zarzetka near Łochów. Some of the Polish victims were beaten and shot by Rubin himself. German gendarmes brought a Jew captured during a manhunt to the school house in Zagoździe near Łuków in order to identify Poles who had assisted him. Two Home Army members he identified miraculously escaped being arrested.

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293 Namysło and Berendt, *Rejestr faktów represji na obywatełach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej*, 76.
294 Namysło and Berendt, *Rejestr faktów represji na obywatełach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej*, 95.
Unprincipled Jewish bands have been identified by survivors as responsible for the deaths of a number of Jews:

Thus, in Galicia, where in the absence of an organized anti-German partisan movement groups of armed Jews simply tried to survive in the forests, there were cases of fratricidal murder motivated by the urge to obtain arms. In the Białystok [Białystok] region such a ‘wild group’ of Jews, as they were called, raped several Byelorussian peasant girls and stabbed to death two Jewish partisans of the Jewish Forois Detachment to get hold of their rifles.300

[In the environs of Buczacz, Tarnopol Province:] The Jewish bandits were no better than the [Ukrainian] murderers. They fell on the Jews in hiding, on the Jews in the forests and robbed them naked. That happened to Shaul Enderman and others.301

To Buczacz they brought Jews from the town of Tłumacz. Among the youth from Tłumacz was a so-called band. This was a group of young, armed boys. Brave and determined for anything, they were the scourge of the area. They even robbed their well-off brethren.302

A group of Ukrainian “partisans” counting Jews among their members are known to have pillaged and murdered in the vicinity of Kopyczyńce east of Tarnopol.303

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

The Tenth became a power to be reckoned. Originally thought of as an elite group of Jews, it was discovered that their acts of force were motivated by their own selfish needs and gratification. It was while hundreds of Jews were hiding in an area known as Abluva, that the true character of the Tenth was realized. The Tenth became aware that the Germans had discovered where the Jews were hiding. Instead of informing everyone of the intended raid, they left unannounced for Russia, leaving the others unprepared for the assault that followed.304

There was a 14-year-old boy in our group, Itche Meir, whose parents had owned the paint factory in Luków [Łuków]. After explaining that his parents were dead, he confided that he knew where the family gold was buried in an old cast-iron pot. Two of our group, brothers-in-law—one a little

302 Izak Szwarc, “Buczacz: Obozy pracy w okolicach Buczacza,” as cited in Ajzensztajn, Ruch podziemny w ghettach i obozach, 49; Testimony of Izak Szwarz, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 327.
304 Abram, The Light After the Dark, 95.
shoemaker and the other a strapping hulk of a man who had worked in a slaughterhouse—voluteered to go with him to find the gold.

After a few days, the men came back alone and told us that Itche Meir had changed his mind and run away. At first we believed them, but I soon became suspicious because of the way they were behaving. I started to worry as to what really happened to the young boy.

A few days later, as I peddled my wares, one of my customers told me he’d found a fresh grave near the road. That night I took two men with me to find the grave. …Digging it up, my fears became a reality: there was poor Itche Meir’s body with his head bashed in. … Returning to the camp, we found the suspected murderers. We said, “We found Itche Meir’s body. Why did you kill him?”

The shoemaker started crying and confessed. “I begged my brother-in-law not to kill the kid, but he didn’t listen.” He pleaded with us and cried. …

The big guy, on the other hand, was a different story. He didn’t seem to react to his brother-in-law’s accusation, he just sat there with his rifle … When he finally fell asleep, however, we took his rifle away. The next day, one man was assigned to take him deep into the forest and execute him. Our judgment was swift, his execution just.305

In a few cases Jews were killed before they could bring ruination to their benefactors and their families. After his capture in Polichna near Brzozówka, a Jew by the name of Icek Wagman identified various peasants who had sheltered him. A sergeant at the police station killed Wagman before the arrival of the German gendarmes. Another Polish policeman reacted similarly when a weary Jew appeared at an outpost near Tarnów and incriminated many Poles who had assisted him. The Jew was executed before the return of the German commander. After the war, the Polish policeman was sentenced to death for his misdeed.306

In Zdziebórz near Wyszków, two Jewish young men were sheltered by various villagers. They were eventually accepted into the Home Army where one of them perished in an armed confrontation with the Germans. Believing it to be the work of the Home Army, the surviving Jew went to the German outpost in Pniewo to report the Polish partisans. Tipped off by a Polish policeman of an impending raid, the Home Army dispatched a small group to execute their betrayer as he left the outpost.307

A Jew who was sheltered by a Polish family near Glowaczów recalled the panic and tragedy that ensured when a Jewish woman was captured by German gendarmes and divulged the hideouts of Jews and their Polish helpers:

So they caught those two women … the younger one escaped. And she come running to us at night … And she told us that lady and the little girl told the gendarmerie … where [the] Jews are. … about maybe thirty, forty Jews … were killed … hidden like me. And they took the Poles, the


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

whole families and … killed them right with them. … people who were hidden were crying and making noise. She says, “If we catch that woman with that little girl we’re going to cut her in pieces.” In the whole area, … all the Gentiles were looking for her. Because why? She really babbled and gave out a lot of people that they were holding Jews, making a mess out of the whole area.  

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

The following cases are particularly perplexing and defy easy answers. Eugeniusz Niedziela was hiding ten Jews on his farm in the village of Markuszowa. On July 3, 1942, the Germans shot six inhabitants of the villages of Markuszowa, Kozłowka, and Oparówka who were helping Jews. Niedziela and other farmers were coerced into participating in their round-up. Moreover, Niedziela was blackmailed by another inhabitant of the village, who convinced him to denounce Jews. The Jews to whom Niedziela provided help survived the war and Eugeniusz Niedziela and his wife and mother were rewarded in 1993 with the medal Righteous Among the Nations.

In Zaklików near Kraśnik,

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

The farmer went to the Gestapo and told them about the two Jews. … ‘They were taken away and shot.’

David Gushee explores the possible scenarios that may have given rise to this tragedy and their implications, without naming an important factor in the equation—the overwhelming and paralyzing effect of fear:

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311 Cited in Gilbert, The Holocaust, 492.
How could the same Polish farmer save two Jews and betray two others? Perhaps he was morally splitting the difference, attempting to do right by his conscience by saving some Jews and to do right by the authorities by turning others in. Or it could be that the farmer could not think of a doctor he could trust to care for the gangrenous son and did not want a dying Jew to care for and later bury. Possibly he thought that four people, rather than two, were too many for him to accommodate, especially with one sick with gangrene. Maybe he feared that the Nazis (or snooping neighbors) would discover the two Jews in his cowshed and decided that the best way to avoid being raided was … by turning these new Jews in. … The story illuminates the limits of any typology, for this farmer was both an informant and a rescuer. The tale also reveals the complexity of human behavior, particularly in such severe moral crises, and indicates the importance of withholding facile moral judgments about Gentile behaviour during the Holocaust.312

Harsh German measures often put Polish villagers in an untenable situation. After murdering the Jews hidden in a pigsty on a farm in Siedliska near Miechów, the Germans went to the rescuers’ house looking for the Baranek family, the Poles who had sheltered these Jews.

They took Łucja and Wincenty to the barn, where they shot them. A moment later, they also brought the children there, ordered them to kneel down in the barn door, and shot them. After the murder, they robbed the Baraneks’ house. However, they did not find Łucja’s mother, Katarzyna. Threatening to murder the entire village, they ordered the local people to find her. The next day the neighbours brought Katarzyna to the German post, where she was most probably murdered.313

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

The street was like a deep canyon. No feelings could penetrate its high walls. The shutters on the windows were closed. This was a way for those behind them to turn their backs on their occupiers … I looked up at them. What would you do, you good people, I wondered, if I suddenly knocked on one of your shelters and asked to be hid? I didn’t need to ask. I knew the answer. I would hear

312 David P. Gushee, The Righteous Gentiles of the Holocaust: A Christian Interpretation (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 66. Sometimes Polish rescuers simply refused to take in additional charges, as was the case with a Polish policeman by the name of Czesiek, who rescued from the ghetto in Chelm and sheltered Bella Peretz and her young daughter Sarah. He did not agree to take in, and simply turned away, three of Sarah’s cousins who appeared unexpectedly at his door “because it was too dangerous for him.” See the Interview with Sheila Peretz Etons, April 30, 1990, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Reports of betrayal by rescuers are also found in other countries. For example, the French rescuer of Adele Lazanowski Zaveduk betrayed her mother, and later someone denounced the rescuer and her Jewish charges. See Elaine Saphier Fox, ed., Out of Chaos: Hidden Children Remember the Holocaust (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2013), 102–3.

313 Kancelaria Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polski, Polacy ratujący Żydów w czasie Zagłady: Przywracanie pamięci / Poles Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust: Recalling Forgotten History (Warsaw: Museum of the History of
the bolt slide shut on the door. And what right did I have to condemn them? Why should they risk themselves and their families for a Jewish boy they didn’t know? Would I have behaved any differently? I knew the answer to that, too. I wouldn’t have lifted a finger. Everyone was equally intimidated. …

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

‘It’s here,’ I repeated.
‘Very good,’ said a policeman.
We climbed to the second floor. I said again:
‘It’s here.’
‘Good.’
The policeman drew his pistol. …
‘Ring the doorbell,’ his companion ordered.
I tried imagining the moment my father opened the door. What would I say to him? How could I explain what had happened? Would he understand? Could one comprehend the incomprehensible?

Forgive the unforgivable?

A metallic sound came from inside. It was followed by the shuffle of my father’s slippers. The door opened. His glance slid from me to my two escorts and lingered there. I could see the blood drain from his cheeks. ‘Oh, no,’ he murmured, taking a backward step. My mother was looking over his shoulder. … A policeman pushed me through the doorway. We entered. His companion shut the door. The trap was sprung.314

While Roman Frister survived deportation, his parents perished.

In this context, it is also worth noting that Jews in hiding routinely suffocated or poisoned infants and newborn babies fearing that they might give them away or imperil their own chances of survival. Hundreds, if not thousands, children were killed for this reason.315 Mentally unstable Jews also suffered a similar

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315 Yaffa Eliach describes how a group of Jews hiding in the attic of a barn in Raduń refused to accept her family into the hiding place because they had young children. They were finally allowed in when her father threatened to reveal the hiding place to the Germans, but only on condition that the children be held as hostages: “If any of them made a noise, they would be silenced. … Fearing [the baby] might cry loudly enough to be heard [by passing Germans] from the outside, the people who held him, smothered him.” See André Stein, Hidden Children: Forgotten Survivors of the Holocaust (Toronto: Viking/Penguin, 1993), 59. For other examples, see Yerachmiel Moorstein, ed., Zelva Memorial Book (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 1992), 80; Leon Najberg, Ostatni powstańcy getta (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 1993), 61 (Warsaw); Lyn Smith, ed., Forgotten Voices of the Holocaust (London: Ebury Press/Random House, 2005), 191; Rivka and Israel Teyer, eds., The Red Forest: As Narrated by Izak Slumowitz (Raanana, Israel: Docostory, 2005?), 129; Miriam Brysk, Amidst the Shadows of Trees (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Yellow Star Press, 2007), 91; Hurman, Pod osłoną nocy, 31; Bill Tammeus and Jacques Cukierkorn, They Were Just People: Stories of Rescue in Poland During the Holocaust (Columbia, Missouri and London: University of Missouri Press, 2009), 105; The Words to Remember It: Memoirs of Child Holocaust Survivors (Melbourne: Scribe, 2009), 94 (Wilno); Suzanne Ginsburg, Noike: A Memoir of Leon Ginsburg (San Francisco: Avenger Books, 2012), 65 (Lubomil); Reicher, Country of Ash, 120 (Warsaw); Katz, Gone to Pitchipoi, 73–74 (Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski); Kołacińska-Gałążka, Dzieci Holocaustu mówią..., vol. 5, 263 (Brodzy); Sara R. Horowitz, “‘If He Knows to Make a Child…’,” Memories of Birth and Baby-Killing in Deferred Jewish Testimony Narratives,” in Goda, Jewish Histories of the Holocaust, 135–51, especially at pp. 138–40 (various locations). See also the memoir of S. Strassler, Yad

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fate. It is not surprising, therefore, that when Polish rescuers grew fearful for their own lives when the Germans executed Jews and their Polish benefactors nearby, out of desperation, some Poles killed their Jewish charges rather than risk the Jews’ falling into German hands and betraying their benefactors if they were simply told to leave without a place to hide.

Nor is it surprising that Polish rescuers took the precaution of concealing from their Jewish charges, and other Jews, the fact that they were sheltering or helping other Jews. The fewer people who knew, the less likely the chance of being found out. The same held true for Poles who were involved in both the underground and sheltering Jews. They too often withheld information about the former activities from their Jewish charges. Jews often concealed their assumed identities and hiding places from fellow Jews for that same reason. Two young Jewish women who were taken in by the Kłosowski family in Kocmyrzów near Kraków, “deduced that they were both Jewish, but did not give it away to one another. They were both ready to deny it, because you couldn’t be sure who was a spy and who wasn’t. They did not tell each other the truth until after the war.”

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

Stanisław Kurek, who was awarded by Yad Vashem, recalled that the constant bickering of his

Vashem Archives, E/253, 64 (Zloczów).

316 Celemenski, Elegy For My People, 194. Celemenski describes how he administered a poison pill to an unbalanced Jewish woman in a Warsaw hide-out who would scream hysterically, aloud, and in Yiddish. He justifies the deed thus: “If anyone in the building were to hear Yiddish screams, the Gestapo would be called to investigate.” A mother and her deranged young son, who had screaming fits, were evicted from a large bunker during the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, but the woman’s daughter was kept as a hostage so that the mother would not betray the location of the bunker. See Zofia Rozenstrauch, “Historia czterech miesięcy,” Przelen, no. 1 (1947), cited in Engelking and Leociak, Getto warszawskie, Second edition, 804. Masza Groll from Brześ nad Bugiem described the the strangling of a hysterical 50-year-old Jewish woman in a hideout full of Jews. See Grynberg and Kotowska, Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945, 556–57.

family’s Jewish charges raised suspicions in the village and required them to change their hideouts on their host’s property three or four times. A Jew who was sheltered by the Home Army in Lublin recalled a scene in the apartment he was taken to after leaving the ghetto:

And we arrived to a house, to an apartment house which one of—not headquarters but one apartment where the Home Army was meeting …

I was surprised. We found maybe 10 or 12 Jewish people there, hiding. I found out that he is helping lot of Jewish people. … He took me to another room. Now listen to it. And I listened. There were noises over the wall, people talking in Yiddish, arguing and fighting with each other. He said, what kind of people are you? I’m risking my life and here they start fighting about … stupid things and the neighbors they hear those things. … They’re old orthodox people. For some reason they felt they should continue their orthodoxy, their sacred needs. They want kosher food. You know, where you going to get kosher food there? One of the men died, older man died, but he was very religious. What the Home Army did, they put him in an orthodox kind of canvas sack.

That’s how Jews are buried you know. Not in the coffins. And they threw him over the wall into the Jewish cemetery. And I think this was more than anybody could expect. But this was just one [of] the examples what those people did for us.

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

Adam Neuman-Nowicki, *Struggle for Life During the Nazi Occupation of Poland* (Lewiston, New York; Queenston, Ontario; and Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 59 (two quarrelsome Jews hidden by a Pole in Chmielnik received a third Jew “with demonstrable ill will”); Kuperhand and Kuperhand, *Shadows of Treblinka*, 151–53 (Jews did not allow a Jewish straggler to stay in their bunker because of his lack of caution), 163 (a Polish benefactor warned his charges for arguing and screaming); Naomi Samson, *Hide: A Child’s View of the Holocaust* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 71 (quarrelsome children led their own mother to believe she had no chance of surviving with them); Musiał, *Lata w ukryciu*, vol. 2, 331 (the quarrelsome charges of the Bradło family attracted the attention of villagers in Lubcza, near Ryglice); account of Miriam Banker, who was sheltered in Dubiecko, in Hartman and Krochmal, *I Remember Every Day…*, 105; Samuel D. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), 364 (a bunker in Warsaw where 34 Jews were sheltered); Menachem Katz, *Path of Hope* (New York and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and The Holocaust Survivors’ Memoirs Project, 2008), 104 (smoking cigarettes in a bunker); Grzegorz Górny, *Sprawiedliwi: Jak Polacy ratowali Żydów przed Zagładą* (Izabelin-Warsaw: Rosikon, 2013), 240–41 (the deranged daughter of Marceli Lewi-Lebkowski left the hideout while the zoo in Warsaw where they were hidden by the Zabiński family was full of visitors). Another perspective on this phenomenon can be found in Jewish testimonies that describe quarrels and even threats of denunciation among members of Jewish groups who lived in the ruins of Warsaw after the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. Their behaviour was often intolerable for other group members, so one can only imagine what Polish hosts had to endure on account of the quarrels of their Jewish charges. See, for example, Barbara Engelking and Dariusz Libionka, *Żydzi w powstańczyej Warszawie* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2009), 302–4.


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

and Maria Śliwiak, who sheltered ten Jews in a bunker in Kolomyja. Their charges were frequently quarrelling, which proved to be a source of great distress for their Polish benefactors.325

Rescuer Jerzy Koźmiński of Warsaw, who was awarded by Yad Vashem, recalled the boisterous quarrels that erupted among his family's charges, especially the full-blow rage of one of the charges who hurled invectives in Yiddish at the top of his voice. The rescuer credits their survival in these perilous circumstances to the decency of his neighbours who turned a blind eye to these frequent incidents.326 Similarly, Władysław Kowalski, who sheltered the brothers Filip and Jakiel Rubin in his apartment on Pańska Street in Warsaw, was exposed to danger because of their loud quarrels. However, his neighbours, who heard the commotion, did not betray them.327 Edward Reicher, who resided with a group of Jews on Waliców Street in Warsaw, recalled: “ Petty incidents led us to quarrel constantly and without dignity. We fought not just with words but also with our fists.” He continues: “It was obvious that we were living there, but days, weeks, and months went by and nobody denounced us, even though the entire apartment complex, which was home to several hundred people, knew of our presence. Even the Polish prostitutes who received German clients in the same building did not betray us.”

Jan Galas, the caretaker of a tenement house on Ogrodowa Street in Warsaw, was sheltering six Jews and a small child in the cellar of the building. Another charge, Dawid Efrati, was willing to stay there only for a few days because of the frequent quarrelling among the Jews. Efrati soon returned to the home of the caretaker’s son, Stanislaw, which he had left because, in his nightmares, Efrati used to scream in Yiddish and attracted attention. Within days of his departure, the Germans conducted a door-to-door search after a German official had been shot in the vicinity of the tenement house on Ogrodowa Street and discovered the hiding place of the Jews. All of them were executed including the caretaker, whom they had betrayed. Despite this tragedy, Efrati was not asked to leave the son’s home.329

A loud quarrel in a bunker in a Lwów suburb occupied by 34 Jews was overheard by a Ukrainian policeman and resulted in the arrest, on December 6, 1943, of the Jews as well as three members of the Józefek family, their benefactors. The brothers Kazimierz and Bronislaw and their mother Maria Józefek together with the Jews were hanged in a public square. They were left hanging for several days, as a warning to anyone else who would contemplate aiding Jews.330

As could be expected, living in close quarters under extreme conditions could lead to flare-ups between charges and their rescuers. Insolent behaviour toward their Polish hosts did not facilitate harmonious relations. The stereotype of the “stupid” Pole, widely held by Jews, surfaced even when Poles put their lives at risk to shelter Jews during the war. Teresa Prekerowa, who was active in the Żegota organization,

327 Leociak, Ratowanie, 282–83.
328 Reicher, Country of Ash, 198, 201.
recalls: “It was often that Jews told Poles, ‘We are more intelligent than you,’ and it made the Poles crazy. It was a very difficult situation.”331 Although such remarks tested the patience of Poles, there is no evidence that it caused any Jew to be expelled from their hiding-place.

Sometimes imprudence led to the downfall of Jews in hiding and their Polish benefactors, as was the case in Ciepielów Stary and Rekówka near Lipsko, where several Polish families and their Jewish charges, who became notorious in the vicinity for their thievery, were burned to death when word got back to the Germans. In retaliation, Polish partisans killed some German gendarmes and a local man who had betrayed the Jews.332 Some Jews who were sheltered by a Polish family in the village of Zalesie near Lubaczów went to a neighbouring village where they stole from a Ukrainian farmer. The latter reported the Poles and Jews to the Ukrainian police in Oleszyce. Three Poles were arrested, and two of them likely perished.333

Poles fighting the Nazis outside of Poland were also put at risk because of the irresponsible conduct of Jewish charges. A Polish underground guide, known by the code name of “Władysław,” who was part of a group based in Marseilles which secretly smuggled Jews out of France, was exposed on what was to be his final crossing into Switzerland. Accompanied by his pregnant wife, he had brought a group of fifteen Jews to within arm’s reach of the Swiss border where they awaited an opportune moment to cross over. Defying his instructions, three young Jews left the hiding place to look for food (grapes) and were spotted by gendarmes patrolling the area. The entire group was apprehended, never to be heard of again.334

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

The Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB) … was established [in the Warsaw ghetto] in July [1942] as the transports [of Jews to Treblinka] began. At first two key leaders of the ŻOB were Józef Kaplan and Szmul Breslaw of Ha-Shomer Ha-Za’ir. However, they were caught at the beginning of September [1942], apparently because of informants, after they had succeeded in acquiring a few weapons. The underground collapsed but began to reorganize in October [1942].335

In Warsaw, hundreds of Jews in hiding were suddenly at risk when one of the surviving liaison men of the Jewish Fighting Organization [ŻOB] was caught and tortured. Under torture, he broke; many of those in hiding were then rounded up and killed.336

After some Jews who tried to escape from the ghetto in Lwów were arrested, widespread arrests ensued in the ghetto.337 About 300 Jews managed to escape during an Aktion carried out by the Germans in

332 Stanisławczyk, Czterdzieści twardych, 231–34; Zającowski, Martyrs of Charity, Part One, entries 110, 418.
333 Namysło and Berendt, Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej, 351.
334 Marian Para, Los polacos y los judíos a través de los siglos (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Estudio, 1986), 171–72. The author, who was also a guide in the south of France, recalled that many of the Jews he brought to Switzerland in safety promised profusely to show their gratitude in the future; however, none of these promises ever materialized. Ibid., 174.
336 Gilbert, The Holocaust, 654; this is based on Tuvia Borzykowski’s diary entry for January 28, 1944.
337 Eliyahu Jones [Yones], Żydzi Lwowa w okresie okupacji 1939–1945 (Łódź: Oficyna Bibiofilów, 1999), 190.
Trojanówka, in Volhynia, and set up a camp in the nearby forests with the assistance of Polish partisans. About half of them were persuaded to return to Trojanówka by the rabbi, who headed that town’s Jewish council, on a promise of clemency. However, they were soon executed. The rabbi and one of the survivors then led the Germans to the partisan base which, fortunately, had been abandoned by that time. 

Thousands of Jews had fled from the ghetto Głębokie to the forest. When the Germans announced that they had the “right” to return to the ghetto, the Judenrat chairman Lederman was sent out to entice them back. Hundreds of unsuspecting Jews returned in response to this false promise.

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

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

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

In the spring of 1943, Jewish partisans helped about 100 Jews to escape from a work camp in Adampol near Włodawa. One of the Jews, however, denounced the partisans’ plans for further escapes and, as a result, about 800 Jews were executed. A group of Jews in the Włodawa ghetto, identified as Moszko Lichtenberg, the son of Lejb from Maloryta, and Hersz Buchbinder, betrayed to the Gestapo the renowned Rabbi Zajzer of Radzyń and some escapees from Sobibór who had brought back news of the death camp and had sought the rabbi’s protection. All those betrayed were rounded up by the Jewish police and executed.

Some Jews from Mielec who were deported to Parczew were held in a synagogue. “From there, with the help of local Jews, they were marched off to Wlodawa [Włodawa] … 3 miles from the extermination camp Sobibor [Sobibór] … They had to wait 7 months for their destruction …”

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338 Włoński and Zwolakowa, Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945, 262.

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Gongola (Lejba Goldsztein) from Sierpc was betrayed by a fellow Jew and was eventually deported to Auschwitz. Examples can be multiplied.

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

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

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

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

She soon noticed the marked difference in attitude of Polish and Russian workers, who engaged in extensive sabotage at the plant, and that of the Ukrainian workers: “The Ukrainians, however, were traitors. They were working against the Russians, against the Poles, against everybody, denouncing all the time.”

“The Russians had hateful eyes when they looked at the Germans. Ukrainians were always charmingly sweet and sang, ‘Heil Hitler!’”

“You were not allowed to travel from one village to another. Only

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348 Ibid., 93.
349 Ibid., 98.
350 Ibid., 99.
351 Ibid., 225–26.
Ukrainians had this right because they were pro-German.” When Zosia Goldberg was arrested, a Pole who worked as an interpreter, who suspected she was Jewish, counseled her on her appearance and the “story” she should give to her German interrogators. She also encountered several Jews (and a Ukrainian interpreter) who would betray her, and several other Poles who helped her.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jews could also be conscripted, often through coercion, to take part in German punitive measures directed at Poles. Rev. Roman Pawlowski, a 70-year-old priest from Chocz, was publicly shot in Kalisz in November 1939, in front of the local inhabitants who were driven to the public square to watch the spectacle. “Agents of the Gestapo forced local Jews to tie Fr. Pawlowski to the post, after which he was shot in front of the assembled multitude. The Jews were made to kiss the feet of the corpse, unbind it, put it on a cart, and take it to the Jewish cemetery and bury it according to the Jewish rite.”

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353 Ibid., 130.
354 Ibid., 129.
355 Goldberg, Running Through Fire, 132–34. Zosia Goldberg describes how she was helped, during her interrogation, by a Pole who was employed by the Germans as an interpreter. Ibid., 129.
356 The Persecution of the Catholic Church in German-Occupied Poland: Reports Presented by H.E. Cardinal Hlond,
“fingered” by Polish Jews who served in the German militia, Jan Dudziński and two of his friends were picked up by the Gestapo and sent to Auschwitz where only Dudziński survived.\textsuperscript{357}

Jews were utilized to carry out executions of Jews, and less often of Poles. In the fall of 1939 both Poles and Jews were imprisoned, tortured and murdered in Górka Klasztorna near Łobżenica by the Selbstschutz, a paramilitary formation composed of ethnic Germans who were prewar residents Poland. On November 23, a rope was tied to each of Anna Jaworska’s legs and two groups of Jews were ordered to pull the ropes in opposite directions until her body was ripped in half.\textsuperscript{358} Jewish policemen were ordered to publicly hang a group of Jews and Poles in Belchatów on March 18, 1942.\textsuperscript{359} The Germans ordered a public hanging of ten people in Brzeziny on Purim in March 1942. They ordered the Judenrat to select the victims, build the gallows, and carry out the public execution.\textsuperscript{360} The Germans ordered Jews to hang a group of Polish prisoners in Mława on February 4, 1944. Afterwards, the Germans executed the Jewish executioners, who gained nothing by complying with the orders.\textsuperscript{361}

A Jew from Zwoleń recalls:

> Another night gendarmes came, selected several young men, and put them into a truck. We were sure they would be shot. It turned out altogether differently: 2 Germans had been shot not far from the village of Gura-Pulavskia [Góra Puławska]. The Germans took Polish hostages and announced that if the guilty ones were not delivered within two days, the hostages would be shot. When the time had expired, the Germans ordered the 2 young Jews to hang the Polish prisoners, among whom was a priest. The Germans took photographs of the entire event. The young men were wearing their yellow arm bands. The next day the photographs appeared with captions in large letters: “JEWS HANG POLES.”\textsuperscript{362}

On the eve of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the Germans rounded up Poles in Starachowice, among them women and at least one young girl, leaving church on Sunday morning. The hangmen, young Jews, stood the Poles on stools and placed ropes placed around their necks. The stools were then kicked away, and the bodies were left hanging.

The most memorable killing of the early period was not of Jews but rather the public hanging of 16 or 17 Polish hostages in the town square in June 1941, orchestrated by the chief of the Security Police branch office in Starachowice, Kriminalkommissar Walter Becker. This carefully planned

\textsuperscript{357} Patric\textsuperscript{i} Treece, A Man For Others: Maximilian Kolbe Saint of Auschwitz (In the Words of Those Who Knew Him) (New York: Harper & Row, 1982; reissued by Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Indiana), 128.

\textsuperscript{358} Barbara Bojarska, “Zbrodnie Selbstschutzu w Łobzenicy,” Przegląd Zachodni, nos. 5–6, 1963, 147.


\textsuperscript{360} Dean, Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945, vol. II, Part A, 45. The Jewish police caught Jews who smuggled, confiscated the goods, and the smuggler would have to pay a ranson for his or her release.

\textsuperscript{361} Ryszard Juszkiewicz, Losy Żydów mławskich w okresie II-iej wojny światowej (Mława: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Ziemi Mławskiej, 1994), 79–80.

“theatrical” event took place on a Sunday morning in the sealed-off main square, and Poles leaving the church were forced to watch. The bodies were left hanging for several days, and in a transparent attempt to stir up Polish hatred against the Jews, the Germans had forced the Jewish council to provide young Jewish men wearing masks to serve as hangmen.363

According to Peretz Cymerman, … this was not the first Jews had been forced into the role of hangmen on behalf of the Germans. Sometime earlier, Jewish police had come and fetch him, two brothers, and his brother-in-law. They were put in a horse-drawn wagon, along with a bag of ropes, and taken to [police commander Walther] Becker’s office. The “man with the pipe” (Labuhn) told them that, as they were butchers by profession, they knew how to strangle cows with rope. They were to return at 5 a.m. the next day. Jewish police were stationed outside their house to make sure they did not flee. The next morning, the young Jewish butchers were taken by truck, along with eight prisoners—five men and three women—to a small town a two-hour drive from Wierzbnik, where they saw many German troops positioned on the rooftops. Becker went up to them and told them to do a good job or they would be next. The victims were placed on chairs, and ropes were out around their necks by Cymerman’s brother, standing on a stepladder. The chairs were then kicked away. It was all over in about four minutes.364

Of course, no one was “forced” to do anything in the true sense of that word. No gun was held to anyone’s head. The Jewish council or police could have declined to carry out the orders. As in other towns, the Jews of Starachowice themselves directed Germans to Jewish homes, compiled lists of Jewish men fit for labour duty, dug pits and buried Jews executed by the Germans in the local cemetery, and took part in the round-up of Jews.365 A group of Jews who were planning to escape from the ghetto were worried about snitches among the Jews: “one of them even showed clear signs of his wavering loyalty and we needed to ‘remove’ him to be rid of the risk. This kind of action, planning the murder of a fellow Jew, was well and truly beyond us.” They also feared the Jewish officials: “Their fear of a brutal reprisal could also make them act against us before we did anything.”366

Sometimes the ghetto police were pressed into assisting in the execution of death sentences imposed on Jews by the German authorities. On German orders, the ghetto police participated in the public execution (usually by hanging) of Jews in Zduńska Wola, Brzeźiny, Łęczyca, Belchatów, Poddębice, Wieluń, Pionki, Ozorków, Warta (all between February and April 1942), Bialystok (on December 31, 1943), and Łódź (where one execution was performed by a Jewish executioner and his assistants).367 An eyewitness relates how, during the liquidation of the forced labour camp in Dębica, the notorious Jewish policeman and camp

363 Christopher R. Browning, Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 93.
365 Schutzman, Wierzbnik-Starachowitz, 165ff. (Jerahmiel Singer), 186 (Leibish Herblum), 246 (Zvi Unger).
elder Immerglick ordered the Jewish police to deliver 50 “illegal” Jews who had escaped and somehow made it back to the camp later on. They were detained in a room of the local Talmud Torah and killed the same night, with the help of the ghetto police: “the men of the Ordnungsdienst grabbed the hands of the victims and Gabler (apparently the Lagerkommandant) shot them.”

Earlier, the Jewish police had assisted the Gestapo in searching the houses for any Jews in hiding during Aktions in the Dębica ghetto.

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

Additional examples from Kraków are described later.

There are many accounts of Jews betraying Poles in other contexts. In the village of Jagiella near Przeworsk, Polish army officers who hid with their families were betrayed by two Jewish women. The officers were arrested by the Gestapo and their families were executed on the spot. In Lwów, a Jew betrayed a Pole who was sought afterwards by the Germans. A betrayal by a Ukrainian and a Jewish woman in Zloczów led to the arrest and disappearance of two Poles. Siudek Meryl, a sergeant in the ghetto police in Rzeszów, informed on Poles who had helped Jews; he was executed after the “liberation” by a Polish underground organization. A Jew from Łuków by the name of Telman is believed to have denounced the gamekeeper Antoni Piecko. Jan Idec was denounced by a Jewish acquaintance who was a Gestapo agent in Kraków; he spent the duration of the war imprisoned in concentration camps.

A gang of Jews was apprehended in Lida after robbing Jewish property left for safekeeping with a local Orthodox priest, a trusted friend of the Jews. The priest was badly wounded with brass knuckles administered to his head. When the Judenrat refused to intercede to obtain their release from prison, they informed the German authorities of the residence permits the Judenrat had procured for Jewish fugitives.

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Trunk, Judenrat, 514.
Gitel Hopfeld, At the Mercy of Strangers: Survival in Nazi Occupied Poland (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 2005), 55.
Herzog, ...And Heaven Shed No Tears, 301.
Mariusz Bechta, Rewolucja, mit, bandytyzm: Komuniści na Podlasiu w latach 1939–1941 (Warsaw and Biała Podlaska: Rachocki and Rekonkwista, 2000), 73.
from Wilno by paying off Polish municipal clerks, thereby endangering the lives of all involved. Local Jews were then coopted to identify the refugees. As a result, 75 to 80 Jews were arrested and executed by the Germans together with the members of the Jewish council. Avidan, the head of the gang, was released by the Germans as a reward for his tale-bearing and returned to Wilno. Believed to have conveyed information to the German authorities on illegal activities in the ghetto, Avidan was liquidated by the Judenrat and ghetto police.378 In the nearby town of Zdzięcioł, a 12-year-old boy who tried to escape deportation by blending in with members of the Judenrat, was abruptly yelled at by a woman: “Don’t stay next to us. You don’t belong in this group.”379

Smuggling food and other items into ghettos proved to be a source of unexpected danger. Poles who, in defiance of German decrees, smuggled food into ghettos or traded with Jews also faced their share of problems. The Jewish police were under orders to arrest non-Jews who made purchases in stores exclusively designated for Jews, and Poles arrested for such transgressions were turned over to the Germans for execution.380 In the Warsaw ghetto there was an extensive network of Jewish szmalcowniks—made up of smugglers, porters and Jewish policemen—who staked out strategic points in the ghetto such as entrances in order to accost Poles who entered the ghetto illegally, usually to trade but sometimes to bring help. These Jews would demand bribes, failing which the Poles would be rouged up or even handed over to the Germans.381 Jewish children caught smuggling food into the Warsaw ghetto were frequently apprehended by Jewish policemen, who beat the children with their clubs and confiscated their food supplies.382 Jewish policemen demanded enormous bribes to facilitate the release of Jews during the Great Deportation from Warsaw in the summer of 1942.383 The greatest obstacle to smuggling food into the ghetto in Łódź was the large network of Jewish Kripo and Gestapo agents employed by the Germans, drawn from the Jewish population and the ghetto police. Their activities also resulted in the deaths of many Poles who engaged in smuggling.384 Meyer Shwartz, a resident of Łódź, recalled: “There were Jewish spies who said that his father was hiding furs, so he was badly beaten. The Germans also beat his aunt, breaking all her fingers.”385


382 Gutenbaum and Latała, eds., *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 2, 123.

383 Testimony of Artur Ney, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 2227. One policeman demanded 15,000 złoty just to deliver a letter.


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

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

Occasionally, a Jewish policeman was prepared to turn a blind eye during the deportations from the Warsaw ghetto, but this usually required the payment of a hefty compensation to buy his silence.

We used to hide there during each Aktion. Once a Jewish policeman noticed us there, and when during an Aktion he came into our hiding place, we locked him in together with us, (he agreed to this for a considerable sum of money). After the raid, we let him out.

Sometimes Poles who ventured inside the ghetto simply fell at the hands of ordinary criminals. That was the fate of a Polish policeman who was shot and killed by a Jewish thief in November 1939. The Pole’s colleague was wounded in that altercation. Even child smugglers were not out of reach as potential victims:

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

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386 Gutman and Bender, *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*, vol. 5: Poland, Part 2, 865.
390 Katsh, *Scroll of Agony*, 80; Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, 102. The murderer was one Jakub Pinchas Zylbring; in retaliation, the Germans shot 53 Jews.
A similar situation prevailed in Wilno when Jews who worked outside the ghetto had to face the Jewish police on their return to the ghetto. The policemen beat up fellow Jews at the gates to the ghetto, confiscated the food they were carrying, and mocked them.\(^{392}\)

The behavior of the Jewish police at the gate—the searches and the beatings—made them and their commander, [Meir] Levas, the most hated group among the Jews of the ghetto. These blows and searches were inflicted directly by the policemen themselves, and became the rule when Murer or another German was on the spot. Many Jews saw the Jewish gatemen as the oppressors who prevented them from bringing in food. The gate police more than once exceeded the necessary norm and abused their position to impound food for their own consumption and enrichment.\(^{393}\)

Internal rivalries and jealousy led to acrimonious quarrels among Jews involved in illicit trade. On occasion they even denounced each other to the German authorities, as was the case in Głowno near Łódź.

Kosher butchers would bring cattle for slaughter through the ghetto gate or cut a hole in the fence to get them in. There was a constant war between the butchers and the Jewish Police, whom the butchers refused to bribe. The butchers also fought among themselves, denouncing each other to the [German] Gendarmerie.\(^{394}\)

Polish farmers who traded with Jews could also get up in the struggle, as was the case in Izbica near Zamość, where a Jewish trader summoned the authorities to complain about a rival Jewish trader. Luckily, the Polish “Blue” police responded and the farmer was let off with a warning after paying a bribe. Had the German authorities intervened, however, harsh reprisals would have ensued.\(^{395}\)

There were Jews who smuggled other Jews out of ghettos for hefty sums, and numerous Jewish black-marketeers who bought up Jewish goods for a pittance only to resell them outside the ghetto for considerably more and who made huge profits from the sale of goods smuggled into the ghetto.\(^{396}\) A Jewish survivor from Borysław recalled:

> Several dozen people, mainly young boys, went to the forest near Borysław and built underground bunkers there. Later they would come to the Lager [camp] and take people to the bunkers for a fee (several thousand zlotys).\(^{397}\)

It was not only Jews, however, who were forced to sell their belongings to survive, and Jewish black-marketeers were eager to take advantage of Poles, as well as Jews. Jews from Warsaw recalled:

\(^{393}\) Arad, *Ghetto in Flames*, 305.  
\(^{395}\) Account in the author’s possession.  
\(^{397}\) Gutenbaum and Latała, eds., *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 2, 78.
… more and more people were selling their valuables, their possessions, even their clothes. The Wolavka [Wałówka], the used goods market [located outside the ghetto], was full of people and getting bigger every day. People from all classes, people who had never set foot there, one and all were selling their possessions—valuable sets of dishes, sets of silver, clothing, bed clothes, and even more modest objects—everything was being offered for sale. The Poles bought; Jewish merchants also bought cheaply from people who wanted to sell as quickly as possible, and then they sold the merchandise to the Poles at a profit. When a Pole came to the market expecting to sell something expensive at its worth, people would laugh at him. After standing in the market for an hour, which seemed like a year, the seller would set his price lower and lower; if he had come to sell something, that meant that he needed money, and quickly.398

I remember going to the nearby market to sell our silverware. I told a vendor that I wanted $100 for it. The shrewd vendor offered me $45. I then went from vendor to vendor, trying to sell it for more. When I could not and went back to the first vendor for the $45 he had offered me, he now said that he would give me only $25, and not a cent more. I was stuck—I had no choice.399

Jan Kott, a convert of Jewish origin who was residing in Lwów, recalled:

I went into business with three specimens of a new subcategory: “merchants of war.” They came to buy furs and rugs but most of all goods and diamonds. They knew that not only the Jews but also the Poles had to get rid of everything. Although honest in business in their own way, they were uninhibitedly voracious. …

The circle of my activities expanded. Henceforth I traded mainly in dollars and gold. To say “traded in” is an exaggeration: I simply got from Mr. Lindenfeld, who was my “banker,” dollars and sometimes rings and took them to my Warsaw speculators, who came once every two weeks to Lvov [Lwów] to trade, or rather to smuggle them back. Mr. Lindenfeld was a prewar merchant; he had had, as he told me one day, a magnificent jewelry shop on the main square of Stanisławów. Before the [Soviet] deportations, he had liquidated the whole business and taken refuge in Lvov.400

Kott took up similar activities when he moved to Warsaw where he traded in currency and gold in partnership with left-wing Polish literati.401

Criminal elements in the ghettos also preyed on fellow Jews. According to one source, there was an Unterwelt (underworld) in Łódz made up of “thieves, prostitutes, and so on, and, in the ghetto reality, those people dominated. It was a regression to primitivism.”402 In Ożarów, a gang composed, unusually, of Jews and Poles robbed ghetto homes at night.403 Robberies and muggings were a frequent occurrence in the

399 Alpert, A Spark of Life, 22.
401 Kott, Still Live, 80–81.
Lwów ghetto.⁴⁰⁴ Jewish informers in Lwów found well-appointed apartments of well-to-do Jews for German officials,⁴⁰⁵ and extorted large sums of money from Jews in hiding in exchange for not being denounced.⁴⁰⁶ A Jew from Silesia named Hans and his German partner arranged to transport Jews from Lwów to Warsaw for payment and then betrayed them to the Germans. The father of Danuta Lis (then Schmerler) made arrangements with Hans to take his daughter to Warsaw in May 1943. Then only 13 years old, Danuta was sexually abused in Warsaw by Hans, who also stole her money.⁴⁰⁷

After being denounced to the German authorities by his Jewish neighbours, Dr. Edward Reicher decided to move his family to another apartment in the Warsaw ghetto:

Moving was a risk because of the “grabbers” and thieves …

So I was extremely cautious. I concealed all our gold, jewelry, and gold watches in [my daughter] Elzunia’a favorite toy, a brown teddy bear. I packed the dollar bills in a condom that I carried on my person. With everything well hidden, we took a rickshaw to our new apartment on Nowolipki Street. Elzunia carried the precious bear.

When the driver stopped outside the front door of our new building, I began to help them unload our possessions into the house. My daughter started to play on the street with a small boy who was perhaps eight years old. Before I came back downstairs, the boy suddenly wrenched the bear from her and ran away. … That yellow bear contained almost all our possessions—and money often spelled the difference between life and death. I was in despair. I tore off to look for the boy.

On the street I ran into a patient of mine who was a smuggler. I told him what had happened, and he advised me to go to a known underworld hangout, a café on Smocza Street. I ran all the way there, asking passersby as I went where the café was. Many of them mocked my desperate question: “Where’s the thieves’ café?” People looked at me as if I were out of my mind. Suddenly an elderly man with a broken nose and an unkempt beard appeared before me.

“Follow me,” he said. “I’m a go-between.” He had a strange way of constantly smacking his lips. We came to a dirty bar, the like of which I had only ever seen in crime movies. Behind the bar stood a fat bartender … I ordered tea and the middleman went from table to table, chatting up various people. A moment later he returned to my table with a suspicious-looking middle-aged man in a worn suit with a garish scarf around his neck. This turned out to be the father of the eight-year-old boy who had snatched Elzunia’s bear.

“What can I do for you?” the thief asked.

“I would like my things back. I will give you cash worth part of the value of the stolen items.”

⁴⁰⁴ Moty Stromer, Memoirs of an Unfortunate Person: The Diary of Moty Stromer (New York and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and The Holocaust Survivors’ Memoirs Project, 2008), 79. When the author left the Lwów ghetto he was followed by two secret agents whom he and his companion were able to lose. Ibid., 182.
⁴⁰⁵ Henryk Reiss, Z deszczu pod rynnę…: Wspomnienia polskiego Żyda (Warszawa: Polonia, 1993), 76; Zbikowski, Archiwum Ringelbluma, 556.
⁴⁰⁷ Katarzyna Meloch and Halina Szostkiewicz, eds., Dzieci Holokaustu mówią..., vol. 4 (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie “Dzieci Holokaustu” w Polsce, 2012), 134–35; Mateusz Wyrwich, “Obcy we własnym mieście,” Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej, no. 3 (2009): 80. Hans was arrested by the Germans and imprisoned in Kraków, but managed to survive. After the war, he was recognized by a Jew whom he had betrayed. Hans was tried and sentenced to death.
“We shall see.” The three of us left the café and headed to Krochmalna Street. A wooden staircase on the far side of the courtyard led up outside of the building. … I was led into a room.

The stench was overpowering. … A woman was nursing twins. The little thief was there too.

The bear was retrieved from inside the sofa; it had already been professionally gutted. And there were its contents: a dozen twenty-dollar gold coins, two diamond rings, one loose diamond, my 75-gram gold watch (a wedding present from my wife’s grandfather), and a woman’s watch with a gold chain. Nothing was missing. An appraisal was begun. The middleman’s valuations were not very high. The value was established in dollars. We also agreed on the percentage for the thief—almost half.

“Do you have enough money on you to pay us?” the middleman asked.

“I do.”

“Very well. It will cost you nine hundred dollars. And I get fifty dollars as the go-between.”

Jews from the Wilno ghetto also fell victim to fellow Jews who agreed to transport them to other, presumably safer localities, for large sums of money, but abandoned them outside the city. Conditions inside ghettos were often unsafe because of gangs of criminals. In Wilno,

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

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

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

Looting, a hazard of war and civil strife, was carried out by members of all national and religious groups when the Germans and Soviets entered Poland in September 1939. When the Germans set up temporary holding camps for Jews in 1939–1940, there was no shortage of scavengers. Emanuel Ringelblum recorded that Polish Jews were quick to appropriate valuables which German Jews had discarded because the latter

408 Reicher, Country of Ash, 83–84. The family of the little thief from Krochmalna Street survived the war thanks to thieves who had hidden them on the Polish side. Ibid., 253.
409 Żbikowski, Archiwum Ringelbluma, 415.
411 See, for example, Żbikowski, Archiwum Ringelbluma, 327. For an account of looting by Jews in Skala Podolska, a town in the Soviet zone, see Abraham Tracy, To Speak For the Silenced (Jerusalem and New York: Devora, 2007), 13–19.
were afraid that their possession might lead to serious repercussions at the hands of the Germans.\[^{412}\]

Looting was a common occurrence in the Warsaw ghetto, especially when the size of the ghetto was reduced due to population attrition. Being blackmailed for not complying with German orders was also a pervasive worry.

… every once in a while, the district was made smaller, and 15,000 to 20,000 persons were shifted to the overcrowded remaining area. … The fact that the Jewish mob stole mercilessly from their fellow men during such shifts only magnified the feeling of contempt for those who were perishing. There were many of those shifts …

At one time they needed fur coats for German soldiers … many turned their furs over because they had been seen wearing them and they feared blackmail from their fellow Jews.\[^{413}\]

Later on, after the Great Deportation in the Warsaw ghetto in the summer of 1942, the Jews who remained in the ghetto looted property left behind by the Jews who had been expelled from the ghetto.\[^{414}\] Jews who remained behind in the Warsaw ghetto and worked in the workshops continued to face selections for deportation, in which the Jewish police stood guard, and denunciations by Jewish work guards.\[^{415}\]

Much has been written, in recent years, on such Polish conduct as looting Jews, denouncing Jews for financial gain, housing fugitive Jews only as long as they could pay, etc. Josef Zelkowicz, a resident of Łódź, relates Jewish misconduct in relation to its Polish counterpart. He comments, “Major felonies were committed in the ghetto, where accepted human rules did not apply. … Furthermore, we know, things are no different among the Jews than among the Gentiles…”\[^{416}\] This had started long before the Nazis began systematically exterminating Jews anywhere in German-occupied Poland. Consider the matter of Polish “greed” in the acquisition of Jewish properties, including previously respectable and not-greatly-needy Poles engaging in this conduct. Zelkowicz describes the same among Jews, as he writes,

Grave crimes were committed in the ghetto. The gravest of them was the transformation of people who had worked for decades to maintain their culture and ways, the fruits of millennia of effort, into predatory beasts after half a year of life under inhuman conditions. Overnight they were stripped of every sense of morality and shame. Ghetto inhabitants pilfered and stole at every opportunity, whether they needed the booty or not. …

They stole from the community chest, of all places. They stole from the stocks of food for which people had paid in toil, blood and sweat—from the food warehouses that were supposed to feed,

\[^{412}\] Ringelblum, *Kronika getta warszawskiego*, 69.
\[^{415}\] Testimony of Jerzy Gladzsztern-Geiazdowski, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 2098.
equally, all the inmates of this concentration camp that they call a ghetto.\textsuperscript{417}

When Jews from Western Europe were deported to the Łódź ghetto, they found themselves helpless. Swindled and exploited, they soon sank from relative affluence to a subhuman existence. A large percentage of them were over 50 years old and unable to work. They had to write to relatives to help them, simply to buy food and other essentials. Those who didn’t have relative [sic] began to sell off their finery to get daily bread. As a result, ghetto prices skyrocketed creating resentment among the ghetto dwellers that perceived these newcomers, parasites.\textsuperscript{418}

Jews also known to turn on one another after the Germans invaded Poland, a phenomenon that is not widely publicized. Jewish informers were particularly valuable when the Germans came to plunder Jewish property.\textsuperscript{419} Jewish eyewitnesses from Warsaw report the following occurrences:

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

A ‘poem’ was even composed to this effect:

\begin{verbatim}
    Mummy, Daddy, listen do
    With a German the Gestapo came two by two
    What shame, what a disgrace
    The first was a Pole, the second a Jew!
    Mummy, Daddy, listen do
    Here come the Gestapo, do you know who?
    What a shame, the worst disgrace
    The first is a Jew, and the second is too!\textsuperscript{420}
\end{verbatim}

The issue of closure inside the ghetto evolved into other problems … Enormous movement was noted amongst the Jews. They were buying huge amounts of foodstuffs, and stocking up especially

\textsuperscript{417} Zelkowicz, \textit{In Those Terrible Days}, 131.
\textsuperscript{418} Anna Ellenberg-Eibeshitz, \textit{My Son..., My Son...: A Chronicle} (Haifa: A. Eibeshitz Institute for Holocaust Studies, 2007), 150.
\textsuperscript{420} Cyprys, \textit{A Jump For Life}, 26.
on flour, sugar and oil. The wealthy bought whole sacks of products. … However, storing large
amounts of food at home was not a simple matter. The Nazis conducted frequent searches in Jews’
homes. The plight of a Jew maintaining a large store of food at home was no light matter. The
Nazis not only confiscated the lot, but turned the owner over to the Gestapo, where his fate was
sealed.

How did the Germans detect the goods? Rumor had it that among the Jews were corrupt types
who worked for the Gestapo and informed on their brothers who had hidden goods, foodstuffs and
furniture. The Nazis would suddenly show up with trucks, enter the apartment and remove the
hidden stock. A man could become a pauper in a matter of seconds. It was heartwrenching to
witness robbery facilitated by Jewish informants.421

Many highly-placed occupation authorities … were officially and unofficially involved in looting.
So were some Jewish criminals who tipped Germans off about the best places to plunder, or
threatened Jews that they would do so in order to blackmail them.422

Along with the [German] looters came porters from among our Jewish brethren; these are regular
porters who serve the Nazis regularly for pay. … [the Germans] take regularly hired porters who
ride from place to place together with the robbers.423

Jews also engaged in gratuitous denunciations of fellow Jews. They wrote numerous letters to the
German authorities, mostly anonymous, to report Jews who had disobeyed German orders by remaining
outside the ghettos, by engaging in smuggling, by manufacturing bogus documents, and for various other
reasons. Reports about such activities in Warsaw are abundant, but there also cases from Mława, Żelechów,
and other places.424 This state of affairs prompted the author Jehoszua Perle, a Warsaw ghetto resident, to
aver (perhaps too harshly): “The ghetto exposed the sordid underbelly of the Jewish populace. The kind of
denunciation that we see in the ghetto certainly doesn’t exist among the Poles. I don’t believe that any other
nation who has preserved their national pride could fall so low. The worst elements have floated to the
surface.”425

The Germans employed Jewish agents in the Warsaw ghetto to inform about the location of hideouts, the
identity of smugglers and black marketers, and the location of valuables. Shop owners sometimes
cooperated with the SS or helped in the round-up of those who had no work permits. The Jewish police
extorted bribes. Emanuel Ringelblum wrote, in April 1941: “There is a terrible moral breakdown between
even the closest [people in the ghetto]. There are times when [the authorities] come to confiscate a

421 Mordechai Lensky, A Physician Inside the Warsaw Ghetto (New York and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and The
Holocaust Survivors’ Memoirs Project, 2009), 32.
423 Katsh, Scroll of Agony, 187 (diary entry for August 25, 1940).
424 Engelking and Grabowski, “Żydów łamiących prawo należy karać śmiercią!”, especially 49–56, 61, 125. For
examples of such letters see the illustrations between pages 48 and 49, ibid., and Engelking, “Szamowny Panie
Gistapo,” letter no. 205.
425 Engelking and Grabowski, “Żydów łamiących prawo należy karać śmiercią!”, 70.
particular picture, or because they know there is foreign currency or gold hidden on the premises.” 426 A Jewish refugee from Łódź recalled:

One Sunday, I was surprised to see a German SS officer come into the courtyard, whistle and shout, “Max!” A window opened from that same apartment on the third floor. And a young man looked out—he was one of the children who used to play in the yard. He answered in German, “I’ll be right down!” A few minutes later, the young man appeared in the yard and left with the German, the two of them laughing. Afterward, I found out that he was one of the most dangerous informers in the neighborhood and that everyone was afraid of him. In Lodz, I had heard stories of Jewish informers who worked for the Germans, but now, when I actually saw a young Jewish man collaborating with a German—it was said that he helped the Germans plan their robberies—I was in a state of shock. I couldn’t understand how his family could let him cooperate with the Germans. Every time I saw him after that, I used to pray that he would be killed. 427

Rabbi Shimon Huberband wrote about the widespread phenomenon of informing in the Warsaw ghetto, often concerning hiding places for valuables. He goes on to explain that although the phenomenon was tied to the starvation and suffering that was the ghetto population’s lot. “But that is no excuse,” he says. Jewish communities always had their traitors, Huberband explains, “But nothing is comparable to what is happening in the ghetto.”

The Jewish ghetto is flooded with a huge number of informers, collaborators, blackmailers, and thieves. Admittedly, the major causes of all these crimes are the famine, poverty, and epidemics which are prevalent in such horrible forms in the concentration camp which is called the sealed Jewish ghetto. But that is no excuse.
The problem of denunciations is extremely widespread in the ghetto. Jews have always suffered from informers. … But nothing is comparable to the current goings-on in the ghetto.

The porters were the first Jewish informers in Warsaw. They were the ones who showed the Germans where the wealthy Jews lived and where Jews hid their merchandise. Later on the porters went a step further. Whenever they noticed a Jew carrying even the smallest package, they approached him and ordered him to pay them money. If a Jew refused, they called over a German, a Polish policeman, a street agent, or a simple goy. [It is difficult to appreciate how an ordinary goy could be of any assistance to a burly Jewish porter.—M.P.] This is their practice until this very day.

The porters received regular payments from the clandestine milk producers, the illegal slaughterhouses, and other businesses. Otherwise, the businesses would immediately be denounced to the authorities. In many cases, the porters informed on them because they could not reach an agreement with the owners concerning the size of the weekly payment.

427 Freiberg, To Survive Sobibor, 93–94.
In addition to the sums which the porters received from the Germans and Poles [the identity of these Poles is rather baffling—M.P.] to reward them for their denunciations, the porters also stole a large amount of textiles, leather, and other items while carrying them down from homes and loading them into trucks. …

Besides porters, there were also artisans who served as informers. In many cases, Jews called upon their close, good friends who were craftsmen, carpenters, bricklayers, and oven masons, and seeking to secure their jewelry, asked them to conceal their valuables inside a wall, floor, or ceiling. In many cases, Jews asked that their jewelry be built into their ovens or stoves. The artisans were well paid for such work. But in many cases they informed on the wealthy Jews. The Germans would then enter the Jews’ homes and head straight for the “hiding place.” It was thus patently clear that the craftsmen had informed. In many cases, the artisan even came along with them.

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

Another incident occurred to a well-off Jewish family who were banished from their village near Warsaw and were now living in a small apartment on Geśia Street in the Warsaw ghetto. They called in a Jewish plasterer to remove a brick from the oven and hammer a nail in the recess, so they could hang up a purse containing jewelry. The next day—as quick as that!—several German policemen arrived, walked over to the oven, and began pulling out bricks, but could not find the right one. “They got very angry, beat everyone cruelly. They threw heavy Talmud volumes at the head of one tenant, Mrs. Yudkowsky, until she was covered in blood.”

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

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429 Cited in Levin, Walls Around, 91.
430 Ibid.
431 Ibid.
Merchants, craftsmen, and businessmen in the ghetto were also informed on. The widow of a well-known thief shot by the Germans turned many neighbours over to the Germans. One neighbor was “a poor, depressed Jew, dying of starvation along with his wife and children,” who made a meagre living grinding flour in an underground mill. Despite the tip-off, the man got off lightly with a 100 złoty fine that he begged from his neighbours. Another Jew, who tried to sell a couple of watches to make a living, had his profits of 135 marks and 200 złoty confiscated by the Germans, due to the woman’s slander. A third Jew had to pay 500 złoty to stop his children’s clothes from being confiscated. A fourth, an artist, was accused of dealing in cotton wool and made a 200 złoty payoff. The Germans then moved to a fifth, neighbouring apartment, where they demanded—and got—150 złoty. All of this activity was the product of one woman.\textsuperscript{432} A man from Łódź who came to Warsaw was threatened at gunpoint to hand over the address of a wealthy Jew. He justified his action by saying: “all I had was the 200 złoty in my pocket—and it would have been terrible for me if the Germans took that.” Luckily, the Jewish merchant’s name he wrote on a slip of paper had already left Warsaw.\textsuperscript{433}

Dr. Edward Reicher recalled a sumptuous Sabbath feast he attended at the home of a Jewish barber who worked for a well-placed German official in the ghetto:

Leon [Kac] had a very large apartment. … The meal was exquisite—a feast such as we had not had for years: herring, sardines, hard-boiled eggs with mayonnaise, gefilte fish, consommé, chicken, vegetables, and a bottle of genuine Carmel, the wine from Palestine. The Sabbath candles shone in a silver candelabrum, a masterpiece of Venetian art. … After dinner came coffee and a cake washed down with a good cognac. …

The next day I returned to Leon and listened to his tale.

“You know yourself, as a physician, what happens when one works with people or takes care of them. At times one speaks of many things. I always chatted with my customers … The officers wanted me to give them the addresses of rich Jews. I gave them those addresses, and will continue to do so. The Jews are doomed in any case; they will all be deported. The fact that I betray their financial status means only that their apartments are searched more thoroughly. Since they’re going to be deported, I’m doing nothing wrong.

“Where they’re going, no wealth or jewelry can help them. The officers only search the apartments once the owners are deported. They take the best things, and leave the rest for the Office of Estimates. But I can do exactly what the officers do. They do it for their own personal gain. And the officers have so much work that I do it not only for myself but also for them.

\textsuperscript{432} Ibid., 92. 
\textsuperscript{433} Ibid., 92.
“Every day, I go out with the two Ukrainians assigned to me and load valuable things onto a rickshaw. The officers get wristwatches, gold cigarette cases, cuff links, and the pins studded with precious stones. Those are things they can easily hide and sell. They trust Leon the Jew. The rest I keep.”

Leon Kac amassed an art collection, but was eventually deported to Treblinka with his family.

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

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

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

Informers received ten percent of all loot collected by the Germans resulting from the information received, Emanuel Ringelblum said. The phenomenon was so widespread (400 informers were recorded in May 1942), that there was a ghetto joke that ran: “Two Jews happen to meet. One asks the other ‘How are you?’ The other one says: ‘Listen, one of us has to be an informer, so I’d better not tell you.’” Ringelblum also pointed out another widespread phenomenon: extortion on the part of Judenrat employees. Given his description, this was clearly commonplace. “The gall of bribe-takers among the Jewish community workers

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435 Ibid., 92.
has reached such heights that a post office clerk who knew of a family that had received many packages, came with his wife to the family, and demanded they sell him goods for cheap.\footnote{Levin, \textit{Walls Around}, 93.}

It was not only Poles who sometimes refused to return Jewish belongings temporarily lent them for safekeeping. In fact, the Jews had their own courts that dealt with such comparable Jew-on-Jew behaviour:

\begin{quote}
During the war, there have arisen specific kinds of wartime litigation. Immediately after the bombing, there was a massive number of lawsuits brought before rabbinic courts by people who had entrusted others with their belongings, clothing, merchandise, valuables, and money. Those who were given the belongings claimed that the items had been stolen or burnt and so forth. The owners refused to believe their claims.\footnote{Huberband, \textit{Kiddush Hashem}, 204.}
\end{quote}

Another damaging phenomenon noted by Chaim Kaplan in January 1941: Jews who refused to pay rent to their Jewish landlords, who then turned their tenants over to the authorities. He said cynically that “Warsaw’s residents don’t like paying debts, even when they truly owe them,” and that this was doubly the case when no legal threat hung over their heads. Landlords were in trouble; they asked for rent and no one paid. This could have been solved by legal means, but the process was long and complicated. The Germans, said Kaplan, taught us another way: bring in a \textit{Volksdeutsche} to explain the situation to the tenants, that if they did not pay—tomorrow they would be thrown into the streets. Landlords also figure in another unflattering context—trafficking in ration cards. Ringelblum tells of “bloodsucking” landlords and shop owners who took advantage of the fact that many poor people could not afford even the miniscule rations allowed to them. They would buy the sugar ration card from the poor and sell them for a nice profit.\footnote{Levin, \textit{Walls Around}, 97–98.}

There also developed a brisk trade in ration cards of deceased ghetto dwellers, which was facilitated by corrupt policemen. Given the food shortages in the ghetto, these cards could fetch considerable sums of money.\footnote{Testimony of Jerzy Mikołaczyk (Jerzy Warm), Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 6148.}

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

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

When I heard his proposal my eyes lit up. But I bargained with him. The refugee demanded 100 zloty; I offered 20. In the end he agreed to accept 20. Right away the delegation found an excuse to make light of the whole affair. They drafted a protocol that the apartment was full and their
\end{quote}
requisition nullified. Later on I found out that I need not have been so afraid. This is the way the delegation acts with all of its creatures. They hadn’t come to confiscate, but rather to receive 20 zloty. The “refugee” was hired for the occasion.\(^{441}\)

Wealthy Jews got out of labour duty by sending the poor and Jews who came from other ghettos in their place. The practice was sanctioned by the Jewish councils who took large payments in exchange.\(^{442}\) The plight of the poor and starving did not elicit considerable sympathy among ghetto dwellers:

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

When someone died of exhaustion on the streets, passers would cover the corpse with newspapers, lay some stones on it and life rolled on. Some laughed, others cried.\(^{443}\)

But a social differentiation arose in the ghetto, setting apart substantial groups who had the means even under those infernal conditions to lead a comparatively full, well-fed life and enjoy some kinds of pleasures. On the same streets where daily you could see scenes of horror, amid the swarms of tubercular children dying like flies, alongside the corpses waiting for the scavenger wagons, you would come upon stores full of fine foods, restaurants and cafés which served the most expensive dishes and drinks. At 2 Leshno [Leszno] Street, where the Gertner’s restaurant had been, there was a café called Sztuka, complete with floor show. There was another at 13 Tłomacka [Tłomackie] Street, once the Metropole Restaurant. These establishments were run in partnership with members of the Gestapo by outcast Jews, the most important of whom was the dancer Madame Machno. There were also the well-known Schultz Restaurant at Karmelitzka [Karmelicka] and Novolipya [Nowolipie] Streets, A La Fourchette at 18 Leshno Street, Britannia at 20 Novolipya Street. The clientele of these places consisted principally of Jewish Gestapo agents, Jewish police officials, rich merchants who did business with the Germans, smugglers, dealers in foreign exchange, and similar kinds of people. The worst nest of drunkenness and vice was the Britannia. The curfew did not apply to the habitués of this establishment. They made merry all night. Feasting, drinking, and carousing went on to the rhythm of a jazz band. At dawn, when the revelers left, the streets were already strewn with naked paper-covered corpses. The drunkards paid little attention, tripping unsteadily over the obstacles in their path. Around the restaurants and cafés hovered human shadows, swollen from hunger, who trailed after the well-fed drunks, begging for scraps; they were usually angrily pushed aside for disturbing the mirage of luxury and well-being.

The Nazi made moving pictures of such festive orgies to show the “world” how well the Jews lived in the ghetto.\(^{444}\)

\(^{441}\) Katsh, *Scroll of Agony*, 277–78.
\(^{442}\) Urbański, *Zagłada Żydów w Dystrykcie Radomskin*, 92.
Numerous accounts testify to robberies, thefts and extortion, often carried out by gangs that included prewar criminals, which were every-day occurrences in the ghetto. The street urchins who stole in broad daylight did not elicit much sympathy despite their dire predicament.

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

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

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

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

Also worthy of mention are the activities of the Jewish grave robbers, mentioned in the diary of Adam Czerniaków, the head of the Judenrat, already on January 4, 1940: “Yesterday for a second time [our] workers were beaten up at the Praga cemetery [by a gang] which was searching for diamonds.” Ringelblum also noted the same phenomenon several times in September 1941. The first time his record was dry: “Undertakers open graves, take out the jewels and gold teeth.” The second time his reaction was highly emotional: “Unspeakably baseless acts are happening at the cemetery. Mass graves [and] defilement of the dead by the lower orders, who throw them into the graves like dogs. That is not all. It turns out that they open graves at night, pull out gold teeth and steel the shrouds. Recently, there was a serious investigation of Jewish policemen participating in these acts. In one word: the lowest of the low.” In April 1942, author and social worker Rachel Auerbach wrote in her diary: “It turns out that a large percentage of items available today for trade come from looting dead bodies. Specialized companies, who make a living from this, strip the clothes from dead bodies lying in the street. By morning, the people are completely naked, covered at

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445 This phenomenon is described in Engelking and Grabowski, “Żydów łamiących prawo należy karać śmiercią!”, 78–105. The examples are mostly from Warsaw, but also mention Jewish gangs operating in Otwock and Działoszyce.
most by a sheet of paper, or a poster pulled off the wall." During the quelling of the ghetto uprising, Jewish “shabrovniks” (looters) descended on the bunkers destroyed by the Germans looking for food and valuables:

When the Germans had started to detect and destroy one by one the bunkers, the “shabrovniks” set up an intelligence network. They knew which bunkers were gassed, and each time this happened, “shabrovniks” from all over the ghetto converged on the place. They took food from the people still living, they trampled on dead and dying bodies, and fought each other over every scrap. There were among the “shabrovniks” those who did their work with a bitter feeling, knowing that tomorrow someone might trample on their still living bodies …

Not only food was the aim of the “shabrovniks”. In those days, when the most precious items had lost all value, the ghouls searched the pockets of the dead for jewels and currency. They removed rings and watches from the victims of the deadly gas, or even a good pair of shoes.

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

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

where the Jewish police earned the title ‘gangsters.’ … The Ordnungsdienst, together with [some] Polish police, took over entire buildings and demanded ransom money in lieu of searching for the people who were in hiding that night. They say one [apparently Jewish] policeman made 4,000 zloty that same night. They went up to people aged 40 and over, and demanded a pay-off. Clearly,

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448 Alpert, A Spark of Life, 32.
449 Levin, Walls Around, 98.
450 Tuvia Borzykowski, Between Tumbling Walls (Tel Aviv: Beit Lohamei Hagetaot/Ghetto Fighters’ House and Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1972), 79.
451 Ibid., 93.
the people who went with them were those unable to ransom themselves, people who had originally been released because they were sick or because they were sole wage-earners. Among those abducted was a father of seven children, the youngest of which was two weeks old. In particular, they searched through refugee shelters and took starving, suffering men.

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

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

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452 Ibid., 93–94.
453 Ibid., 94. A careful reading of Holocaust literature reveals a disturbing lack of solidarity and compassion among the Jews themselves. Many Jewish sources, as well as non-Jewish witnesses, comment extensively on the great chasm that separated the wealthy and poor inhabitants of the Warsaw ghetto, and eventually all of its residents. Władysław Szpilman described the stark contrast between the existence of the well-to-do and the poor in the ghetto. Large crowds of beggars would converge on restaurants and cafés begging for food only to find themselves chased away by porters with sticks, as at the Nowoczesna. Wealthy passengers riding in rickshaws would also chase beggars away with canes. See Władysław Szpilman, Śmierć miasta (Warszawa: Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza Wiedza, 1946), 71–72, as cited in Engelking and Leociak, Getto warszawskie. First edition, 564. The memoirs of Władysław Szpilman were translated into English as The Pianist: The Extraordinary Story of One Man’s Survival in Warsaw, 1939–45 (London: Victor Gollancz, 1999); large portions of the 1946 Polish edition, which is significantly different, is cited in Iranek-Osmecki, He Who Saves One Life, 41–42. See also: Makower, Pamiątnik z getta warszawskiego, 207, where the author speaks of the “complete breakdown of Jewish society”; Lewin, A Cup of Tears, 127, which describes the enormous disparities in the main midday meal; Acher, Niewłaściwa twarz, 48, which describes daily street robberies and the lack of sharing with the more unfortunate. In his diary, Chaim Kaplan notes that widespread tax evasion by the well-off residents of the ghetto seriously exacerbated starvation among the ghetto poor. See Katsch, Scroll of Agony, 262. One of of the most poignant contrasts in the Warsaw ghetto was penned by Shimon Huberband (cited in Levin, Walls Around, 127–28):

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

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

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

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

Moreover, these nightclubs even host dance contests, like the good old days, where Jewish women and girls, Jewish men, dance in these competitions and even win prizes … And so, the myth of the “united, merciful Jewry” had been destroyed. There is no more to say.
some policemen who stationed themselves at Sienna and Śliska Streets and “made money from adjusting the clock. At 15 or 20 minutes to 9:00 p.m. [when curfew began], they would stop passers-by, claiming that it was already past none o’clock. In return for 10 or 20 zloty, a ring or something else, [the victim] was set free.” According to another diary from Warsaw, in July 1942:

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

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

Alceo Valcini, wartime Warsaw correspondent of the Milan Corriere della Sera, specifically comments on the lack of a sense of solidarity among the ghetto dwellers in their common misfortune. See Valcini, Golgota Warszawy, 233–34. A similar state of affairs prevailed in other ghettos which were plagued by corruption, thievery (especially of food supplies), and black-marketeering (stolen goods were sold at exorbitant prices). Ties with the Gestapo greatly facilitated the success of these ventures. This assumed massive proportions in Łódź, the second largest ghetto in German-occupied Poland, and impacted adversely on the survival of lowly Jews with no connections. The wealthy hid away their belongings; milk destined for children was watered down; the sick were deprived of their food ration cards; people were known to kill off family members to get their ration cards. See Icchak (Henryk) Rubin, Żydzi w Łodzi pod niemiecką okupacją 1939–1945 (London: Kontra, 1988), 236, 243–47, 318, 319–23. Leon Kahn, whose family took refuge in the well-fed ghetto of Grodno in October 1942 after the annihilation of his shtetl, recalled that the Grodno Jews “were cold and inhospitable, and never even offered us a place to sleep, though many had extra room.” After the synagogue service one Friday evening, the shames announced that “there were strangers in the midst of the congregation who were homeless and had lost all their possessions. Would someone take these unfortunates home to share the Sabbath meal with them?” Kahn recalled their reaction: “We went to stand by the door so the congregation could see us easily as they filed out. Family by family left, carefully avoiding our eyes until at last our little group stood there alone.” See Kahn, No Time To Mourn, 94–96. In Goniądz, “The Jewish population … consisted of three classes. The first were the rich who were merchants before the War and also of manufacturers of such items as goods and shoes. They didn’t have to work for a living. Most of them had hidden their goods in bunkers or among peasants they knew in the villages. From time-to-time, they would sell off a bit of goods, which were high-priced then, and buy food and other necessities. They could have existed like this for years.” See Tuviah Ivri (Yevraiski), “The Destruction of Goniądz,” Part 14, in J. Ben-Meir (Treshansky) and A.L. Fayans, eds., Our Hometown Goniądz (Tel Aviv: The Committee of Goniądz Association in U.S.A. and in Israel, 1960), Internet: <www.jewish.gen.org/yizkor/goniadz/>. Just as some Poles did, Jews who procured or manufactured forged documents generally did so for a handsome, sometimes enormous, profit. See, for example, Edward Stankiewicz, My War: Memoir of a Young Jewish Poet (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 59; Testimony of Stefan Ehrlich in Jan Czekajewski, Musings of a Rebellious Emigrant (Columbus, Ohio: MJW Graphics, 2012), 303; Grabowski, “Ja tego Żyda znam!”, 101, 102. One resident of the Warsaw ghetto writes: “Prices of those very documents were considerably higher in the ghetto because of the large number of Jewish go-betweens who profiteered on this business. See Cyprys, A Jump For Life, 114. People who provided valuable services in the ghetto also often gouged their clients. Dr. Edward Reicher recalled that he had to pay dearly to have his wife’s hair dyed blond in anticipation of their escape from the Warsaw ghetto. Even though the job was mediocre, the coiffeur’s “price made my head spin: twenty times what a doctor would charge for a visit in the ghetto.” See Reicher, Country of Ash, 96. Jews sold their belongings to Jewish middlemen in the ghetto who re-sold them outside the ghetto for a profit. See, for example, the testimony of Stefan Ehrlich in Czekajewski, Musings of a Rebellious Emigrant, 301. Jewish policemen in Łwów demanded exorbitant sums of money for shelters during the liquidation of the ghetto, and those who hid there did not welcome Jews who could not afford to pay. See Czakajewski, Musings of a Rebellious Emigrant, 301

Cited in Levin, Walls Around, 94.

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

During the spring and summer of 1941, these units became the new scourge of the ghetto. The ‘disinfectors’ would appear at a given street, seal off a building with police help, then go from apartment to apartment, forcing the people out and marching them under guard to the disinfecting bath. While the inhabitants were away, the disinfectors or the police, or both, would rob the dwellings while disinfecting them. The deloused inhabitants would come back from the ‘bath’ stinking of one kind of disinfectant, to apartments stinking of another and robbed of most of their belongings. The people feared the police and the disinfectors more than the plagues of typhus or typhoid themselves. And there was no authority to which they could turn. The targets of the disinfectors were mostly larger buildings, where there were many tenants and more to steal.456

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

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

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

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

In my courtyard the following incident once took place: A disinfection was announced and the disinfectors came with their paraphernalia, not to disinfect but to haggle over the size of the bribe. For a full hour they stood on their price. During that time the bargaining would stop and start periodically, not secretly but publicly. In the presence of all the residents of the courtyard, the disinfectors negotiated their deal. Finally they agreed on 400 złoty [złoty]. Every apartment that was supposed to have been disinfected paid its share. Once the money was handed over the courtyard was out of danger, as far as sanitation was concerned, since the health department would receive a duly signed report that everything had been carried out according to plan.457

456 Landau, *Caged*, 78.
The post office employs several people, and the Jewish building agents have returned to their jobs and scared all the tenants. The jokesters have made up a new prayer: “Let us fall into the hands of Gentile agents, only let us not fall into the hands of a Jewish agent!”

As historian Gabriel Finder points out,

The prevailing opinion in the Warsaw ghetto of the Judenrat and its chairman, Czerniaków, was negative. The Judenrat’s onerous and unfair tax policy, of which the poor bore the brunt, its conscription of overwhelmingly poor residents into forced labor contingents, and its tolerance of corruption within the ranks of the Jewish Order Service (Służba Porządkowa), the Jewish police force in the ghetto, which operated under its auspices, all elicited antipathy in the ghetto.

Conditions outside Warsaw were no better. Denunciations and counter-denunciations flowed freely and resulted in brutal retaliations by the Germans. Twenty-four Jews were hung in the central square of Mława, with many more being shipped to Auschwitz. The extent of retaliations against Poles who engaged in illegal trade with the Jews, and were also denounced, is not known.

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

The Gestapo reacted swiftly. Several prominent Mława Jews were interrogated. Forty-year-old Menachem Davidson, chief of the “Jewish police,” had to answer for the “appalling lack of security in the ghetto.” But Perelmutter was himself arrested, and killed in prison sometime in January 1942. Worse, the Gestapo learned that the Jews were still able to communicate with the outside, in particular buying provisions. Dallüge, the Gestapo official responsible for the investigation, noted, “all these things demonstrate that, despite the [closing of the ghetto] the Jews continue to corrupt Germans through illegal exchange.” Dallüge requested permission to conduct a punitive action …

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458 Katsh, Scroll of Agony, 231.
Needless to say, the Berlin head office readily authorized a *Sonderaktion* against the Mława Jews. In mid-January 1942 several dozen were arrested, to be killed in a subsequent mass execution.\(^{461}\)

The Mława [Mlawa] ghetto was well organized. There was food and clothing. The “Judenrat” was the contact between the ghetto and the outside world and was also responsible for supplying the needs of the ghetto population. …

The Germans could have starved the ghetto. They asked for volunteers to join the police force. People joined in the hope of saving themselves. There were some who thought it might be a good way to help all the others.

… The “Judenrat” received an order to deliver 100 people to the Germans. They chose 50 young people and 50 old ones. The old people dug the pit and the young ones were shot. I wanted to run away but it was impossible. Still I decided to try, as there was nothing to lose. The moment the German guard turned his back in the yard, I ran. There were bars on the windows and Jewish ghetto guards. … A policeman named Purman who now lives in Israel was on guard. He was married to the daughter of my uncle’s brother. He saw me attempting to escape and looked the other way. Jewish policemen searched for me later, particularly Haskel Alter, who used to live in Israel. I hid until the end of the “action”. …

There was a transport that they brought in from Ciechanow [Ciechanów]. … From there they were sent to Treblinka. A total of five transports left the ghetto. Eliezer Perlmutter was the liaison between the Jews and the Germans. …

Guttman cooperated with the Germans and gossip had it that he had abandoned his own wife. … Guttman was unemployed most of the time, and his wife supported the family by making hats. He was a butcher by trade but did not own a butcher shop. In the ghetto they lived well. Guttman was feared almost like the Gestapo. After his son was hanged, he became a monster, even delivering his wife into the hands of the Germans. He had another son and daughter who were later deported to extermination camps. His son ran the only cafeteria in the ghetto. Guttman knew he would not be able to save his son, and the moment he knew that his son’s time was up he no longer cared for anything.\(^{462}\)

At that time, the head of the Jewish police in the Mława [Mlawa] Ghetto was Shalom Gutman. He was known as “the informer”, and his treachery was known to all. Anyone who was concerned about their life would flee when they saw this man of iniquity.

Shalom Gutman found out that my mother and sister had snuck into the ghetto, and he informed the German police about this. The police along with Shalom Gutman came to search for them in our house. When they found them, they brought them to the police yard, and all trace of them was lost. As far as I know, they were shot to death there.\(^{463}\)

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

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

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

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

Shlomik Leszman, the owner of several houses of ill repute in Brazil who was forced to return to Poland because of his various misdeeds, worked with Gestapo confidante Moshke. Their job was to uncover where Jews were hiding their valuables, and then deliver these confiscated valuables to the Germans after taking their cut. Moshke, in turn, worked with Kowalski, the Polish chief of the Miechów secret police. Moshke identified the secret hiding places, of the Jewish valuables in Działoszyce, and relayed them to Kowalski, who arranged for the hiding places to be torn open and the wealth confiscated. Moshke then bought the valuables from Kowalski for a fraction of its value.

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

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

There was Moshke with his jaundiced thoughts, one of three or four informers from our town who denounced people to the Nazis and who exposed anyone who did things forbidden by German decree. Moshke must have been paid or received some benefit for his treachery. Unfortunately, we

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466 Chaim Yitzchok Wolgelernter, *The Unfinished Diary: A Chronicle of Tears* (Lakewood, New Jersey: Israel Bookshop Publications, 2015), 148, 177–78. Moshe appears to be Mosze Frydrych, one of the Jews from Działoszyce who pointed out to the Germans wealthy Jews for a cut of the victims’ confiscated property. Since he became a liability, Frydrych was eventually eliminated. See Rączy, *Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim w latach 1939–1945*, 227.
were not careful enough to keep all our secrets because we could not imagine anything as disgraceful as Jewish collaborators.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Informers also guided Nazis to our house to search for hidden valuables. I was at home, sick, when Nazis led by the Stadtkommandant (city commander) barged in and violently opened the book closets and searched between the pages of our holy books for paper currency. These
antisemites hated Jewish books in the process threw the books to the floor. ... Our house was searched from the attic to the basement, but the Nazis found nothing.\footnote{Tenenbaum, \textit{Legacy and Redemption}, 93–96.}

When some Jews from Pińczów arrived in Działoszyce to avoid deportation to Treblinka,

the family hid in a crawlspace at the house of a cousin who himself had lost his wife and children at camp Plaszow [Płaszów]. It was not long until someone informed on them. The Jewish police forced David’s family out of their hiding place and beat them. David recalls that the Jewish police “were ugly, as ugly as anyone else.” … David particularly remembers one Jewish policeman named Bialobroda [Białobroda], who wore black boots and often walked through the town with an SS officer and his German shepherd.\footnote{Yehudi Lindeman, ed., \textit{Shards of Memory: Narratives of Holocaust Survival} (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 2007), 133.}

… the Germans had surrounded Działoszyce [Działoszyce] to deport all of the Jews. While David and his family hid in their apartment, a Jewish woman came and asked them, “You have money, don’t you?” After agreeing on a price, the woman led them through the sewage system to the outskirts of the town where her husband stood waiting for them with a horse and wagon. … the Jewish woman and her husband, a cattle dealer, had conspired with some farmers to kill rich Jews and take their money. … David’s family made a deal to pay the couple in return for sparing their lives, even as they realized that the couple would now start looking for another Jewish family to kill.\footnote{Lindeman, \textit{Shards of Memory}, 134.}

In his memoir, another Jew from Działoszyce described the activities of the Chairman of the Słomniki Judenrat, Bialabrode [Białobroda], who regularly fraternized with the Nazi Bayerlein, the newly-appointed chief of the Security Service in nearby Miechów SD. The Nazis gave Bialabrode an automobile for his use. The author adds that, “He [Bialabrode] carried a leather whip with him all the time and struck innocent Jews no differently from a Gestapo agent. … During the deportations in the Miechow district, Bialabrode was granted an extraordinary level of authority by Bayerlein.”\footnote{Wolgelernter, \textit{The Unfinished Diary}, 160, 161.}

The author described the infamous Jewish police, the as follows:

Its men pandered to their German masters and distinguished themselves by implementing every decree and ordinance with the sort of cruelty exhibited by newly trained Gestapo officers. Indeed, during the Działoszyce [Działoszyce] expulsion raid, they did not sit with folded hands. If ever there will arise a Jewish historian who will record the events of these days, his face will turn red with shame when he reaches the disgraceful chapter of the \textit{Ordnungsdienst}.\footnote{Wolgelernter, \textit{The Unfinished Diary}, 459.}
The tendency of the Judenrat to try to ransom the Jews was predicated on their authority to collect money from the community, and this had untoward consequences: “On more than one occasion, the Judenrat took advantage of an opportunity to help the town by extorting money for their own purposes.”

The above events, or the role of the Jewish police in the liquidation of the ghetto, are not mentioned in the Dzialoszyce Memmorial Book, with the exception of one testimony:

In 1940 … The Germans conducted searches in merchants’ shops and took away wagons full of goods. … There were also many Jews who bought the goods that had been taken from the merchants. Everyone’s life was in danger, but they did not realize it.

In 1941, the situation became much worse. Every morning, upon arising, we heard bad news. On a certain day, the Germans killed four butchers. They caught them slaughtering a calf. On the following day, they shot two Jews—Hilel Skopicki, z”l, and Szulim Aszer Zelikowicz, z”l, who had had business dealings with the commissar in charge of Jewish property.

It also happened that some Jews were afraid to keep their goods in their own possession and thus passed them over to others. The informers had their work cut out for them, and the Germans immediately performed searches. Afterward, a commando group from Kazimierz came and began to search private houses. One time they searched the house of our rabbi, Reb Eliezer Epsztajn, zts”l [of blessed righteous memory], and found a bag of silver. They forced the rabbi to walk to the market square with the bag on his back and stand there all day, until the community was able to get him released from his punishment. Thus they humiliated everyone. Each day brought new problems.

Characteristically, Moshe Bejski, who is consumed with railing against Poles, conceals the involvement of Jewish informants in Dzialoszyce:

Every Monday and Thursday, thorough searches were conducted for merchandise that was restricted, and the fact was that the gendarmerie would sooner or later find each and every hiding place and take out everything if value and confiscate it. So they found many goods belonging to various merchants, among them Ikek Majer Waga, Alter Spokoyny, Dula, Gałązka, Szulimowicz, Płatkiewicz, and others. Most of the time these discoveries were accompanied by jail time, fines, and, in some instances, even by a worse fate.

The following testimony is from Kolbuszowa:

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

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473 Wolgelernter, The Unfinished Diary, 463.
475 Busgang, Działoszyce Memorial Book, 217.
Naturally the Germans were willing to listen to him, interested in whatever information he might have to pass on. And when we saw him speaking to German police and going in and out of military headquarters, we understood that he enjoyed a privileged position. Naturally he was not shy about playing it to his advantage. He would look the other way, he said, when Jews violated German instructions—for a price. When, for example, the ritual slaughterers in defiance of orders continued to provide kosher meat to Jews in town, they had first to satisfy this man’s demands for fear he would report their activities to the authorities.

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

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

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

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

The success enjoyed by all three informers was fortunately cut short when they overstepped boundaries and their bribe-taking and bribe-giving was uncovered by the Gestapo. … Each of the three was at some point caught in a compromising position. Their past services to the Germans counted for little, could not save them from being executed. Their deaths freed us from a form of terror we had come to despise; but with all the other horrors about, their elimination brought no dramatic change in our condition.476

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In the town of Łask near Zduńska Wola, after hearing from some Jewish informers that Rabbi Eisenberg had hidden a horde of valuables, including silver artifacts from the synagogue, the Germans summoned him and demanded he reveal the hiding place, beating him cruelly. Another report states:

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

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

In Chrzanów, Jews accompanied and assisted German soldiers in removing goods from the few Polish commercial establishments in that town in September 1939. A Jew in Rzeszów was easily duped into believing that the German invaders were potential benefactors. According to one Jew witness:

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

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

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

Crossing from the German side [near Przemyśl] was nerve-wracking because gimlet-eyed soldiers scrutinised every traveller, searching for Jews who might be travelling without armbands or carrying money or valuables. Any pretext was sufficient to beat, arrest or shoot. … A small group of Jews just ahead of her were taking a long time to go through. The guards were examining

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478 Z. Tzurnamal, ed., Łask: sefer zikaron (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Residents of Łask in Israel, 1968), 27.
480 Account of Roman Wawrzonek, dated February 2002 (submitted to Poland’s Institute of National Remembrance).
documents and shaking their heads, finally they motioned for them to step aside. … Just as my mother stepped resolutely towards the sentry, a voice shouted ‘Jude! Jude!’ It was the man who’d been stopped from crossing; he must have realised that she was Jewish and was trying to stop her out of spite.\footnote{Armstrong, \textit{Mosaic}, 216.}

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

The members and staff of the Judenrat, too, were among the privileged; they were provided with higher bread rations and other necessities. And above all were the Jewish policemen, around a hundred young men, who became the real rulers in the ghetto. They robbed the single smugglers of their products, took bribes from the organized smuggling gangs, and allowed the rich to buy themselves out from being sent away to work camps. Instead, they dragged the young men from the poor homes and families, often beating them mercilessly with the rubber batos they wielded. …

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

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

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

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

\footnote{Armstrong, \textit{Mosaic}, 216.}

\footnote{(Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Rzeszow in Israel and the USA, 1967), 322ff.}
Now that the Germans demanded another four hundred men to be sent away, nobody was willing to go. The streets of the main ghetto became empty; young and middle-aged men hid wherever they could. Soon [Bernard] Kronenberg, [the head of the ghetto police], with his ghetto policemen, went into action. They broke into houses by day and night, dragging and beating the men and leading them to a wired enclosure beside the ghetto police station. Outside the station, mothers, wives and children gathered, refusing to leave their dear ones. Their cries and pleadings did not move the policemen, most of them relatives and former friends of the interned. The policemen moved briskly, clicking with their leather boots, giving out orders and cracking jokes.

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

Suddenly several trucks with Ukrainian militia-men entered the ghetto … As they moved, roaring and shouting, rifle shots were heard and cries of the dying and wounded pierced the air. People panicked and ran for shelter into the houses, stores and courtyards. The Ukrainian detachments reached the Judenrat and the ghetto police station. Right away they cordoned off the assembled Jews and led them to the square behind the railway ramp, which had been fenced in with barbed wire some time ago. Groups of Ukrainian soldiers, accompanied by Jewish policemen, began to move into the ghetto streets and lanes, driving out the people from their homes and hiding places. Many of the people came out by themselves, scared and dumbfounded by the shrieking Ukrainians and the whistling ghetto policemen. Although obeyed the orders and marched silently to the gathering place, the soldiers continued to beat mercilessly whomever they could reach with their rifle butts. From time to time they began shooting straight into the crowd.  

When Jankiel Cieszyński briefly returned to the ghetto in Otwock during its liquidation that began on August 19–20, 1942, to search for his mother, he encountered two Jewish policemen who caught him and wanted to take him to the German gendarme. The boy insisted that he was not Jewish and managed to free himself and run away to the Aryan side.

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

> Because the Jews had transferred to the ghetto a store of supplies looted from Soviet warehouses, most avoided starvation. However, after the Jewish Police reported the whereabouts of these

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484 Joanna Beata Michlic, “The Aftermath and After: Memories of Child Survivors of the Holocaust,” in Sara R. Horowitz, ed., *Lessons and Legacies X: Back to the Sources: Reexamining Perpetrators, Victims, and Bystanders* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2012), 162, 164. While in the Jewish children’s home in Otwock after the war, Cieszyński recognized one of the former Jewish policemen dressed in the uniform of a Polish soldier. Cieszyński denounced him to the authorities, but there is no information as to what, if any, action was taken against him.
supplies to German authorities, conscripted laborers working outside the ghetto were forced to forage for plants and to barter material possessions for food with the local population. Ghetto informers eroded community solidarity. The Jewish Police operated independently, blackmailing and robbing fellow inmates, in spite of the Jewish Council’s efforts to restrain them.

Some 24 Jews were executed for attempting to escape from the ghetto or for being found illicitly outside its gates. At least 6 others, including 2 Jewish policemen, were executed, based on a denunciation from inside the ghetto.485

Jewish policemen, however, all non-locals, reported on and turned in Jews … Jewish policemen took the Nazis to the hiding places of foodgoods, which had been taken from the abandoned Soviet storehouses and hidden in the ghetto. The goods were confiscated, and the Jews in whose houses they were found, were beaten.486

Jews who tried to survive by trading with Poles outside the ghetto were denounced or thwarted by fellow Jews who were envious of their exploits. Irene Budkowski (then Elster) recalled her experiences in helping her father, who ran a butcher shop in Sokołów Podlaski, by delivering meat to customers outside the ghetto.

“My parents used to send me out and take orders [for meat] from the Polish people,” Irene told us. Then my father would make up the orders. And early in the morning, someone would pull out one board from the [ghetto] gate and push me through [to make deliveries]. The policeman was paid off. But some of the Jewish people in the ghetto were wondering how we were making a living. So they watched and they caught me. They took away my money and started fighting with my Dad, who was such a nice, quiet man. And then I couldn’t go any more to do business. So it got very bad in the ghetto.”487

In a number of localities in Eastern Poland that were previously under Soviet occupation, Jews were denounced as Communists by fellow Jews and were executed by the Germans. A journalist from Kaunas by the name of Caspi-Srebrovitch, a member of the Revisionist Party, was given permission by the Germans to live outside the ghetto and is believed to have identified more than 300 young Communists in Kaunas and Wilno.488 A young Jewish woman, a former komsomol member who returned to the Wilno ghetto in early 1942, was cautioned by her father: “A lot of people think you are in Russia. … Let’s hope that no one

487 Tammeus and Cukierkorn, They Were Just People, 55.
informs on you. So many people have already been lost.” Jews who ventured outside the ghetto could also find themselves betrayed:

Many Jews, at the risk of their lives, tried to recover the things they had left with the Aryans. … Jews on occasion did help the Germans catch those among us who had illegally left the ghetto to recover their belongings. (I later found out, for example, that Sara Zawadzka one of my fellow students at school, was involved in this.)

“Irka and her family were killed. They escaped from the peat works to Lida. They got fake documents saying they were ‘Volksdeutsche.’ Their last name ‘Folkman’ fitted in with that, and so did their first names. They worked there, made a good living, and were open about it. Other Jews informed on them—out of envy. … When they came to get them, Arturek, Irka’s little brother, wasn’t home. When he found out that they had carted off his family members, Irka, and her boyfriend Julek, he went to the Gestapo himself. They shot them all.”

A Jewish policeman by the name of Szmukler who ventured outside the ghetto was apprehended by the Lithuanian police and under torture betrayed the hideout of some 120 Jews in the evacuated ghetto.

Throughout occupied Poland, the Germans secured the assistance the Jewish councils and informants to provide the names of Jews suspected of being Communists or who were politically active. Hundreds, if not thousands, of Jews so identified were then executed in the Kommunistenaktion in the early part of 1942 in Tarnów, Jasło, Gorlice, Rzeszów, Dąbrowa Tarnowska, Radom, Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, and many other towns.

… in the first half of 1942, the terror of the Gestapo also intensified. In February 1942, the Security Police shot about 50 Jews in Jasło who had been allowed to return from Eastern Galicia in the fall of 1941. A similar Aktion was conducted in Tarnów a few weeks later. These people were deemed suspect as they had lived under Soviet rule. In the spring of 1942, the Security Police also seized and killed prominent Jewish social and political activists in a number of ghettos in Distrikt Krakau [Kraków], especially any Jews known to be Communists, Socialists, or Zionists. For example, the head of the Gestapo in Nowy Sącz, SS-Obersturmführer Heinrich Hamann, received orders from the Commanding Officer of the Security Police and the SD (KdS) in Kraków to arrest and shoot all Jews in the Kreis known to be Communists or to sympathize with them. In response, Hamann obtained an old membership list for the Poalei Zion (left-wing Zionist) movement and ordered that all those on the list be arrested with the assistance of the Jewish Councils and the Jewish Police. … Similar “anti-Communist” Aktions took place, for example, in Rzeszów and Dąbrowa Tarnowska. The goal was to terrorize Jews and forestall efforts at resistance just prior to the deportations.
The largest such Aktion [in Radom] took place on April 27–28, 1942, under the direction of SS-Hauptsturmführer Paul Fuchs of the Radom Gestapo. This was part of a centrally coordinated wave of arrests against alleged Jewish Communists and members of the intelligentsia throughout Distrikt Radom. In the city, 70 Jews were arrested, and another 100 were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp …

On the night of April 27–28, 1942, members of the Gestapo and the Schupo … entered the Jewish quarter [in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski] and arrested 68 people according to a list provided by the Judenrat, which was supposed to represent the members of the local leftist parties. Although the Aktion was dubbed a “Kommunistensktion,” among those arrested were also members of the town’s intelligentsia, who had not been targeted at the start of the occupation. Some 36 of the arrested Jews were sent to Auschwitz concentration camp; and 32 were shot on the spot.

Jewish informants could turn on both Jews and non-Jews. In Buczacz, a Czech Jew by the name of Dr. Bronfeld, who was appointed to head the Judenrat, is believed to have supplied the Germans with the list of intellectuals, among them Poles and Ukrainians, who were murdered in August 1941. During the liquidation of the ghetto, the Germans and Ukrainians, with the aid of the Jewish police, drove out, brutalized, and murdered the Jewish victims: “The Jewish scoundrels did not lag behind the murderers. They pounced on the Jewish hiding places, on Jews hiding in the forests and stripped them naked.”

During the liquidation of the Buczacz ghetto some Jews, among them a certain Landes, took up the German offer of finding Jews hidden in bunkers in exchange for their lives. Hundreds of Jews were betrayed, but the Germans did not spare the turncoats and shot them too. Fearful of being executed by the Germans in a collective act of punishment, a young Jew in Jeziornica near Słonim falsely fingered an older Jew, thereby sparing his own life. A group of seven wounded Jews who escaped from an Aktion and took shelter in a Jewish hospital in Słonim were betrayed by a Jewish doctor, after the Germans threatened to burn down the hospital. The victims were driven to the Jewish cemetery and shot.

In time, cooperation with the Germans became organized and entrenched through the creation of Jewish councils and the Jewish police forces which were established in every ghetto. The Jewish councils were called on, among other things, to compile detailed lists of the ghetto dwellers, which were then used by the German authorities to supply Jews for labour duties as well as for deportations. The Jewish police also ensured that Jews did not leave the ghetto and engage in smuggling, and were used to round up Jews for

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(Tomaszów Mazowiecki), 497 (Dąbrowa Tarnowska), 509 (Gorlice), 511 (Grybów), 514 (Jasło), 539 (Limanowa), 544–45 (Nowy Sącz), 568 (Rzeszów), 585 (Tarnów).
497 Testimony of Emanuel Kriegel, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 303, number 196.
498 Żbikowski, Archiwum Ringelbluma, 355.
499 Testimony of Mordechaj Jonisz, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 141.
various tasks and, ultimately, for deportation to the death camps. German orders were, for the most part, dutifully complied with and greatly facilitated the destruction of the Jews.

In Biłgoraj, in early 1942, the German authorities instructed the Jewish council to prepare a list of 1,000 Jews, ostensibly for deportation to a labour camp in the Ukraine. The Jews were later assembled at the town square and taken to the train station in Zwierzyniec, where they were forced onto rail cars and sent to be gassed at the extermination facility in Belżec.500 Similarly, in Szczebrzeszyn, in early August 1942, the Jewish council submitted a list of 2,000 people for deportation supposedly to the Ukraine. The Jewish police subsequently assisted German forces in arresting the Jews on the list and imprisoning them.501 When the German authorities ordered the recruitment of 50 Jews from Młynów, Volhynia, for construction work in Równe, Ukrainian and Jewish police went from house to house looking for men, using a list drawn up with the help of the Judenrat. In place of those who had fled, the police took whomever they could find. The Germans murdered all the men once they had finished their work.502 When Ghetto I was being liquidated in Grodno in November 1942, the Jewish council members drew up deportation lists and read out sentencing orders at the public executions. Fearing the personal repercussions of not fulfilling the deportation quota, the Jewish police extricated people from hiding and seized off the streets many of the “useful artisans” and their families, given dispensations from the deportation.503

In Raków near Staszów,

In the summer of 1942, the Gendarmerie arrived suddenly in Raków to arrest young Jews for forced labor … Raków’s youth immediately went into hiding to avoid deportation. Gendarmes, assisted by the Jewish Police under the command of Chairman Zielony, prodded with bayonets the walls and floors of Jewish houses, dragging out all who had hidden. They caught between 30 and 40 young Jews. They locked the up in the synagogue for the night, then loaded them on trucks that headed for Skarżysko the next morning.504

The liquidation of the ghetto in Pińczów was carried out on October 4, 1942, by the SS and German Gendarmes, assisted by the Jewish police. On the following two days, the Jewish police assisted the Germans in searching the empty houses in the ghetto for escapees and goods. Jews who were discovered were shot on the spot.505

Corruption also set in. The Jewish council extorted valuables from the Jews in Sochaczew, supposedly to bribe the German authorities, but much ended up in their own pockets.506 The Jewish police in Sokołów Podlaski established a jail, mainly to incarcerate those who did not pay dues demanded by the Jewish

In Zawichost near Opatów, as in most ghettos, the better-off Jews could avoid labour service by paying money to the Judenrat. Refugees from other towns claimed that only a small fraction of the aid from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in Kraków reached the intended recipients in Zawichost. Because local Jews were convinced only the employed would survive another deportation in Dęblin-Irena, they filled the best available jobs, leaving 200 deportees from Slovakia positions as unpaid municipal conscripts. A popular rebellion took place in the Radomsko ghetto because the Jewish council enlisted only the poor and refugees for the labour conscription. A crowd of Jewish labourers burst into the Judenrat’s headquarters, demolishing the offices and driving out its members. The Judenrat called for the Gestapo’s help, resulting in a three-day pogrom and looting of the ghetto. When thousands of Jewish refugees from Vienna began to arrive in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, the Judenrat confiscated their belongings and sent them to the nearby villages where they were taken in by Poles who provided them with accommodation and food. In the spring of 1942, the Jewish council in Sokółw Podlaski cut supplemental bread rations to 200 grams (7 ounces) and opened a special store only for the council employees. As a result, conscripts assigned to the Szczeglacin labour camp refused to assemble. The Jewish police went from house to house, beating those participating in the protests. A testimony from Głowno near Łowicz preserved in the Ringelblum Archive noted: “The Judenrat was hated by the Jewish population.” Reports from the ghetto in Urzędów near Kraśnik, where there were ten Jewish policemen, are equally damning. A man called Haftke, who was in charge of the Jewish Labour Office in the ghetto in Koźminek, was notorious for his cruelty to his fellow Jews and assisted the Germans to select those who would be sent away. The Jewish Council and Jewish police in Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki near Warsaw were typical of many:

Every day the Jewish police broke into Jewish homes, rushed in and forcefully grabbed people for work, because the Judenrat had to provide 350 workers daily. One spring day in the year 1942, when there were only 300 people provided, and they came late, two rows of soldiers lined up at the gate of the ghetto showered us with beatings and screamed: “We'll show you how to be late for work!” Blood ran that day, and the Wehrmacht ran to find another 50 workers. Soon I saw how these were brought out, beaten, looking non-human. They were chased across the barbed wire and the blood ran from their bare feet. Many fell faint, and then many of them were thrown into a cell. By noon it was already known that they would be executed. …

514 “Urzędów,” Virtual Shtetl, Internet: <http://www.sztetl.org.pl/en/article/urzedow/5,history/>. The police force was headed by a Jew from Kraśnik. His deputy, Manasi Szejnbrum, was absolutely merciless towards his compatriots.
One day, after we had gone to work, we did not receive our quarter of a bread ration. We were told that the Judenrat did not receive their rations of bread from the German government, but we all knew that was a lie. What happened was that the Judenrat staff was selling flour and was becoming rich from that. We went out to work in a mood of despair—even that quarter of a bread was taken away from us.

When we explained to our supervisor, a Folksdeutsch [Volksdeutsch], why we were weaker than usual, that they didn’t even give us that quarter of a bread that day, he went over to the mayor Wendt. We heard that after hearing this, Wendt immediately summoned the senior [ghetto foreman] Yisroel Tishler and the worker supplier Nakhman Rajkhan [Rajkhman] and he beat them mercilessly. They bribed him with a new suit, a pair of officer’s boots, and a sealskin coat. All of this was related to us by the people in the ghetto who had come to us to find out what had happened with the bread and with the complaints to the supervisor.

We already understood that we wouldn’t get away with this and that they would get back at us, and that’s exactly how it was. At five in the evening, the time we usually returned to the ghetto, the chief of police, Yankel Baranek, was already waiting for us at the gate, and along with him was his devoted assistant Shloime Sosinski (Morde) and a whole band of policemen. They took us immediately to the Judenrat where each of us was interrogated individually, sentenced, and then we had to sign the papers. The entire process was in accordance with the rules of the Gestapo. The secretary Abramowicz wrote an official report.

I was the last one to be interrogated. They asked me who told the mayor about the bread, and I answered that I did not know. They began assaulting me with questions from all sides, but my answer remained the same: I did not know. Soon the real chief of police, Baranek, began attacking me. He led me into a separate “police room,” and began shouting at me hysterically: “What are you thinking, that you’ll be able to conduct your Poalei Zionist tricks here like your brother Menashe?” (My deceased brother was once the head of the Poalei Zion in Nowy Dwor [Dwór].) All the policemen began beating me until I collapsed in a faint. They revived me with buckets of water. I was completely beaten and bloody, and two policemen dragged me out of there because I couldn’t walk on my own. They dragged me into the attic where the police arrest happened and then they threw me down like a sack of potatoes.

When I revived, I saw that I was not alone. A boy from Wysogrod [Wyszogród] also lay there, beaten up. They arrested him because he missed a day of work. The following day, they sent the Wysogrod boy to another labor camp near Mława [Mława]. This time, my fate was better, since my family pleaded on my behalf and I was able to remain in the ghetto.

After the event with the bread, the Judenrat warned the Jews in the ghetto that “those who will talk too much”—meaning those who will give details about the activities of the Judenrat—will get their due punishment. And the Jews were afraid.516

The following are descriptions from Opoczno:

Mordechai Rosenbaum, the [Jewish Council] chairman’s deputy, became a Jewish informant ... He later interceded on behalf of arrested relatives but kept from himself a share of the bribes intended for the Germans.517

In the middle of April 1942, the Opoczno police chief demanded from the Judenrat a complete list of the Jewish population. It is conjectured that the provision of this list is connected to the upsurge of arrests that began in the Ghetto afterwards on April 27, 1942. Arrested were the Zionist activists, Tuvia Zveir, Abraham Goldberg, Yitzhak Belzhitzki, Mottel Mortkovich, Moshe Vinogrodzki, Schwartsmann, the two Zuker brothers and Hayim Frosh [Frosz], a few communists and a number of people with no past political involvement – together, some 30 men. They were taken to the stream near the community’s slaughterhouse and after three were separated, the rest were shot.

At the end of December 1942, German police came to the Judenrat and said that they wanted a list of all those Jews who had relatives in Eretz Yisrael. The Germans said that these Jews would be sent to a neutral country and would there be exchanged for German prisoners of war who were in Allied hands. The lists were prepared exactingly: questionnaires, the checking of documents, etc. The Jews eagerly reported and those who did not have relatives in Eretz Yisrael forged official documents. Official announcements on this matter, posted on the walls of the city, convinced some of those Jews in hiding or those with Aryan documentation, to come and register. On January 3, 1943, (or perhaps it was January 5), all those who had happily registered, were loaded onto carts that brought them to Kilinski [Kiliński] Square, which was outside the Ghetto. Doubts entered the minds of the Jews when their coats and bundles were taken from them, but they still believed that they were on their way to a neutral country. Only a few guards kept an eye on the travelers, and anyone who wanted to could have escaped. All were taken to Ujazd where a Ghetto was re-established in November 1942, after the series of mass deportations. “Legal Jews” and those who were persuaded to come out from their hiding places were assembled there. The Jews of Opoczno were the last group brought to Ujazd. There they discovered masses of Jews deteriorating in the conditions that prevailed in a transition camp surrounded by barbed wire. Only now, did it become clear to some that the Eretz Yisrael registration was only a cunning plot. In order to make their last hours bearable, others still held the hope that they would indeed be heading for freedom. On January 6, 1943, all the Jews massed in Ujazd were brought to the train station and sent to the Treblinka Death Camp.518

In Szydłow,

In September 1941, deportees from Płock and Łódź complained to the JSS [Jewish Social Self-Help] headquarters in Kraków, accusing the president of the Society for the Protection of Health

(TOZ), L. Koralnik (who also held the position of president of the Judenrat), of denying them social help to which they were entitled. … According to the deportees, Koralnik was selling most of the food to other towns and pocketing the money, claiming to have saved it in case of illnesses.⁵¹⁹

Similarly, in Suchedniów, the Judenrat withheld financial assistance sent by other welfare institutions specifically for the Płock deportees.⁵²⁰ In Rawa Mazowiecka,

Survivors maintained that the Judenrat behaved very badly towards their own [Jews] and even worse towards the refugees [from other towns]. One of its members, Abram Bekermos, was a Gestapo informant who denounced Jews who were trading illegally in foreign currency. …

In the spring of 1940, the community was ordered to pay a contribution of 75,000 złoty; the Germans made the Judenrat responsible for the sum’s collection. When better-off Jews refused to pay, the Judenrat identified them to the Germans. Following a few arrests, wealthier Jews soon contributed their share. …

Abram Zand testified that after he moved to Rawa Mazowiecka in November 1941—then already a ghetto—“the Judenrat was sending transports of paupers to Warsaw [the Warsaw ghetto].”⁵²¹

The impoverished Jews from surrounding towns were the most likely to die of starvation in the overcrowded conditions that existed in the Warsaw ghetto. Of the approximately 60,000 Jews who died in the Warsaw ghetto in 1940 and 1941, the vast majority were not natives of Warsaw but had been resettled there from other towns or had sought refuge in Warsaw.⁵²² On arrival in the Warsaw ghetto, the Jews from the town of Jeziorna were quarantined at 109 Leszno Street, where they were held for dozens of hours under unpleasant conditions. In the quarantine centre bribery, corruption, and theft were rife. The deportees had to pay to collect the parcels they were entitled to and could only be released from the quarantine center early in exchange for a bribe. One account accuses the quarantine manager, Helber, of being a collaborator of the Gestapo.⁵²³ Horrendous conditions of poverty and hunger faced the Jews of Kalwaria Góra in the Warsaw ghetto. Whatever they brought with them was stolen. Hundreds died in the first months and many more daily after that. Most of the remainder were deported to their deaths at the Treblinka extermination camo in the summer of 1942.⁵²⁴ Most of the arrivals from Jeżów were put into impoverished hostels designated for refugees. They experienced difficulties with hygiene and medical care. A large number of the refugee from Jeżów died of starvation and contagious diseases in the Warsaw ghetto. Most of those who survived until the summer of 1942 were among those deported to Treblonka at that time.⁵²⁵

The Jewish police carried out an array of important tasks during the ghettoization of the Jews and in the liquidation of the ghettos. They dutifully carried out German orders to seize property. Manis Szajnbrun, the deputy police commander, used brutality to requisition gold, silver, bicycles, and other items demanded by the German authorities. A group of strong men (shtarken) in Zamość confiscated property that the Germans demanded, including by early 1940 some 235,000 złoty. The Jewish police often apprehended those who tried to avoid detection or escape from the ghettos. In February 1941, the Jewish police from Głowno searched nearby villages to find any Jews still outside the ghetto after the exit passes were withdrawn. Herman Herling’s wife was one of many Jews caught by Jewish policemen in Warsaw as she climbed the wall of the ghetto attempting to leave. From 1940, the Judenrat in Zelów near Łódź was ordered to assist in the transport of hundreds of men to work in the Poznań area. Jews able to work were kidnapped on the streets and from their homes and sent away. The kidnappers were German policemen assisted by the Jewish police. Jewish policemen often extorted money. A testimony from Głowno near Łowicz preserved in the Ringelblum Archive noted: “Extortion was a common and established practice.”

The Jewish police in Węgrów arrested several families to extort money from them. In Łowicz, Jewish policemen demanded payment of an entrance fee from refugees from other ghettos before being allowed through the ghetto gates. Sometimes this was done in order to allow Jews to escape punishment, as was the case in Strzyżów near Rzeszów. When rounding up Jews for forced labour in Otwock, Jewish policemen employed force and even killed some who resisted. The Jewish police in Tomaszów Mazowiecki earned a very bad reputation among most of the ghetto dwellers. During the deportations in that town, the Jewish police assisted the Germans in rounding up the Jews, as they did in many other places such as Wodzisław near Jędrzejów, Hrubieszów, Łęczna, Łuck, Tarnogród, and Jedlicze. The Jewish police in Nowy Sącz also earned a bad reputation for working closely with the German police. The Jewish police participated in many of the round-ups of Jews in the ghetto, including “black marketers” identified by the Jews themselves. In June 1942, the Jewish police rounded up Jews in

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Biała Podlaska and handed them over to the Sonderdienst, ethnic German police, at the railway station. In May 1942, Ukrainian auxiliaries, assisted by the Jewish police, rounded up between 430 and 580 men in Bełżyce and marched them to the Majdanek concentration camp. During a subsequent Akktion in Bełżyce, the Jewish police identified several hundred young men and women who had been ordered to report to the town square for immediate deportation to Majdanek. Jewish policemen would expel and mistreat Jews who tried to sneak into the ghetto for temporary protection. Similarly, in Bochnia, the Jewish police helped the Gestapo, SS and Ukrainian auxiliaries in rounding up Jews in the ghetto and conducting selections and searching for Jews in hiding, and even turned over their own family members for deportation. The Jewish police also lured Jews to come out of hiding by giving them false assurances of safety, as was the case in Drzewica near Tomaszów Mazowiecki. Jews who escaped from ghettos were usually apprehended by the Germans, since most of them were readily identifiable as fugitives by their physical features or dishevelled appearance. The Germans sometimes employed the Jewish police during their manhunts, known as Judenjagd, to capture Jewish fugitives hunting in the countryside. At the beginning of 1942, the German command ordered the complete “cleansing” of the county of Miechów. Assisted by the Jewish police, SS forces and the German gendarmerie, captured about 600 surviving Jews from throughout the county and murdered them in Chodówka forest. When the ghetto in Ołyka, Volhynia, was liquidated in July 1942, the Jews were executed in mass graves outside the town: “Ukrainian police drove the Jews in groups of 50 to the ditch; the Jewish Police forced them to undress and to lie in the ditches facedown, after which drunken German and Ukrainian policemen shot them in the back of the head.” It is little wonder, then, that in the eyes of the Jewish public, the Jewish police “became the embodiment of evil and public corruption.”

Jakob Friedmann, a native of Włodawa, recalls:

Once I was caught by a Jewish policeman whose name was Matthias. He was an exceptional brute. When there was an Aktion against the Jews sending them for extermination to Sobibor [Sobibór death camp], he went up to the house where his family lived and called to his parents: ‘Dad, mum,

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546 Testimony of Chaim Gabrel, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 228.
547 Dean, Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945, vol. II, Part A, 489. See also the testimony of Dawid Braw, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 1909, and the testimony of Teofila Schwimmer, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 3225. Schwimmer identifies the policemen Leopold Ring and Marian Rotkopf as particularly harmful.
549 Ida Rapaport-Gliksztajn, “Getta w Lublinie i na Majdanie Tatarskim (martyrologia Żydów w Lublinie od wybuchu wojny do likwidacji getta),” in Adam Kopciowski, ed., Księga pamięci żydowskiego Lublina (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 2011), 325; translation of Dos bukh fun Lublin (Paris: Former Residents of Lublin in Paris, Paris, 1952). The author writes that Jews who escaped during the liquidation of the ghetto in Lublin were easily captured by the Germans and then sent to the Majdanek camp.
please come down, it’s time for you to go.’ He called to them, and they came down. He knew they were going to Sobibor to be cremated. That’s the kind of man he was.

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

The Jewish council and police in Włodawa were already involved in rounding up Jews at the behest of the Germans as early as July 1940, when the SS arrived from Lublin and ordered them to hand over 250 Jews to work on the construction of the Belżec death camp. For the August 1942 deportation to the Sobibór death camp, the Jewish council in Włodawa drew up lists of the disabled, elderly and orphans, whom the Jewish police then proceeded to round up. During a subsequent deportation in October 1942, the Jewish police once again assisted the Germans, this time rounding up children. The Jewish police continued the dirty work the following April 1943, when they assisted the German SS, Ukrainian police and Latvian police in rounding up the remaining Jews. None of this is mentioned in the entry for Włodawa in Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945.

Unusually, in Białystok, the Judenrat acting chairman Ephraim Barash took drastic steps to address the problem of police corruption:

Barash curbed the excesses of the Jewish Police. On June 16-17, 1942, the Judenrat ordered 20 corrupt policemen sent to labor camps. When a search, on June 21, of the apartment of policeman Grisha Zelikowicz, a notorious extortionist, revealed large sums of foreign currency, diamonds, furs, and other valuables, the Judenrat ordered him turned over to the Gestapo. Barash appointed the popular Moshe Berman, a pre-war deputy chief of [the Polish] police in Białystok, the fill the position of police commander. Berman restored the force’s public image, in part by recruiting policemen with a social conscience. The changes ultimately created a force that refused to help the Germans extricate Jews from hiding places during the expulsions. … When the Jewish Police refused to cooperate, the Germans savagely beat them and turned to informers to find hidden Jews.

The German authorities were also assisted by agents brought into or recruited inside the ghettos and freelance informers. Conditions in Chełm were typical of many towns:

553 Friedmann, Reluctant Soldier, 22. See also the damning testimony about the Jewish police in Wlodawa of Matel Rabinowicz, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 2202, Internet: <http://www.sztetl.org.pl/pl/article/wlodawa/16.relacje-wspomnienia/32901.relacja-matela-rabinowicza?action=viewtable>. A Jew from Wlodawa stated that the Jewish police behaved worse than the Germans. See the testimony of Nachum Knopfmacher, June 28, 1961, Yad Vashem Archives, 03/1787.


555 Dean, Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945, vol. II, Part A, 730–33. The entry notes the existence of the Jewish police and limits their role to providing German officials with valuables.

A certain person unexpectedly appeared in Chelm [Chelm] passing as an administrator of Jewish possessions. At the beginning it was not known if he was a Jew. Later it was learned that the “administrator” was a Jew. He was called “the Jewish overseer”—Reb Pinkhasl. He had a dislikable appearance, was of short stature and with a shaved head—a true German. He always held a whip in his hand like ever Gestapo-man. To the Jews he said he was defending thie interests; he was their “overseer,” but, in fact, he worked with the Gestapo.

Once, the “Jewish overseer” entered the ghetto and told those Jews there that he was authorized—by the German regime—to create a Jewish self defense group—Jewish police, so that the Jews could defend themselves. A Jewish police [force] of 150 people was created, over which there was a commandant. The jail was on Pocztowa [Pocztowa] Street and there were arrests for every trifle. If a Jew escaped from the jail he was then shot by the Gestapo. The “Jewish Guardian,” Pinkhasl, caused the Jews in the ghetto a great deal of trouble.

Erev Shavous [eve of the holiday commemorating the Jews receiving the Torah at Mt. Sinai], 1942, this Reb Pinkhasl came to the Chelemer Judenrat with a demand for the surrender of 3,000 Jews who were not capable of useful work. The representatives of the Judenrat were then, among others, Meir Frenkel (son-in-law of Dovid Liberman), and Anshel Biderman. They called an urgent meeting of all the members of the Judenrat and of the Chelmer businessmen. The meeting took place in the butchers' synagogue and lasted an entire night. It was a bitter and dark night. They did not know what to do. There was great despair. They wrangled for a long time, but in the end they decided to surrender the demanded Jews to the Gestapo.557

Leon Cymlel, who had escaped from a death march and returned to his native Chelm with the help of Poles, found himself pursued by Jewish policemen when he did not report for work. He was chased by one Bocheński in the streets of the city, but fortunately escaped.558 Kalmen Wewryk of Chelm recalled:

The Jewish police went to each house after the Aktion and made new lists of the remaining population—those who had survived. The Germans then ordered the survivors to live closer together, in a more narrowly restricted area. Two families, with 4 children, were sent to live in my home. … My new neighbors resented my presence—they would have preferred to have the house all to themselves.

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

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

I didn’t report to that camp. Some of my neighbors in my flat also didn’t report. Because of them I could no longer use my false-beam hiding place. Anyhow, they wanted to get rid of me. With me gone, there would be one less body in the crowded room. And they could ‘help themselves’ to my meager possessions. One woman in the flat lost her husband so she wanted all Jewish husbands everywhere to die. Another had lost 2 brothers who were my age, so she looked at me and her eyes seemed to say: “Why are you alive and they’re not?” Somebody in my house squealed on me. One day the Gestapo burst into the flat, ran right over to me and told me to tell them where I had hidden my merchandise. … I showed them where all the merchandise was. They brought a truck and I had to load all the merchandise on it. … I had to go with the Gestapo men there and unload the merchandise. When I finished they beat me and drove me straight to the big new military barracks camp and shoved me in. I was no longer a free man. 559

In Szydłowiec,

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

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

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

Jewish informers have also sprung forth out of the earth. Early in the summer [1940] the district police appeared and conducted mass inspections, acting on “leads” supplied by Jewish informers. One of these characters, a refugee from Kalish [Kalisz], takes part in these inspections personally. They are usually done at night, when people are asleep. The police beat the Jews unmercifully, rip up floors, dig up the ground, test the walls for hiding-places. If they find hidden goods they arrest

559 Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej, 694.
559 Kalmen Wewryk, To Sobibor and Back: An Eyewitness Account (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in
the owner and send him to a place from where he never returns. These inspections have been going on for weeks.\textsuperscript{560}

After we lined up as ordered, they pulled a Jewish boy [of about 16 years from Iłża] out of a nearby car, and I immediately recognized him as one of those who joined the partisans and never came back. … He was dragged by two SS troopers who were leading him along the rows as if it were a lineup and telling him to identify. … He therefore moved from one person to the next, until he reached the end of the line with no results. But this fact annoyed the Germans, who started threatening him that if he didn’t tell them what they wanted to know, they would kill him. Then they ordered everyone to take off their hats and the lineup was started anew. Their threats worked this time, the boy cracked and started pulling people out of the rows—one, two, three. …

The Germans, who wanted to take revenge against all the people of Iłża [in the Szydlowiec ghetto], had him pointing out people from Iłża, whom they led to the cemetery and murdered there, in addition to those murdered in the forest. This was the tragic end of the Jewish partisans who left camp Skarżysko and reached Polanka forest.\textsuperscript{561}

\textbf{In Chmielnik,}

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

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

Saul Zernie, the 17, walked to the square with his father, still a young man at age 38. The urge to escape was so overpowering, Zernie bolted. A Jewish policeman pursued and caught him, just as he entered a building. Zernie was forced back to the square. He felt like a hunted animal. “We were all surrounded by German and Jewish police,” Zernie said. “They started lining up the people, picking the healthy ones and the younger ones.”\textsuperscript{562}

\textbf{In Słupia Nowa near Kielce,}

There were also traitors among the Jews. According to survivor Ana Flaumembaum, a local Jewish denounced the entire Judenrat, including Flaumembaum’s father Joshua (Szyja) Kestenberg, her uncle, and cousin. They were sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp following their arrests. …
The Słupia Nowa ghetto was liquidated in September 1942, when German gendarmes accompanied by dogs and Jewish policemen chased its residents onto Świętokrzyska Street. The men were separated from the women and children. Anyone who resisted or was too weak to leave was shot inside his or her dwelling.563

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

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

Those who became the Ghetto police were usually the local scum. One of our neighbors was especially mean, and he wielded his club without provocation. His name was Laybele. … He turned out to be the meanest of all the Ghetto police in Busk.564

In Sandomierz, a Jew confided in a Jewish policeman, telling him where his family had hidden money and gold in the nearby town of Opatów. The Jewish policeman went there with some Germans and retrieved the valuables, but refused to share any with the rightful owner who was in need.565 In Bilgoraj, Efraim Farber avoided registration with the assistance of a Polish clerk only to be sent back to register by a member of the Judenrat who acted as a strict enforcer of German decrees.566 People who clandestinely tried to organize a religious life in the Kielce ghetto were reported to the Germans by fellow Jews.567 A Jew by the name of Spiegel denounced Jews to the Gestapo in Kielce. When Spiegel himself found himself in Auschwitz two years later, a Jewish kapo (abbreviation for Kamaradschafts Polizei, literally a “police force of peers,” that is, a prisoner appointed by the Germans to be responsible for a unit or labor detail in or near a camp) whom he had denounced in Kielce located him and, after severely beating him together with the kapo’s friends, threw him against the electrified perimeter fence where he was electrocuted.568

Conditions in Tarnów, where about 40,000 Jews were confined in the ghetto, were typical of those found in many medium-sized cities. The Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945 states that, on October 16, 1941, the Germans created a Jewish police force consisting of about 300 policemen, that their numbers were increaded before the first large Aktion in June 1942, and that its last commander was a brutal German Jew named Diestler.569 However, the encyclopedia entry is silent about the activities of the Jewish police. A

564 Hecht, Life Death Memories, 81.
565 Urbański, Zagłada Żydów w Dystrykcie Radomskim, 99.
568 Thomas Buergenthal, A Lucky Child: A Memoir of Surviving Auschwitz As a Young Boy (New York: Little, Brown, 2009), 68–70.
number of survivors have left testimonies about those activities, which included frequent betrayals of hideouts during and after the liquidation of the ghetto.

The third deportation took place in autumn of ’41—it was Sunday. I was at work at the time and this man came—a Pole—and he told us that the ghetto was surrounded. …

At 4 o’clock a Jewish policeman came and reassured us that there was nothing happening in the ghetto and we could go home. He escorted us to the ghetto—the ghetto was empty, windows smashed; I go to my flat, open the door—no one is there. I shouted, my cousin answered, he was standing by the window, and was crying. I asked him where my auntie and cousin were, he told me that the Ordnungsdienst (this is the Jewish police) came and took them. And he (the 14-year-old boy) was hidden in the cellar in the house.

From that time on, every few weeks there were round-ups in the streets and in homes, at night or during the day. The Gestapo from various labour camps would arrive and, with the help of the ghetto policemen, organise these round-ups. In November 1942, I was caught together with my cousin, the 14-year-old boy, during one of these round-ups. We were loaded onto a lorry—we travelled several hours to the Szebnie camp near Jasło. 70 men were caught and I (was) the only woman.570

In 1942 the Germans created a ghetto surrounded by barbed wire. Cesia [Honig], her parents and extended family moved to the ghetto and shared one room between them. Everyone was assigned to force labor. Cesia worked sewing saddles in a workshop outside the ghetto boundaries where many Poles also worked. Soon afterwards, all the ghetto inhabitants underwent a selection. Cesia’s father received a forced labor stamp, but the German in charge marked Cesia and her mother’s papers with a K. Someone explained that those with a K, mostly women and children, would be shot the next day. They returned to their apartment and hid behind a false wall. However, a Jewish policeman found them and brought them out to join a procession of those being led out of the ghetto. When Cesia walked past the one factory within the ghetto boundaries, suddenly two Jewish boys whom she had recently met grabbed her and yanked her inside. They told her they would tell her father where she was. Cesia could not bear the thought that she would survive while her mother would be killed and wanted to give herself up, but her father arrived and told her that she had to remain alive for his sake. After surviving the ordeal, she and her father returned to their previous work assignments.571

[The first liquidation started on June 10, 1942.] … At 5:30 in the morning the OD [Ordnungsdienst, the Jewish police] took us—me and my family—with a few hundred people. On the corner of Polna

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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 [horse-drawn carriage], 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. …

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 Magdeburski Square. They herded all the people from Starodąbrowska and Dwernickiego Streets (where the poorest Jews lived) to Magdeburski Square, to meet the quota. The OD-man knew that they were all going to the cemetery [to be executed by the Germans]. The Judenrat was to deliver a contingent of 600 people and it delivered the poorest ones. …

The Judenrat clerks spent the whole night writing the lists of people [to be granted stamps]. … 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. …

Half an hour later all the people were already on the square. [The Germans began searching the basements of abandoned houses.] … 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 [Pustków]—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. …

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 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 [Rommelmann] decision.572

During the third action [in November 1942] I lost my family, only my sister survived. It was in the fall of 1942. On the day of the action my sister went to work, I had escaped from the ghetto a week earlier and stayed at that school friend’s of mine I mentioned earlier, Gabriela, her maiden name was Niedojadlo [Niedojadło]. My sister told me later how it happened. It turned out that our parents were hiding in the same basement as I had with my sister during the previous action, but someone informed on them. It was someone who was taken away. He was at the train station and said he would tell where the Jews were. He was a Jew as well. He thought he would save himself.

There was even this one incident where a son, who was in the Jewish police, informed on his own mother, he said where she was hiding. He went to that shelter where his mother was hiding and said, ‘Don’t be afraid, come out, don’t be afraid. Come out, don’t be afraid, you’ll be fine.’ And that mother came out. And later they were teasing him when he was leading people to work, someone from the first row would call this text: ‘Come out, don’t be afraid’, and someone else called: ‘You’ll be fine’ and they’d repeat it, and he would turn back, but could never catch the one who was teasing him.573

Informers from Tarnów were also active in nearby towns. A Jew from Gorlice recalled: “Once, four Jewish informers came from Tarnow [Tarnów], and sniffed out those who traded in currency. They caused fifty Jews to be shot, among them, Felder, Buksbaum, Zilber, and others.” As elsewhere, local Jews played a significant role in the destruction of the Jews of Gorlice. Jews who hid their furs when the Germans demanded their surrender were known to have been denounced and executed. A Jewish militiaman informed on Jews engaged in illegal trade.

The Jewish police consisted of shady characters. One was a shammes in a synagogue, and had hundreds of Jews on his conscience. They were very diligent at their filthy tasks. One person who especially “distinguished” himself at this work was a person who got drunk with the Nazis, and betrayed the entire Jewish council of Gorlice and the vicinity. His end was terrible, regardless. Before all the Jews were driven out of the ghetto, all those mentioned above were shot. But the woman Bertha, who especially “distinguished” herself and handed over Jewish people and property, is now living in America.

German Jews enjoyed a particularly bad reputation as lackeys of the German authorities. Conditions in Kielce have been described as follows:

Along with the establishment of the ghetto, a unit of Jewish Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst) of several dozen men was recruited. Most were refugees who had arrived from Austria and the areas annexed to the Reich. Bruno Schindler, a German Jew, was appointed as the police chief, and his deputy was Gustav Spiegel from Austria. The Jewish Police were subordinated to the Judenrat. However, in the case of Kielce, they received orders directly from the Schupo and felt protected by their authority. Most Jewish policemen regarded the native Jews of Kielce as Ostjuden—miserable Polish Jews. They did more than what was demanded of them, and the head of the Judenrat was unable to prevail over them. Within the ghetto they were regarded as corrupt opportunists who blackmailed money from the Jews. They lived a life of luxury, and the entire Jewish community feared them.

… By the beginning of 1942, the number of Judenrat employees had reached 4,000. They did not conceal the benefits they received from the other ghetto inhabitants. The entire ghetto knew that the Judenrat and the Jewish police were not lacking for anything, even as many were dying from starvation and disease. …

Since Bruno Schindler, the commander of the Jewish Police, had been shot to death in the Third Aktion, his deputy, Gustav Spiegel, a Jew from Vienna and a bloodthirsty informer and

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575 Yoel Rappoport, “This Is How We Were Taken Captive Before the Enemy,” in Bar-On, Gorlice Book, 271ff.
collaborator, was put in charge of the Jews in the small ghetto, which was essentially turned into a work camp.\textsuperscript{577}

With the transition to the ghetto in April 1941, control over the Jewish police was assigned to the Schupo (Schutzpolizei)—part of the German Security Police—which selected eighty Jewish policemen, mostly from Jewish refugees from Vienna and Łódź, although some local Jews and refugees from other parts of Poland were also included. In early 1942, the number of Jewish policemen was increased to 120. Bruno Schindler, a German Jew who had arrived in Kielce from Łódź, was appointed chief of the Jewish police, and an Austrian refugee by the name of Gustav Spiegel was made his deputy. …

Feeling protected by the authorities, the Jewish policemen took advantage of their position and, since most were refugees from Austria and Germany, they treated the Jews of Kielce as Ostjuden—wretched Polish Jews. From survivor testimonies we further know that, relative to the prevailing hunger and poverty in the ghetto, the Jewish police lived lives of luxury and profligacy and engaged in drinking bouts at the ghetto’s restaurants and canteens. Some beat up lawbreakers, and going above and beyond the Germans’ requirements. Policemen also were exempt from taxes, received increased food rations, demanded and received bribes from Jews, and even extorted money. On the whole, they were perceived throughout the ghetto as corrupt, and the entire Jewish public feared them and regarded them as an integral part of the German authorities in charge of the ghetto. Levy, head of the Judenrat, was unable to restrain the Jewish police, and it seems he made no effort to rid it of corruption.\textsuperscript{578}

The Kielce memorial book mentions Johann Spiegel, an expellee from Düsseldorf, as well as other ghetto policemen such as Proszowski, Bialobroda, Strawczinski, who “harassed the Jewish population very much and their behavior was like that of the Nazis themselves.”\textsuperscript{579} According to another source,

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

The Ukrainian guards, the Gestapo and several of the Jewish police, who had been recruited from the underworld joined forces to wreak havoc on the inhabitants of the ghetto.\textsuperscript{580}

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Two young men who were among the first to be deported to Treblinka managed to escape from Treblinka, made their way back to Kielce and spread stories about what they had seen in the camp. The reaction was swift:

A certain Spiegel, a German Jew who was the Älteste of the Jewish police in the Kielce Ghetto, expelled these two young escapees from Treblinka out of the ghetto, saying that they were spreading panic among the Jews of Kielce.\footnote{Trunk, \textit{Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution}, 123.}

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

During the deportation in Kalisz, on November 30, 1941, the Judenrat ordered the Jews to assemble in front of the synagogue where they selected 600 Jews, mostly the infirm, the elderly and children. One of the members of the Judenrat by the name of Hafteke searched out Jews who had hidden, but allowed some of them to go free upon payment of a bribe.\footnote{Aleksander Pakentreger, “Losy Żydów m. Kalisza i powiatu Kaliskiego w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej (od 1940 do 9 VII 1942: Martyrologia i zagłada,” \textit{Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego}, nos. 2–3 (1980): 114 – 15.} In Chrzanów, “Although their living conditions were better than those of the native Jews, later on many of these German Jews caused trouble. Unfortunately among them there were traitors who ruined many families.”\footnote{Mordechai Bochner, ed., \textit{Sefer Chrzanow: Lebn un umkum fun a yidish shtetl} (Roslyn Harbor, New York: Solomon Gross, 1989), 1ff., translated (by Jonathan Boyarin) as \textit{Chrzanow: The Life and Destruction of a Jewish Shtetl}, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Chrzanow/Chrzanow.html>.} In Tyszowce near Hrubieszów, after the expulsion, the Germans appointed a new leader of the Judenrat named Markus Fischleiber, a German Jew. Fischleiber required that Jews who evaded deportation and returned to the ghetto pay an exorbitant fee to legitimize their residence. Some days later, the SS raided the ghetto and shot some 47 to 60 still unregistered ghetto residents.\footnote{Dean, \textit{Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945}, vol. II, Part A, 721.}

In Parczew,

Then a new figure arrived on the scene: Rudi Kresh [Kreusch], a German Jew in his mid-thirties, who dressed like a German, always in a long leather coat. … Somehow, he became an intermediary between the Gestapo, or the local gendarmerie, and the Judenrat. His way of communicating with the Judenrat was official, German-like.\footnote{Trunk, \textit{Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution}, 123.}

According to Home Army reports, Rudi (Chaim) Kreusch was a Gestapo confidant who was permitted to live outside the ghetto. He played an active role in liquidating the ghetto in Parczew and amassed Jewish valuables by way of the ghetto police. He created a network of Jewish confidants who were dispatched to the forest to join Polish and Jewish partisan groups and then relay information about their activities back to
Kreusch. The Home Army liquidated him in November 1943. Another resident of Parczew recalled that a young Jewish man, who was often seen in the company of German SS-men, informed them that his father (Pinhas Wunderbojm) was concealing merchandise in his home. His father was arrested and then released on a bribe of 50 gold rubles, which was negotiated by the young Jew.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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585 Mandelkern, Escape from the Nazis, 41–42.
587 Testimony of Adam Winder, Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, August 15, 1995, Interview Code 5517.
On May 17, 1942, a notice appeared at the Judenrat in German and Polish: ‘To all older people’ and the names were listed. Within 2 days, those listed were required to present themselves at the Judenrat with the purpose of being forcibly taken from Zamość. …

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

…

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

As in the case of the neighboring villages, the Jewish police took a rather significant role in the ‘evacuation’ in Izbica, which consisted mostly of Czech Jews. They conducted their work with German punctiliousness. They took a direct part in driving and shouting at the Jews, that they should get into the wagons more quickly. A few minutes, however, before the wagons were locked, the Gestapo man Engels ordered the police that they should also get into the wagons. 588

Conflicts were common between the Polish Jews and the Jews who arrived in Izbica from other countries. The latter, who were mostly culturally assimilated, felt superior to the primitive and “dirty” Polish Jews. 589

The open animosity between these groups was exploited by the Germans, who deliberately set the groups against each other. In 1942, they set up one Judenrat for the Polish Jews and one for the foreign Jews transported to Izbica. “During the course of the various Aktions the non-Polish Jewish policemen arrested Polish Jews, and vice versa.” 590 The Germans relied on Jewish-Czech police from Izbica and Komarów to search for Jewish fugitives and carry out deportations in surrounding towns and villages such as Krasnystaw, Tyszowce, and Krasnobreż 591

Gary Keins describes how German Jews deported to Zamość and the nearby town of Izbica looked down on the poorer Polish Jews, took advantage of them and even betrayed them to the Germans: “The small-town ghettos now became overcrowded and the newcomers forced the remaining native Jews out of their shacks; talked deprecatingly about the ‘filth’ in those Polish Jewish shanties. I found their behavior, sorry to say, despicable. … Some of them even pointed out hidden Jews to the Nazis.” 592 Jewish ghetto police would hand over to the Germans non-local Jews who managed to sneak into the ghettos. Shlomo Kandlik from Brześć, who served in the Polish army, escaped from a prison camp near Berlin and smuggled himself

into the Zamość ghetto. “He was recognized as a stranger by the Jewish ghetto police who handed him over to the Germans. They sent him to Lublin. From there together with other Polish prisoners they were sent to Majdanek …”593 Another time, Jews who had returned to Zamość from Lwów were seized. The Jewish police “seized 18 Jews, brought them to the offices of the Judenrat, who immediately handed them over to the Gestapo. They were then taken outside the town and shot.”594 Salomon Podchlebnik, a survivor of Sobibór, described the head of the Jewish council in Izbica, Abram Blatt, as being more efficient than the SS-men in carrying out the round-up of Jews for deportation to Sobibór.595 Jewish policeman and council members often exacted exorbitant amounts for special favours:

In Izbica, there was a Jewish policeman who for 1000 zlotys, in the course of 2 days made an Aryan passport with a photograph. … For such dwellings, one had to pay a goodly sum of money. A Zamość baker lived in Izbica, Sholom Hantwerker, who was a member of the Izbica Judenrat, and it was he who allocated dwellings. For a good house, he took between 500 and 1000 zlotys.596

In Bielsk Podlaski,

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

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

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

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

595 Testimony of Salomon Podchlebnik, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), record group 301, number 10.
… Someone informed on Shlomo Epstein and another Jew whom I had taught something of the trade … I don’t mention his name for personal reasons. A similar case was that of Aron Glachinsky whom we had all liked and had taken in to live with us.597

In Rzeszów,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The night in the police station was pure hell, full of pain and terror. At 11:00 p.m. they stopped beating me and let the chief’s dog into the area where I was held. They left me alone with the dog.598

A witness reports that in the Brańsk ghetto, “the more the Council raised the taxes, the more the Jewish police carried out confiscations of the last pieces of bedding, clothing, and whatever else they were able to lay their hands on.” A group of ghetto policemen in Łuków, headed by their commandant, “denounced the Jews and whipped them, thus assisting the Gestapo in forcing the Jews to surrender gold. Each new oppression became a source of income for them. They became very rich in partnership with the Germans.”

Another account from Łuków states:

In June 1942 were taken 42 Jews in the night from their houses according to the list prepared by the Jewish police, brought out of the town and murdered. Part of them were Jews caught playing cards and part Jews, who returned from the Soviet zone.

Of the Jewish police in Głębokie, one observer writes: “Who could better accomplish the looting of Jewish wealth, either willingly or by force, than Jews themselves? Who could know better than other Jews where Jewish treasures were hidden?” After carrying out German instructions to strip the Jews of their wealth, the ghetto police then proceeded to meet German quotas by rounding up and handing over Jews as required until the ghetto was virtually empty. “While assembling Jews for forced labor, or when carrying out changes in homes, the police learned from their German masters, they would quite often beat Jews.” During the final stages of the liquidation, they scourged the ghetto and dragged Jews out of their hideouts.

A similar role was played by the Jewish police in Niemirów, and in many other towns. An account from Przemyślny reads:

With this “action” the Jewish militia participated actively for the first time, breaking into hiding places, seizing children, young people, women, and old men in the streets. For thousands of złoty and for dollars they saved certain people. In this respect, they were not better or worse than many Germans, who for a bottle of vodka or a can of sardines spared one’s life. They [Jewish militia] were just somewhat cheaper.

In many rural localities, the Jewish police was employed to round up Jews working in the countryside and bring them to town for deportation to the camps.

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599 Trunk, Judenrat, 502.
600 Arnon Rubin, The Rise and Fall of Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today, volume II: District Lublin (Tel Aviv: Tel-Aviv University Press, 2007), 187.
At the beginning of November 1942, Jewish militia men went to all the villages near Hrubieszów, and also to the small towns, in which Jews still remained, with an order to the wójt [village mayor] and the mayor, that all Jews must appear ... in Hrubieszów. In fact, all of them appeared.  

In Brześć nad Bugiem (Brest), “conditions in the Brześć ghetto were very disadvantageous because the Jewish police eagerly cooperated with the Germans. There were constant denunciations to the Gestapo.”

The existence of the two Jewish underground organizations abruptly came to an end on the night before the liquidation Aktion, when the Gestapo, which was informed of all developments in the ghetto, arrested many of their members. Not only did traitors and spies plague the ghetto in Brześć, but also no Germans were required to hold the gates: “Jewish police shared watch over the gates with Ukrainian collaborators. … The Germans could rely on Ukrainian and Jewish policemen to aid them in starving out the Jewish population.”

A Jew from Warsaw assisted the Germans in capturing Jews outside the ghetto and turning them over to the Gestapo. During the liquidation of the ghetto in October 1942, the Germans, probably tipped off by informers, surrounded the hiding place of the printing press and radio and blew them up, along with the people there.

In Kamień Koszyrski in Polesia, “the Germans set up a new Ukrainian police watch, which included a Jew. … Even more distressing was the discovery that there were traitors in our midst, who reported to the Germans on events in the ghetto.”

In Krzemieniec,

Two of the Jewish policemen acted as German agents: Bronfeld, a Czech Jew (who later became Judenrat chairman), and a Je from Łódź, Itsi Diamant. Diamant was connected to an international band of thieves and swindlers. He was shot when diamonds were discovered in his house.

In Lublin, “The SS was looking for returnees from Russia. The Judenrat informed the SS about any such arrival.” A young Jewish woman who worked as a nurse in a Jewish hospital in Lublin realized that its director, Dr. Salomon Bromberg, soon became an agent for the Gestapo; when the SS arrived for an inspection of the premises, they were readily able to identify specific items that the staff had hidden away. The head of the Jewish Hospital at Czyste in the Warsaw ghetto decried “the intrigues, the

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604 Testimony of Motel Kaufman, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 2182.
607 Bauer, Rethinking the Holocaust, 154.
608 Ajzensztajn, Ruch podziemny w gettach i obozach, 89.
612 Goldberg, The Undefeated, 112.
613 Krystyna Modrzewska, “Pamiętnik z okresu okupacji,” Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego, no. 31 (1959): 60, 63.
informing” and “the atmosphere of intrigues and denunciations by anonymous informers,” while “stressing that such qualities could never be met with in the Polish medical world.”

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

In December 1939 was established in Międzyrzecz Podlaski Judenrat composed of 24 members, at the head of which stood the apothecary Klarberg, former revisionist leader, who received from the Germans many favors ... Many Jews saw him as German collaborator, and informer. According to survivors, also the Jewish police was known from their collaboration with the Germans. ...

There were attempts to organize an underground cell in Międzyrzecz Podlaski ... The members of the group decided first to acquire arms, and only later to escape to the forest, but the two leaders of the cell were denounced and arrested in October 1942, and the whole organization disintegrated. Several members decided to join a group of Jewish partisans who acted in the neighboring forest, but the Jewish police also denounced them.

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

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

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

Despite our precautions, the Jewish police came to our house a couple of times and carted away new clothes, coats, furs, a half dozen pairs of my father’s new shoes. The Jewish police lived

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

615 Rubin, The Rise and Fall of Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today, volume II: District Lublin, 198.
among us. They knew what we had and where we had it. If they hadn’t known, a snitch likely had told them. …

[Lazar] now occasionally would extort money from people by threatening to have them sent to the camps unless they paid him.616

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

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

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

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

A week later, on a Friday, two Gestapo agents, Dieter and Bock, brought him into the ghetto once again. Srulejski knew that the Gestapo had him trapped. But he was aware that they were looking for the employment officer, Mr. Finkelstein. Hoping to regain some of his lost influence, he directed the Gestapo to a wall in the house where Finkelstein was hiding. While they were breaking down the wall, Srulejski inconspicuously slipped away. The Gestapo searched, but could not find him. However, Mr. Finkelstein was taken away and never seen again. Soon the news spread through the ghetto that Srulejski had escaped. The Gestapo issued an ultimatum that unless Srulejski was brought forth, five hundred people would be shot. That caused great panic. The Jewish police announced that whoever knew the whereabouts of Srulejski must report it immediately.

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

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

200.
weapons in the ghetto. It was rumoured that Goldman was a traitor and that someone had shot him in revenge.\footnote{Gitel Donath, \textit{My Bones Don’t Rest in Auschwitz: A Lonely Battle to Survive German Tyranny} (Montreal: Kaplan Publishing, 1999), 115–17.}


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

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

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

[May 12] During the night the Jewish police were in our yard. They were looking for our cousins, but they weren’t there.\footnote{The Diary of Dawid Rubinowicz (Edmonds, Washington: Creative Options, 1982), 73, 75.}

The Jewish police in Bodzentyn also assisted the Germans in carrying out searches inside the ghetto, and during the liquidation of the ghetto in September 1942, helped the German gendarmes to chase some 3,000 Jews to the place from which they were deported.\footnote{Dean, \textit{Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos}, 1933–1945, vol. II, Part A, 203.} Historians have described the attitude of the Bodzentyn Judenrat towards the 600 Jews deported there from the town of Płock as “reprehensible.”\footnote{Dean, \textit{Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos}, 1933–1945, vol. II, Part A, 203.}

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With considerable effort I persuaded Mr. Zacharski that my reasoning was sound, and he let me go with the policemen on the condition that they would be responsible for me and my well-being, and if, God forbid, even one hair of mine were touched, he would take revenge upon them and

slaughter them like pigs in cold blood. Of course he did not trust them and their promises and accompanied us. … After all of this I returned to the Ghetto exhausted …

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

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

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

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

[After the deportation of the Jews, a search of the houses in the ghetto began, and anyone found hiding was shot on the spot]: For this purpose they [the Germans] took the Jewish police with them when they went looking for all the remaining Jews.

During the deportation and liquidation of the ghetto in Staszów, several Jewish policemen exploited the chaos to demand money from their fellow Jews.

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

You know, there are people in the ghetto who are now in the Gestapo’s service; they go out into the town every day and look for Jews hiding on false papers because they think that they will save their own skins that way. Even one of my colleagues at the bank, a man I have worked with for many years, broke down and now works for the Gestapo. He turns in everyone, even members of his own family. Not long ago he whispered to me that he knew that Basia was living on false papers somewhere in the vicinity of Cracow. He doesn’t know you personally, and doesn’t know your

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name or where you live, but he is looking for you and is convinced that sooner or later he will find you. When he does, he will turn you in. I had always thought him a man of honor, but the times have changed.625

A Jew from Lwów recalled:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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625 Shatyn, A Private War, 195.
I was also told that a man named Altman, an officer of the Jewish Police and a Gestapo collaborator, had fallen in love with her [Nesia]. Altman’s job was to discover Jews in hiding …

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

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

Many Jewish testimonies describe the treacherous behaviour of Jewish policemen in the Warsaw ghetto. Solomon Radasky (Radosiński) recalls:

My father was killed in April 1942. He went to buy bread from the children who were smuggling food into the ghetto. The children brought bread, potatoes and cabbages across the wall into the Warsaw ghetto. A Jewish policeman pointed out my father to a German and told him that he saw my father take a bread from a boy at the wall. The German shot my father in the back.

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

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… the majority [of the Jewish ghetto police], according to Ringelblum ‘carried out with the greatest eagerness the orders of the Germans. It is a fact that on most days the Jewish police supplied more victims than the quota demanded by the Germans. That was done to have a reserve for the following day. … Many a hideout was discovered by the Jewish police, who always wanted to prove themselves plus catholique que le pape and thus curry favour with the Germans. The victims who escaped the eye of the German were seized by Jewish policemen. For two hours I watched the march of victims to the trains in the Umschlagplatz and I saw groups exempted from deportation being forcibly driven back to the trains by the Jewish policemen. Dozens, perhaps hundreds, of Jews were sent to their deaths during those two hours by the Jewish policemen.’ Szmerling, a former boxer, a giant with a little beard and the face of a killer who was in command of the Jewish police in the Umschlagplatz, did not hesitate to use his whip and took advantage of his position to extort money and jewels from wealthy victims for allowing them to escape from the point of departure for Treblinka. His subordinates, acting in partnership with the Sonderdienst composed of Polish Volksdeutsche [i.e., ethnic Germans] and the Ukrainian and Latvian cutthroats, demanded from 1,000 to 10,000 zloties from their victims to allow them to escape. ‘There were cases when the police demanded from their victims, apart from money, also payment in kind: women had to submit to their lust.’ The police plumbed the depths of their baseness in the final weeks of the Great Liquidation, when thousands of survivors refused to obey orders to surrender for deportation, even if it meant dying in hideouts. Each policeman was then ordered to supply seven victims daily or share with his family the fate of the other Jews. Having already sold their souls to the Nazi devil, the policemen did their best to carry out the order. This did not stop the Nazis from killing over 1,700 policemen and their families at the end of the Great Liquidation.630

The descriptions of the round-ups and deportations penned by first-hand witnesses of those events is horrific. Small wonder that Ringelblum writes that the hatred towards the Ordnungsdienst “exceeds the hatred of Germans.”631 Chaim Kaplan penned the following entries in his wartime diary:

At the beginning … a directive was issued to the Judenrat to deport 6,000 a day; in point of fact they are now deporting close to 10,000. The Jewish police, whose cruelty is no less than that of the Nazis, deliver to the “transfer point” on Stawki Street more than the quota to which the Judenrat obligated itself. Sometimes there are several thousand people waiting a day or two to be transported because of a shortage of railroad cars. Word has gotten around that the Nazis are satisfied that the extermination of the Jews is being carried out with all requisite efficiency. This deed is being done by the Jewish slaughterers.632

[July 28, 1942]: Anyone who could see the expulsion from Warsaw with his own eyes would have his heart broken. The ghetto has turned into an inferno. Men have become beasts. Everyone is but a step away from deportation; people are being hunted down in the streets like animals in the forest.

629 Pogonowski, Jews in Poland, 115.
630 Ainsztein, Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe, 583.
631 Cited in Levin, Walls Around, 151.
It is the Jewish police who are cruelest toward the condemned. Sometimes a blockade is made of a particular house, sometimes of a whole block of houses. In every building earmarked for destruction they begin to make the rounds of the apartments and to demand documents. Whoever has neither documents that entitle him to remain in the ghetto nor money for bribes is told to make a bundle weighing 15 kilos—and on to the transport which stands near the gate. Whenever a house is blockaded a panic arises that is beyond the imagination. Residents who have neither documents nor money hide in nooks and crannies, in the cellars and in the attics. When there is a means of passage between one courtyard and another the fugitives begin jumping over the roofs and fences at the risk of their lives … But all these methods only delay the inevitable, and in the end the police take men, women, and children. The destitute and impoverished are the first to be deported. In an instant the truck becomes crowded. … Their cries and wails tear the heart out.

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

But isolated incidents don’t hold up the operation. The police do what is incumbent upon them. After the completion of the arrests in one house, they move on to another. The Judenrat prepares a daily list of houses in which blockades will be made that day. And here a new source of income is opened for the graft-chasing police. The wealthy and the middle class have yet to be brought to the transports. For those who have no documents, banknotes turn into documents. There is almost a fixed price for ransom, but for some it is cheaper, all according to the class of the ransomed one and the number of people in his household.633

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

632 Katsh, Scroll of Agony, 324.
This criminal police force is the child of the Judenrat. Like mother, like daughter. With their misdeeds they besmirch the name of Polish Jewry which was stained even without this. At the transfer point where the exiles are collected, the policemen traffic in bread. Those loaves of bread, which the police force gets in abundance free of charge, are sold to the hungry and oppressed captives at 80 złoty [złoty] a loaf. For delivering a letter, ten złoty. They are growing rich on these profits, and for the time being they are experiencing the eternal reward in this life—until the Nazis take pity on them as well. Their day will come, and they too will be destroyed, but they will be the last. …

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

The entire ghetto is a mammoth factory producing for the good of the German army. We have become a laughingstock.634

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

Within three days, over two thousand certificates were prepared and distributed … In point of fact it did save many people. They were seized and later released.635

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

633 Ibid., 325–27.
635 Ibid., 332–33.
More factories are established every day. This is the only source of salvation now … Many people scurry to register for the factories. … Everyone is pushing his way into a “shop” and is prepared to sell all his possessions and give away his last cent, if only to be considered productive. …

None of the newly erected factories has any validity or future unless they are incorporated into the network of factories of some German firm; and this privilege too must be bought with cash from the Germans, who demand immense sums in return for the right to work for the German army.636

Vladka Meed wrote the following account:

The Jewish police were now very important people in the Warsaw ghetto. The Nazis relied on them to carry out their roundups, to control employment cards, and to load unemployed Jews into the wagons and transport them to the waiting railway cars. Obviously, no one was very fond of the police; even in better days they had been known to badger and harass people in their daily lives by insisting on rigid adherence to the Nazi regulations. Now they had become even more hostile and aggressive. They were feared, but at the same time they were the objects of envy. For one thing, the Jewish police were secure; even the Germans thus far had left their relatives alone. They were never threatened with “resettlement.”

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

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

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

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

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

636 Ibid., 333–34.
But the Jews who were about to be deported did not move. Ashen white with fear, they begged the police for mercy. …

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

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

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

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

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

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

When all tenants were assembled in the yard the selection started. … Those selected for deportation were handed over to the Jewish police. Together with their Aryan colleagues the police led the victims to the Umschlagplatz on foot or in carts.

Landau wondered also about the continued collaboration of the Jewish police after the deportation of the summer of 1942:

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The Germans had to enter the houses to remove the people they wanted for deportation yet they were still assisted by the Jewish police. I often ask myself what evil force made the Jewish police co-operate in January 1943, when they themselves had been decimated after the great deportation.

Ruth Altbeker Cyprys provides the following description of the round-ups in the Warsaw ghetto:

Immediately after the publication of the ‘Resettlement Order’ the manhunts started. Ordinary large carts, accompanied by a few Jewish policemen, appeared in the streets. All those with inadequate documents, or with none, were forcibly pushed on to the carriages. …

I witnessed the expulsion of the Korczak Orphanage. … On the day that they left the ghetto they made a strange procession as they walked along Słiska [Śliska] Street led by an elderly, dignified man, and accompanied only by a few policemen. … Mr. Korczak would not leave his children. And I learned, later, that he gave the same answer to his Aryan friends when they tried several times to take him to the Aryan side.

In the first weeks after the expulsion order the Germans did not show up in the ghetto. Jews themselves, as for example the Jewish militia, were entrusted with the job. They carried out the checking of identity papers in the streets and even on the Umschlagplatz where the Germans were present; the loading and forcing of Jews into the railway carriages was left to the militiamen. After all ‘points’ and other places of collective Jewish misery had been cleared out, street catching was carried out ceaselessly. …

The institution of the blockades carried out by the Jewish militia became a daily routine. During a blockade, which as a rule took place in the early hours of the morning, a strong detachment of militiamen would cordon off a whole street or a part of big road, and begin sweeping the blocks. There would be a shrill whistle and shouts of ‘All down, all to the courtyard’ which would announce the beginning of the blockade. After a while the militiamen would enter the flats, chasing the inhabitants out. They were very efficient in their searches, even too meticulous, for they looked into the night tables and drawers, they climbed into the attics and descended to the cellars. The courtyards were swarming with militiamen and when all the tenants were gathered, an officer would begin the checking. The lucky owners of good Ausweis passes were placed on one side of the yard, all the others on the other side. They were then chased out into the street and loaded into the waiting carts. …

On 6 August [1942] I was resting at home after my night shift when I suddenly heard a terrible noise in the street, loud cries, shots and shouts of ‘Alles runter’ (all downstairs). I knew what this meant. The street was already full of Germans, Ukrainians and Jewish militia. A normal blockade had started. We all had to go out into the street guarded by Germans, Ukrainians and Shaulis (Lithuanians), while the militia searched the rooms and hideouts, forever dragging somebody out. …

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639 Ibid., 204–205.
Alas, they checked no papers. Only the families of the militia men were released on the spot. The rest, formed in fives, were hurried to the Umschlagplatz. The way was strewn with horrific sights. …

… During all this time the Jewish militia loaded the freight wagons with struggling people, sealed them in, while new trains pulled in to the station …

Izrael Lichtensztajn and Zosia Goldberg describe the round-ups in the ghetto with understandable bitterness:

The course of the operation is as follows: units of Jewish police march through the streets. They rush at the gate [of the tenement house] and surround the entire courtyard. Everyone has to leave their apartments and come downstairs. When the residents of the house find themselves in the open area, the entrances to the dwellings are blocked. All of the rooms are searched again and only then does the inspection of people begin. Everyone must come forward with his document. Those with a good certificate—for a workshop, an official of the community or self-help organization—are set aside. … All those without certificates are loaded onto carriages and sent to the Umschlagplatz … There empty freight wagons are waiting for them, into which are packed from 120 to 200 persons, and are sent on their way. …

Unfortunately, we were betrayed. Our leaders do not have the courage to die like people. They die like fleas, bugs or mice. Today I saw Dr. [Emanuel] Ringelblum sitting in a carpentry workshop at 59 Nowolipki Street. He’s hiding there with his family. … Did it have to come to this that activists worried only about their private life, and wrote everything else off as a loss?541

One day the Germans encircled the house at Leszno 42, and they called everybody down. I was with my mother and we were sleeping on the floor with my aunts and we were supposed to go down with them. Instead, I ran upstairs to Bolek, a young fellow who was a friend of mine. He knew many of the Jewish police and he spoke Russian, so I said to him, “Go down and see what you can do.” Along with the German Nazis, there were Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians, and Jewish police.

“Try to get all the family out,” I told Bolek. They were already forming lines to march to the trains at the Umschlagplatz. So he came back and said, “I saw Marian. He’s in the police. I’ll see what he can do.” But Marian, my ex-husband, the one I had married and divorced before the war, simply washed his hands of us and turned away. … He did not lift a finger to help. …

Then Bolek tried to talk to a Ukrainian who understood his Russian. He made up a story that my mother was his mother and I was his sister. He said our family was dead. Maybe because Bolek spoke Russian to him, which is close to Ukrainian, he felt sympathetic. I don’t know why, maybe it was just luck, but the Ukrainian said you can take out your mother and sister from the line, but nobody else. Everybody else had to stay.542

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541 Testimony of Izrael Lichtensztajn in Markowska, Archiwum Ringelbluma, 175–77.
542 Goldberg, Running Through Fire, 34–35.
Calel Perechodnik, himself a policeman in the outlying Otwock ghetto, provides the following damning verdict:

There is no justification for the Jewish policeman in Warsaw. They cannot defend themselves by explaining that they had a mental blackout. This might be done in the course of one day, but not for three long months. Their hearts turned to stone; all human feelings became foreign to them. They grabbed people, they carried down in their arms infants from the apartments, they robbed if there was opportunity. So it was not surprising that Jews hated their own police more than they did the Germans, more than the Ukrainians. There is nothing like setting a brother against a brother.  

Yitzhak Katzenelson, an eyewitness to these events, penned “The Song of the Murdered Jewish People,” in which he bemoaned the role of the Jewish police.

*Ani ha-gever*, I am the man who watched, who saw
How my children, my women, my young and old, were thrown
Like stones, like logs, into wagons,
Brutally beaten, rudely abused.

I watched from the window and saw the brutes—O God!
I observed the beaters and the beaten—
I wrung my hands in shame. O what disgrace and shame.
Jews were being used, ah, to destroy my Jews!

Apostates and near-apostates with shiny boots on their feet,
Hats with the Star of David, like a swastika, on their heads,
An alien, corrupt and vile tongue on their lips,
Dragged us from our homes, flung us down the stairs.

They smashed doors and forced their way
Into closed Jewish homes with raised clubs in their hands—
They hunted us, beat us and drove young and old to the wagons,
Into the street! They spat in God’s face, profaned the light of day.

They pulled us out from under the beds and closets, cursing:
“The wagon is waiting! Go to hell, to the *Umschlag*, to death!
They dragged us to the street and continued to prowl—
The last dress in the closet, last bit of cereal, last morsel of bread.

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643 *Perechodnik, Am I a Murderer?*, 104.
Look into the street and you’ll go mad!
The street is dead, yet full of shrieks and screams—
He street is empty, yet the street is full.
Wagons laden with Jews, with mourning and grief!

Wagons laden with Jews, wringing their hands, pulling their hair—
Some are silent—their scream is loudest!
They watch, they look … Is it a nightmare? Is it real?
Around the wagons, alas, woe is me! Jews in police uniforms, in boots and hats!

The German stands aside, as if smugly sneering—
The German stands aloof—he doesn’t interfere.
Woe unto me—the German had Jews destroy my Jews.
Look at the wagons, behold the shame, look and see the suffering!

Looting was a significant component of the overall tragedy that befell the ghetto. The Jewish police looted vacated apartments on a massive scale often amassing for themselves considerable fortunes, about which there was considerable boasting within the ghetto. Emanuel Ringelblum noted the “wholehearted cooperation,” as he put it, between the assisting forces and the Ordnungsdienst: “They loot together. The entire Jewish police force is awash in money and jewelry.” Chaim Kaplan determined that the Jewish police was actually pleased with the deportation order, delivering 10,000 persons per day, and not only the 6,000 requested by the Germans, “because it fills their pockets with gold.” Abraham Lewin described several times the manner in which Jewish policemen took their brothers’ property, even as they were being sent on their final journey. “People talk about terrible robbing and looting during deportation. They cast out the people, then steal and plunder all of the tenants’ property. Shops are also opened forcibly, so they can take out merchandise. The participants: Ordnungsdienst, plain ordinary Jewish neighbors, and the Germans.” Ten days later Lewin wrote: “Jewish policemen are participating in looting. They break into apartments, empty closets, break dishes and destroy property just for fun.” A week later he wrote: “Yesterday evening, at around six o’clock, the Ordnungsdienst raided homes and made the tenants vacate them. They threw tenants out by force, broke into empty apartments, looted and robbed anything they got their hands on, while at the same time arresting women, mainly those without papers. How did Jews come to be pillagers?”

After the deportation, the Germans reactivated the Werterfassung department (the “collection of valuables detail”), which had been previously active in stealing furniture from apartments before the ghetto was established. The Warsaw division employed 4,000 Jews who always managed to rob from the robbers and take something for themselves out of the stolen and confiscated items being transported outside the ghetto. Operating alongside this official unit were those the ghetto residents called shabbers—Jews who

645 Makower, Pamiętnik z getta warszawskiego, 62.
646 Cited in Levin, Walls Around, 149–51.
looted empty apartments. Initially, they took only money, jewelry, or other items that could be exchanged for cash. Later on, everything was up for grabs, wrote Rachel Auerbach. Rolling down the ghetto streets were “armchair-beds and folding sofa-beds. New metal bed-frames that quickly rusted, old fashioned mattresses … giant piles of all sorts of bed linens, children’s coverlets, pillows, sofa cushions, straw mattresses, field beds. … There were pots, pans, kettles, Sabbath candlesticks and Passover Seder plates, undergarments and outerwear, dominos and chess sets, soccer balls and playing cards, baby clothes and toys, and many family photos.” Soon the Jews remaining in the ghetto were engaged in dealing in abandoned Jewish property with buyers from outside the ghetto on a massive scale.647

The beginning of the Jewish underground was fraught with difficulties, not the least of which was the plague of informers inside the ghetto.

The Jewish Fighting Organization [Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa—ŻOB] ... was established in July [1942] as the transports [to Treblinka] began. At first two key leaders of the ŻOB were Józef Kaplan and Szmul Breslaw of Ha-Shomer Ha-Za’ir. However, they were caught at the beginning of September, apparently because of informants, after they had succeeded in acquiring a few weapons. The underground collapsed but began to reorganize in October.648

Before the Jewish underground could carry out their planned resistance to future German deportations from the Warsaw ghetto, they had to get liquidate Jewish Gestapo agents and informers in their midst and collect money to arm themselves. Bernard Goldstein, a Bund activist, records:

In further preparation for the events ahead, the Jewish fighting organization took steps to clear the ghetto of all Jewish servants of the Gestapo. Special counterespionage groups tracked down every Jewish Gestapo agent and liquidated him. For example, there was Alfred Nossig, a Jewish intellectual from Galicia. He had been a contributor of articles in Jewish, Hebrew, and German to various journals. He had served as an informer on Jewish matters for the German government even before Hitler. His specialty was the Polish Jewry. After the First World War, when Poland became independent, he used to visit Warsaw from time to time. Now he appeared in the ghetto on special work for the Gestapo. One of our comrades discovered his apartment and searched it. An identity card showed that Nossig had served the Gestapo since 1933, the year Hitler came to power. The fighting organization passed sentence of death, and he was shot.

Fuerst, one-time director of the prewar Jewish Students’ Home in Praga [a suburb of Warsaw], and a Gestapo informer, was shot by order of the fighting organization. Lolek Kokosovsky, a Maccabre leader from Zgerzh [Zgierz], was a Gestapo agent whose specialty was political information about the ghetto and the members of the underground organizations. At first he escaped our agents only with a bad wound. His friends took him from the ghetto, and he recovered. Later, however, he was shot and killed on the Aryan side as he walked out of a restaurant.

Sherinsky [Szeryński], an apostate Jew, already has been mentioned as the commissioner of the Jewish police. Our attempted execution of him failed, though he was seriously wounded. Afterward he took his own life. Laikin, who had been a lawyer before the war, was Sherinsky’s assistant. After Sherinsky’s death he assumed the position of Jewish police commissioner. Greatly hated in the ghetto, he was sentenced to death and shot.

These executions further strengthened the morale of the fighting groups and increased the prestige of the Jewish fighting organization. It felt sufficiently powerful now to levy a tax on the entire ghetto to buy arms; it even taxed the Judenrat. Some of the wealthy who refused to pay the tax were arrested. The authority of the fighting organization began to be felt throughout the ghetto. Its influence and power grew with every passing day.\footnote{Goldstein, The Stars Bear Witness, 178–79.}

David Landau, a member of the Jewish Military Union, writes:

> From a speech by ŻZW leader Paweł Frenkel: ‘… both the ŻOB and the ŻZW have been collecting large sums of money from the rich Jews in the ghetto and from the departments of the Eldest to pay for the arms some of you are buying. Up to a few weeks ago we had mutually agreed to report to each other where collections had been made, in order not to duplicate our work. Of course, here and there, we used force, but in general even those who were approached knew that once they had paid up and the collectors gave them their receipts they would be in the clear. However, in the last few days it appears that some clever individuals have been going around making collections for their own pockets in our name or in the name of the ŻOB. … we have confiscated the collected money from the individuals who believed they were clever and have warned them that their game is very dangerous. …

> A man we sent to execute a Jew who was an informer to the Gestapo, did his duty; he killed the traitor … The woman was Anna Milewicz, who previously belonged to the Hashomer Hatsair. She was removed from it. The Hashomer Hatsair was in full agreement with what we did, because it was proved that she worked for the Gestapo.\footnote{Landau, Caged, 189–91.}

When the Germans embarked on the final liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto in 1943, among the collaborators that marched into the ghetto on April 19 were the Jewish ghetto police, who headed the column of collaborators, a small group of Polish police (who were withdrawn once fighting erupted), and Latvian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian troops.\footnote{Landau, Caged, 221; Engelking and Leociak, Getto warszawskie, First edition, 218; Władysław Bartoszewski, “The Martyrdom and Struggle of the Jews in Warsaw under German Occupation 1939–43,” in Władysław Bartoszewski and Antony Polonsky, eds., The Jews in Warsaw: A History (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, in association with the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, 1991), 338–39; Najberg, Ostatni powstańcy getta, 45; Moshe Najberg, Ostatni powstańcy getta, 45.} The insurgency (street fighting) was soon over. Some of the fighters and many other Jews took cover in numerous hideouts, called “bunkers,” which had been prepared in advance.

Many, if not most of the bunkers were closed and hostile to outsiders, even to those who had helped to construct them. One Jew recalled:
One morning when we came to the entrance of the bunker we had been working on, there was a tough man standing guard there who would not let us in. The place was now filled with people who had come from all over and were using our shelter. When I tried to get in around him, he smashed me over the head with his rifle butt. I had to have my head bandaged up.

The next morning, there I was standing on line at the “Umshlag Place” [Umschlagplatz] (the train depot), the place from which all Jews were deported to camps and to the gas chambers. 652

Another bunker occupant recalled:

One morning we heard some knocking. The voice of a woman called my name and begged to be allowed in with her children. It was Mrs. Windman, with two children, her mother, and the brothers Kopchuk. It was clear to me we had no choice but to let them in, yet the others were staunchly opposed. The arguments continued all day; we almost came to blows. Those most adamantly opposed to accepting outsiders were those who still had some provisions. Softly, we, who were in agreement to let them in, instructed them when to come back and to use the entrance on Zamenhof Street.

We waited in vain. They never came. If, as we feared, the Germans had caught them, we were also lost. We learned later, that, indeed they had been picked up by the Germans and taken to the Umschlagplatz but they had not given us away. …

Yet to our astonishment, a group of Jews appeared in the opening, … who had made their way through ruins and dug passages to the Aryan side to enable them to escape. … They were in the same position as we, without means of livelihood, without room for the hundreds of survivors of other burnt-out bunkers, seeking a place of refuge.

Among them I saw many who had worked in the vegetable storeroom. Rabbi Meir whispered to one who knew my brother-in-law, Ackereisen, that I still had some alcohol on me. He did this to detract the attention from himself and the provisions he still had, which he wanted to share with no one, not even with the young children. He had taken over a section of the cellar and there closed himself off with his provisions. I bartered with one of the newcomers, agreeing to exchange some of my alcohol for dry biscuits for my son. I gave him the alcohol but never received the biscuits.

The new arrivals asked us to take in another thirty survivors. The arguments broke out again. …

We were all very worried. Only Reb Meir believed he would survive and refused to share any of his supplies. 653

Occupants who were regarded as liabilities were expelled from bunkers. A mother and her deranged young son, who had screaming fits, were evicted from one large bunker, but the woman’s daughter was

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652 Alpert, A Spark of Life, 34.
kept as a hostage so that the mother would not betray the location of the bunker. Infants were suffocated or poisoned by occupants who were afraid that their crying would betray the existence of the bunker. The Germans relied on Jewish policemen, Jewish agents and Jews who had been caught earlier and turned into informers to ferret out Jews in hiding, both during the revolt and afterwards. One Jewish survivor records that informers were already searching out the locations of bunkers before the uprising in the ghetto. Rikvah Trapkovits-Farber reported that Jewish policemen were employed to lure Jews out of underground hideouts, holding out the promise of safety in work camps. Some other examples of betrayal follow:

Along with us, neighbors from our stairwell and employees of the hospital were hiding in the attic. We heard shooting all the time—machine guns from the German side and solitary shots from the Jewish. …

Once—perhaps on the third or fourth day—I fell asleep in the attic. I was tired. Suddenly, something woke me up. I opened my eyes, moved a bit. … No one said a word. …

At one point I heard a loud ein, zwei, drei (one, two, three) behind the wall, then a pistol shot. Somebody was removing the loose bricks from the outside. It was a Jewish policeman. We had been discovered. …

We crawled out one by one. It was funny: a few Jewish policemen, one German, and a whole bunch of us. We could have just killed that German! The Germans now proceeded to demolish these [bunkers], on the strength of the lists furnished by Brandt [a Jewish agent]. … As soon as a bunker was discovered, some of the occupants would be shot in full sight of the rest. A German officer would then offer a reprieve to anyone who would disclose the location of other bunkers. This would sometimes produce the psychological effect of breaking down the resistance of one or other of the survivors, who would then lead the Germans to any hide-outs they knew of. A new plague of informers now infested the ghetto. The Germans, as a rule, would keep these informers alive only until they had squeezed them out of every bit of information, and then shoot them out of hand. The average life-expectancy of such an informer, therefore, was no more than a few days, and the Jews continued living in the ghetto. While some German units were engaged directly in fighting, others were engaged in sniffing out bunkers. Expert units were employed in this work. They were helped by sniffer dogs and here and

655 Najberg, Ostatni powstańcy getta, 61; Engelking and Leociak, Getto warszawskie, Second edition, 804, based on the testimony of Stella Fidelseid, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 4873.
656 Paulsson, Secret City, 91; Engelking and Leociak, Getto warszawskie, Second edition, 828. The Jewish “musers” were housed on Zamenhof Street and worked with a special 137-member German police unit tasked with locating hidden Jews.
658 Dan Porat, the Boy: A Holocaust Story (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), 95.
659 Wiszniewicz, And Yet I Still Have Dreams, 70.
there by the last Jews they managed to capture. They would leave one of them alive and make this unfortunate person follow them as they approached a bunker. The living sacrifice would be made to call in Yiddish: ‘Jews, you can come out, the Germans have gone!’ Sometimes the ruse worked. 661

Jack Klajman, one of the many Jews whose hideout was betrayed by Jewish informers, states: “Clearly, the most effective method for the Germans was the use of Jewish informers—and that is how my hideout was uncovered on 21 April [1943].”662 Benjamin P. describes how his bunker was betrayed by a Jew who had come around asking about his relatives, and then returned the next day with German gendarmerie.663 Halina Birenbaum states that her bunker was betrayed when one of its residents went out to scavenge and was apprehended by the Germans; he betrayed the location of his hideout and all of its residents were seized.664 Israel Mittelberg’s hideout was also betrayed by fellow Jews:

The Germans had come from the same opening as our guests of two days earlier; quite clearly they had denounced us. … Outside, we caught sight of the two young men who had denounced us—one was eighteen, the other in his early twenties. They tried to deceive us, further assisting the Germans in their treacherous work. … The informers were often put to death before their victims.

A selection took place. About one hundred and sixty of us stood for an hour in the yard. Those prepared to talk were told to move to the right. Out of our ranks, no one volunteered except for a couple by the name of Shuster—he had served as a Jewish policeman. We turned away from them in contempt.665

Another Jew captured during the mop-up of the ghetto recalls:

There were a few underworld personalities in our bunker, who had arms. They played the role of our “protectors”. A sharp debate broke out among them over some shady matter, and the defeated one, Yisraelikl, was threatened with revenge. Outside, we heard the shooting and bomb explosions from quite near. Houses were burning around us. The smelly smoke came in from around us. The air in the bunker was difficult to breathe. The eyes were tearing, the throats were strangling, and we were all choking. At night we opened the secret trap door to get some air. This also let us see what was going on outside. Suddenly, Yisraelikl was snatched out of the bunker. He disappeared. We had a suspicion that he would betray us. During the day we heard a strong explosion, and the lights went out. We were overcome by great terror. We heard Yisraelikl’s voice near the trap door: “Here you have the group to be annihilated!” At that moment, the trap door opened and the order was issued: “Out!” A hand grenade fell into the bunker with a bang. There was a terrible stampede. We crawled out of the bunker with the fear of death. The wounded were dragged out by the Germans with terrible beatings from their guns and whips. Encircled by the armed Germans, we were taken

661 Landau, Caged, 235.
665 Mittelberg, Between Two Worlds, 33.
The largest and best equipped bunkers belonged to the criminal underworld. The most famous one was located at 18 Miła Street and served as the headquarters of the Jewish Fighting Organization (Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa—ZOB) after its previous premises on 29 Miła Street was betrayed. In actual fact, this bunker belonged to Shmuel Isser, a prominent figure in the Jewish criminal underworld. It was one of the best equipped and largest in the ghetto, housing about 200 persons, among them many thieves, prostitutes and their families. This bunker was also betrayed.

Leon Najberg, who held out in the bunkers of the Warsaw ghetto until the end of September 1943, witnessed the use of Jewish informers by in the service of the Befehlstelle, the local SS command headquarters, repeatedly throughout this period. Dawid Białogród moved around from place to place to avoid the Germans and their Jewish informers, who continued to hunt down the remaining Jews, until January 1944, when he escaped from the ghetto. The Jewish police also proved useful by throwing grenades into the entrances to subterranean shelters. All of this led to universal suspicions among the survivors toward all Jews: “the residents saw in every unfamiliar Jew who did not live in the hideout an informer in the service of the Germans or at best a suspect person.” As a precaution Jewish survivors in the ruins of the ghetto would not reveal their hideouts to fellow Jews.

Many Jews went into hiding again after the general uprising of August 1944 was crushed by the Germans, and the Poles were ordered to evacuate Warsaw. Jews awaiting the arrival of the Soviet army in the ruins of Warsaw often had to be leery of those with whom they hid. David Landau recalls:

668 Najberg, Ostatni powstańcy getta, 89, 110, 115, 120, 132 (Tyszler), 142–43 (Tyszler).
669 Testimony of Dawid Białogród (Stanisław Nowakowski), dated November 7, 1957, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 5003.
670 Stefan Ernest, O wojnie wielich Niemiec z Żyldami w Warszawie, 1939–1943 (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 2003), 74. See also p. 287 on the use of Jewish policemen.
671 Najberg, Ostatni powstańcy getta, 68.
672 Najberg, Ostatni powstańcy getta, 137.
Under the ground, Jews inhabited caverns and bunkers, like moles, eking out a wait which stretched into three and a half months. A few hundred Jews were daring to defy the fury of the Germans. …

But when we finished and went in to the next room attached to the basement it all became worthwhile. The place had belonged to a jeweller. We found a safe with the key in the lock. Inside it was a small box containing gold coins, a gold-covered cigar box, ladies’ watches with wristbands and on chains, and a considerable number of smaller pieces of jewellery. In ordinary times such a safe would have made one very comfortable.

… we had five women and thirteen other men on our hands … The contents of the safe were later divided more or less equally between us, but we soon discovered we had a thief among us.673

A Jewish woman who hid in cellar with a group of more than thirty Jews stated:

On another night, Sukharevitch came upon someone else again, this time a woman with a five-year-old child, who were lying in the ruins not far from our bunker. It turned out the woman had been wandering around through the ruins for weeks and found nowhere to hide. We took them in with us. They stayed down here even though the second group, which had come in later, objected.

And still another time, we ran into a very religious Jew and a mishimed staying together. They’d also been wandering over the ruins. They found a bunker, but the Germans uncovered it and they only got away at the last minute. We took the in with us, but this time, a violent argument broke out. The violent people refused to keep them. They even talked about taking them outside to be shot. After a long quarrel, they finally agreed to let them stay with us.

Not far from where we were, there was a second Jewish bunker and when they discovered ours, they attacked us and it almost came to bloodshed. To this day, I have no idea what made them do it, but in the end, they realized their mistake and we united. …

For a month, a silence hung over everything as if we were in a cemetery. … Finally, for several nights without stop, we heard heavy artillery barrages. This gave us hope. … We couldn’t stop arguing among ourselves in the bunker. Our “enforcers” even thought of ways to keep all the valuables we’d gotten for themselves. But most of us only thought of surviving these last few days.674

The situation was much the same in most ghettos in occupied Poland. When the remnants of the ghetto population were being mopped up, the Jewish councils and police played a key role in detecting Jews who tried to escape or hide. The ghetto authorities actively participated in uncovering Jews who hid in bunkers and other hiding places. The combination of Jewish police and informers was particularly lethal. Familiar with the topography of the ghetto, the layout of the apartments, and the nooks where people might try to hide, the ghetto police were given the task of sniffing out Jews in hiding. Many well-camouflaged places

would not have been discovered otherwise. Numerous examples have already been described earlier. The same was true in Warsaw, Kraków, Wilno, Kolomyja, Buczacz, Skalat, and many other ghettos.\footnote{Trunk, \textit{Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution}, 308–10.} Similarly, in Łańcut, a number of Jews who had hidden after the liquidation of the ghetto were betrayed by Jews.\footnote{Trunk, \textit{Judenrat}, 513.}

In Szczewierzew, “The German police and the Jewish police, with the assistance of the Judenrat, ran about and dragged the Jews out of bunkers in order to have them sent to Belzec [Belżec].”\footnote{Testimony of Diana Grinbaum, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 1501.}

To capture those who had hidden, the Germans relied on Jewish youths who were adept at locating hideouts.\footnote{Dov Shuval, ed., \textit{The Szczewierzew Memorial Book} (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 2005), 104.}

In Radomsko,

After the liquidation of Radomsker Jewry, there were a number of Jews in hiding places and in bunkers in addition to the remaining Jews in the small ghetto on Limanowski Street. A number of those in the bunker in the knife factory ‘Unitas’ (Limanowski Street 46) were discovered on the first day and all forty of them were taken to Piotrkow [Piotrków] Trybunalski, where an aktzia was then taking place. At Limanowski 42, two Jews Aitsze Fiszman and Zilberszatz were discovered by the Folks[Volks]-Deutsch Kunitsky. They were given to the German regime and they were shot at the Jewish cemetery on the same day.

Every day, new bunkers and hiding places were uncovered and new victims fell. It was suspected that this was the work of a member of the Judenrat and of the commandant of the Jewish police, who knew exactly where the Jews were hiding. Hundreds of Jews from the bunkers were shot on the spot or sent away to Czenstochow [Częstochowa] and from there by transport to Treblinka.\footnote{Zygmunt Klukowski, \textit{Dziennik z lat okupacji Zamojszczyzny (1939–1945)} (Lublin: Lubelska Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1958), 294 (entry for October 31, 1942).}

In Kosów Lacki,

The liquidation of the Jewish community in Kosów Lacki began on September 22, 1942. … SS officers ordered the Judenrat and Jewish Police to gather all the Jews in the marketplace but separated off the families of the labor camp craftsmen in the building where the Judenrat met. SS and Ukrainian auxiliaries accompanied the Jewish Police on a house-to-house search for those in hiding, shooting those they found. … About 150 ghetto residents were killed trying to flee and were buried in a mass grave at the Jewish cemetery. The next day, the SS searched Polish houses throughout the town and in the surrounding countryside, killing Jews they discovered there.\footnote{Simkha Hampel and Yisokhar Minski, “The Megillah of Suffering,” in L. Losh, ed., \textit{Sefer yizkor le-kehilat Radomsk ve-ha-seviva} (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Radomsk, 1967), 361–62; translated as \textit{Memorial Book of the Community of Radomsk and Vicinity}, Internet: \texttt{<http://jewishgen.org/yizkor/radomsko/Radomsko.html#TOC>}.}

Conditions in Lwów, which is representative of the fate of many ghettos, have been described in numerous accounts such as the following:

The Jewish police force was patterned on the Nazi police: Schutzpolizei, Sonderdienst, and Kriminalpolizei (Kripo). It grew to a force of approximately 500 officers.

In the beginning the police were well-regulated, acknowledging the authority of the Judenrat. … However, most joined for personal reasons, having in mind the privileges which went along with the job, such as larger food rations and exemption from forced labor and resettlement, as promised by the Gestapo. Some, driven by the instinct of self-preservation, lost their ability to differentiate right from wrong, and any human feelings. In time they acquired the mentality of the SS and fully cooperated with these murderers.

The worst were the members of the Sonderdienst … Golligier-Schapiro, Krumholz, Ruppert, Scherz, Vogelfaenger, and others fell into this category. The Sonderdienst assisted the Germans and actively participated in the so-called resettlement of Jews. They helped search for hiding places. Living in the ghetto they knew where to look for a bunker. They carried Jews from their hiding places and handed them over to the SS slaughterers. During an Aktion each was given a quota of Jews to be delivered to the SS. Anyone whose operation showed a shortage had to join the detainees himself.

Once one of these “catchers,” who previously had deliberately overlooked a bunker where his sister-in-law was hiding, failed to fulfill his quota. He then rushed back to the bunker, pulled out his sister-in-law, as well as the other Jews who were with her, and delivered them to the SS for deportation.

Morally corrupt, they accumulated large sums of cash and valuables by accepting bribes, blackmailing people, and extorting ransom money for excluding from deportation those who could pay.

They assisted the Germans in confiscating Jewish possessions. Although they were supposed to combat smuggling, they worked hand in glove with corrupt German officers, sharing the spoils with them. They participated with their German principals in drinking and sexual orgies, and in their stupor no longer differed from the SS hangmen. Some Jewish policemen once accompanied the SS to Jaworze and Złoczów to assist their masters in an Aktion.

The authority of the Sonderdienst increased with each Aktion. From August 1942 on, they slowly gained the upper hand over the Judenrat. In 1943 they achieved total superiority, functioning exclusively as agents of the SS, and became the paramount authority over the remnants of the ghetto, replacing the Judenrat entirely. The Gestapo had complete confidence in them. This went so far as to hand over any Jew caught outside the ghetto to the Jewish Sonderdienst. The Sonderdienst kept these Jews in the jail at Weyssenhof [Weyssenhoff] Street. At the earliest opportunity they were delivered on time to join the others on their way to the gas chambers. They did their jobs well.681

681 Joachim Schoenfeld, Holocaust Memoirs: Jews in the Lwów Ghetto, the Janowski Concentration Camp, and as Deportees in Siberia (Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav Publishing House, 1985), 80–82. For another damning account from Lwów see Grynberg and Kotowska, Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945, 283. The Jewish police from Lwów were also employed outside the ghetto. For example, the concentration of 512 Jews in a school on Sobieski Street on March 25, 1942, was accomplished by 10 German, 20 Ukrainian, and 40 Jewish policemen. See Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, vol. 2, 506. The Jewish police from Lwów also took part in the liquidation of ghettos in outlying communities. In Stryj and Rawa Ruska, they helped the German and Ukrainian police round up
Historian Eliyahu Yones fully supports this account of the Jewish “Order Service” (Jüdische Ordnungsdienst), as it was officially known.

Functionally, the Jewish police were divided into four main units:

a. Ordnungsdienst (Order Service)—the largest unit in terms of number of members.
b. Kripo (an abbreviation for the German word Kriminalpolizei), the Jewish criminal police.
c. Sonderdienst or Spezialabteilung, the special service. This unit dealt with problems defined as “political,” including manhunts for Jews who were suspected of belonging to leftist circles and sympathizing with the Soviet Union.
d. The Jewish gendarmerie.

The three last-mentioned units reported directly to the Gestapo, not to the Judenrat, and attracted members of the underworld. The difference among them was not clear-cut and self-evident. …

The Jewish criminal police was headed by Max Guliger-Szapira of Lvov [Lwów], the scion of a family of grain merchants and members of the Jewish sports association Hashomonea before the war. Guliger-Szapira excelled in exposing Jews’ hideouts and handing many Jews over to the Germans. In 1943, the Germans deposed him and replaced him with Rupert. His deputy was a refugee from Kraków named Krumholtz. The two of them competed for primacy with abusive and obscene behavior. The gendarmerie was commanded by Janek Scherz … Other “officers” in the Jewish police force were Barch Roisen, Dr. Abraham Rosenmann, Narcisfeld, and Dr. Tunis. The de facto commander of the Jewish police was Guliger-Szapira. These men inflicted severe damage on the Jewish community of Lvov. …

As the Germans’ policy toward Jews in the Generalgouvernement became tougher, the duties of the Jewish police changed in ways that affected their relations with the Judenrat and caused the Jewish population to view them differently. These matters led to changes in the human makeup of the force. When the function of the police as an instrument of persecution against the Jews became strongly emphasized, men of public sensitivity resigned from the force and were succeeded by riffraff, thugs, brutes, and seekers of illicit lucre—all of whom were willing to obey the Germans’ orders dispassionately, unflinchingly, and mercilessly.

… When compulsory forced labor was introduced, and forced-labor camps were established, the Jewish police was instructed to deal with recalcitrants and to flush out and turn over people in order to meet the labor quota that the Germans had given the Judenrat. Policemen accompanied officials of the Supply Department to expropriate belongings from Jewish homes in accordance with “orders” placed by Germans. This action usually entailed the use of force. In the later summer of 1941. When the Germans established the first slave-labor camps in the Galicia District and ordered the Jewish community to meet the quota of Jewish workers that it required, the Jewish police abducted those marked for labor and turned them over to the Germans. …

Jews for deportation to Bełżec, and were particularly adept at discovering and destroying hideouts. See Grynberg and Kotowska, Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945, 356; Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, vol. 2, 506. In Busk, in addition to the SS, Wehrmacht, SD, German gendarmes, armed local Volksdeutsche, and Ukrainian police, the Germans brought in over a dozen Jewish policemen from Lwów. The terrorized Polish population, appalled
Dr. Adolf Rotfeld collaborated with the Germans from the start; during his tenure as chairman of the Judenrat, the Jewish police performed every mission they were assigned. In the autumn of 1941, the Germans began to establish slave-labor camps across Eastern Galicia and presented the Judenrat with new demands for workers who would toil there. Armed with lists from the Judenrat, the Jewish police fanned out in the ghetto. Since most of the targeted persons evaded the dragnet, the Jewish police met the Germans’ quota by circulating in the streets and arresting every Jew they encountered. Their eagerness to carry out the mission, their ambition, and the necessity of filling the quota were stronger than any permit. Thus, they often disregarded labor permits that those abducted possessed …

Jews who could afford to bribe the kidnappers did so and were released on the spot. Indigent and refugee Jews fell prey to the policemen and were taken away, first to the Jewish labor bureau and thence to slave labor camps.

In November 1941, as SS and Ukrainian police perpetrated the “Aktion under the trestle,” the Jewish police—who continued to abduct Jews in the city streets—also took possession of the battered Jews who had been taken to the labor bureau. There, members of the Ordnungsdienst handed them over to the SS, who then sent them to the camps. …

At this time [1942], the Jewish police were given additional duties and their numbers grew to 750. … The expanded units were the criminal police (the Kripo) and the special service (the Sonderdienst), which were tasked with monitoring Jews who belonged to left-wing circles, keeping track of suspected collaborators with the Soviet regime in 1939–41, and dealing with Jews who traded on the black market. Ordinarily, there was no need for evidence to demonstrate someone’s guilt. A denunciation was all it took to have someone arrested, and the detained person would then come under extortionist pressure. These units of the Jewish police had their own prison where they “interrogated” these miseries, whom they handed over to the Germans only after they had squeezed them dry.

A week after the March 1942 Aktion, the Gestapo ordered the Jewish policemen to report to the front of the Judenrat building. Hauptsturmführer Erich Engels, head of the Jewish Affairs Department of the Gestapo in Lvov, came to this location, escorted by a company of SS men, and informed the commander of the Jewish police that since the ghetto population had contracted by 30,000, there was no longer a need for so many policemen. Accordingly, their population would be trimmed by 200, starting with those who had failed to meet their quota during the Aktion. They were ordered to step out of line and turn in their caps, armbands, and billy clubs; a short time later, they were loaded aboard trucks. Thus the men who several days earlier had helped dispatch Jews to extermination were now banished to labor camps. In several cases, the destination was Janowska. The Germans promised the Judenrat that the deportation of the wayward policemen would be followed by a resumption of calm. As time passed, the ranks of the Jewish police swelled again—to 500 or, according to another source, to 750. Again, the newcomers were coarser that their predecessors …

The Jewish police had various duties in 1943: maintaining hygiene, taking morning roll-call, and escorting workers their jobs. They also hunted for “illegals” who were hiding in the camp and by what was happening, locked itself up in their homes. See A. Shayari, ed., Busk: In Memory of Our Community
helped the Germans perform selections, in the aftermath of which many Jews were deported for extermination. The Jewish police in Lvov were also sent to nearby towns to take part in Aktionen, because Jewish policemen in those localities usually preferred to escape than to participate in the reviled task of turning over their brethren to the Germans. …

The misdeeds of the Jewish police left such a deep impression in the memories of the survivors of the Lvov ghetto that all testimonies mention them. The worst of all, according to the witnesses, were the Sonderdienst men, who believed that their total obeisance to the SS would save their lives. Members of this group, such as Guliger-Szapira, Krumholtz, Rupert, Scherc and Vogelwanger, aided the Germans by participating actively in deportations and in searches for hideouts. As inhabitants of the ghetto, they knew where to search. They dragged people out of their hiding places and unhesitatingly handed them over to the SS hangmen. They were corrupt; they amassed fortunes from bribes that they charged people to spare them from deportation. They also shamelessly participated in the Germans’ drinking parties and merrymaking. 682

With the approach of Passover, the Germans launched an Aktion against “asocial” elements. It began on March 19, 1942. To carry it out, the Jewish police were mobilized. The first group consigned to deportation was the poorest, located on the basis of a list of welfare recipients. Several days later, all Jews who lacked labor permits were gathered in the school on Sobieski Street. When the Germans found the roundup too small, they decided to complete the job themselves with the help of Ukrainian police. … On Passover eve, as the Jews seated themselves at the Seder table, policemen raided their homes, tore them away, and brutally led them to trains. They day after the festival, it transpired that the previous day’s eve had been the last and bleakest day of the “March Aktion,” in which 15,000 Jews were removed from their homes and murdered. …

Before long, the Gestapo embarked on a purge among Jews who had collaborated with it. One by one, various agents and liaisons vanished and were murdered. The Germans began to eliminate anyone who seemed unnecessary to them or who knew too much. Thus, Reiss, the former soap-factory owner who had brokered between Engels and the Judenrat disappeared. So did the Kripo agent Oskar Halperin. 683

On December 5, 1942 … A new Aktion had begun. … The ghetto was totally surrounded.

The Germans and Ukrainians—aided by members of the Jewish police—tossed grenades into the cellars and set afire the wretched wooden dwellings that lined Kleparów Square on all sides. The blaze spread quickly to adjacent buildings. Where Jews were suspected of hiding, the hovels were doused with large quantities of gasoline and then torched. … The dense smoke drove the Jews out of their hideouts. The Germans chased them down and murdered them. Infants were vivisected with bayonets, thrown into the fire, or smashed against the walls. …

(Haifa: The Busker Organization in Israel, 1965), xlvi.

682 Yones, Smoke in the Sand, 118–25.
After the Aktion, the Jewish police abducted Jews to bury the many corpses that remained in the streets. The “gravedigger unit,” as this group was called, interred the bodies in the trenches across from Pilichowska Street. 684

The 30 gravediggers were well situated materially, since they took valuable things from the corpses. 685

In the middle of 1943, SS officer Warzog, having finished his assignment with the liquidation of the Zloczów camp, replaced Willhaus as the commander of Janowska. The new commander … brought several Jews with him; they mingled among the prisoners, gathered information, and kept him abreast of the prisoners’ doings. By means of deception and dissimulation, Warzog tried to create the impression that the regimen had become more humane. His purpose was to mislead the prisoners in order to obviate the possibility of an uprising. 686

Jakub Lang recalled a Jewish policeman by the name of Stark who excelled in locating hideouts of Jews in the Lwów ghetto, thereby exceeding his quota. 687 Ada Kessler-Pawlak also recorded what she witnessed in the Lwów ghetto:

Maks Goligier was in the Jewish police. He walked around the ghetto with his head raised and hit Jews with his rubber truncheon. He had friends among the Gestapo men … He was the right-hand man of the cannibals … He drank with them. His office was in a separate room in the Gestapo building on Pelczyńska Street, which Jews and Poles avoided from a distance. He pointed out former friends, and he knew everyone who wanted to pass as Aryans and did not wear their armbands. 688

Goligier was also employed at the train station where he fingered Jews to the Germans. Other Jewish survivors from Lwów confirm this picture and acknowledge that the ghetto was “full of informers,” thus paralyzing any underground activities. The Sonderdienst was also known to ferret out people with pro-Soviet sympathies and those who belonged to leftist organizations. 689 Ukrainians and Poles working in the Kripo (criminal police) were known to pay Jewish informers to tell them which Jews in the ghetto were wealthy. According to this extortion “game,” these wealthy Jews were arrested, and, upon paying a bribe, were released. 690 Blackmailers were drawn not only from marginal elements of society, but also included some upright members. According to Samuel Drix,

685 Testimony of Abraham Schuss, dated November 9, 1945, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 1153.
686 Yones, Smoke in the Sand, 208.
687 Testimony of Jakub Lang, December 21, 1945, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 1340.
690 Drix, Witness to Annihilation, 38.
I would like to add that in the almost eleven months of my stay at Janowska camp and OT camp, I observed how people behaved at such a time of distress and struggle for life, often in a manner quite hard to predict from their education and social status. They showed themselves as they really were, beneath this veneer. There were some from good homes and privileged backgrounds who behaved like animals, not just stealing to survive but blackmailing and profiting through others’ miseries so they could have a more comfortable life. Fortunately, such people were few, but they were influential. On the other hand, there were people from very simple backgrounds, poor and uneducated, who did all they could to help others at great personal sacrifice and risk.691

Drix describes what happened when four Jewish policemen tried to hide among the other Jews of the work camp:

News about it spread like lightening and soon a crowd gathered, hostile to those four. Jewish policemen from the ghetto, in the period 1942 to 1943, had a very bad reputation. They had actively helped the Gestapo in all the actions, and were very eager, even too eager and brutal. They had filled their pockets with money and valuable objects from their victims or from those whom they had blackmailed. It was therefore understandable that this crowd of inmates granted no mercy to them and offered them no refuge. … These traitors and Judases had earned their punishment at the hands of their own brothers, and their masters’ prize for their faithful service.692

Helene Kaplan, who was imprisoned in the Janowska camp in Lwów, reported:

The Jewish policemen were also known for their lack of compassion towards their fellow Jews. If the lives of their own wives, husbands or children were in danger, all the others would be sacrificed. That was how they operated and how they earned their awful reputation. …

Of course, some of the Jews were rank opportunists, people without scruples and with no soul. One of these was a cook in Janowska. He was killed by the inmates after they learned that he was selling food for money and diamonds while the rest were starving. Unfortunately there were quite a few like him.693

William Ungar, who lived in the ghetto in Lwów, also recalled the Jewish ghetto policemen as being “cruel and unscrupulous”:

But many acted more like devoted servants in the hope of ingratiating themselves with the Gestapo. Others were just callous, brutal people, untouched by any of the nobler sentiments when it came to hunting down their fellows.

691 Drix, Witness to Annihilation, 169.
693 Kaplan, I Never Left Janowska ..., 126.
While at the Janowska labour camp, Ungar was denounced to the Gestapo by oberjude Tenenbaum, the German appointed chief of the Jewish workers.694

A handful Jews from the Lwów ghetto managed to escape and join work crews in Kiev where they posed as Christians. The Jewish intermediaries made a small fortune transporting those desperate to save their lives.  

Marek was fascinated with the Lvov-Kiev escape path that we uncovered. He felt that a lot of Jews could be shipped through it out of Lvov. He was getting friendly with Romek and was trying to get involved in the transports. Was he motivated by the desire to help our compatriots? This was undoubtedly important to him, but what really fascinated Marek was the business opportunity. A safe escape from the Ghetto was worth a lot of money. Marek felt that if he made contact with the Ghetto, he could get a thousand gold dollars per escapee. In a few trips he could make a fortune.695

Throughout Eastern Galicia, as in Lwów, the Germans employed both the Ukrainian and Jewish police to liquidate the ghettos and to search for Jews who tried to hide or escape the round-ups for deportation to death camps: Bóbrka, Bolechów, Borysław, Brody, Buczacz, Bukaczowce, Czortków, Drohobycz, Gródek Jagielloński, Jaworów, Kolomyja, Kopyczyncze, Przemyślany, Rawa Ruska, Rohatyn, Sambor, Skalałt, Sokal, Stryj, Tarnopol, Thumacz, Trembowla, Zloczów, and Żurawno.696 Episodes of corruption on the part of the Jewish councils (Judenrats) and Jewish police abound. Despite this overwhelming evidence, Israeli historian Yitzhak Arad claims: “Cases in which the Jewish police openly aided the Germans were few, and such conduct was not characteristic of the Jewish police in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union.”697

In Buczacz, most survivors condemned the Judenrat and the Jewish Police for corruption. When supplying the Germans with workers for forced labor camps, the Jewish Police, initially commanded by Josef (Józef) Rabinowicz, would “seize … only the poorest Jews … who could not ransom themselves.” … The last head, Baruch Kramer, came in for the harshest condemnation. This “handsome Jew … was still a follower of Hasidism and wore side locks” before the war. But “under the Germans he shaved and became their servant.” As head, “he ran around with a hatchet during the roundups and betrayed the hiding places of the Jews. … He celebrated with the Germans and forced young Jewish women to come to these feasts.” He was thus deemed “more of a collaborator than a Jew,”

694 William Ungar and David Chanoff, Destined to Live (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2000), 171–72, 253, 276, 277.
697 Yitzhak Arad, In the Shadow of the Red Banner: Soviet Jews in the War against Nazi Germany (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, in association with Yad Vashem, The International Institute for Holocaust Reseach, 2010), 258.
in charge of a Judenrat that “became a tool of the Gestapo.” Similar bitterness was expressed about “the shameful actions of the Jewish Police, which, at the height of its degeneration, was headed by Mojżesz Albrecht.” Moshe Wizinger, who later fought with the Polish Resistance, wrote scathingly: “The Jewish Police are robbing, killing, worse than the Germans; Albrecht walks down the streets in an Ordnungsdienst uniform. Like the Germans, he is holding a whip in his hand and woe to whoever will stand in his way.”

In the town of Bolechów, south of Stryj, conditions are described as follows:

After Dr. Reifeisen’s suicide, Dr. Schindler was appointed as the head of Judenrat. Jewish police (or militia) were, as well, organized under the command of the lawyer Dr. Pressler. Initially their role was quite modest and restricted, as for instance, the safeguard of order in the public kitchen of the Judenrat. Later on their importance increased. They got a special cap with a yellow band and an armband they wore on their lower forearm that read, “JUEDISCHER ORDNUNGSDIENST” in red embroidered letters. A kind of cooperation developed between them and the Ukrainian police. Jewish policemen helped in the forced mobilization of Ukrainian labor for compulsory work in Germany. For some time the Ordnungsdienst was much feared by the Gentiles in the neighborhood.

Since the early autumn one could see dozens of men, women and children begging for food from door to door. Most were horribly swollen from hunger. They also picked nettle and other supposedly edible plants in order to prepare something to eat. These people came mostly from the poorer element as well as from the expelled. The Judenrat kitchens supplied hundreds of meals but, unfortunately, these only consisted of thin soup. Typhoid and hunger played havoc with scores. The mortality rate started with several deaths per day and gradually rose to more than 40 deaths a day in the winter of 1942. Then there was a decline. Almost daily, Jewish policemen had to break into dwellings and pull out dead bodies. The total number of victims was then estimated at between 600 and 800.

In contrast, some relatively well-to-do Jews still managed to lead more or less normal lives. Some even had Gentile housemaids and their children got private lessons. Some problems could still be solved by money.

The Jewish police (Ordnungsdienst) then consisted of several tens and had ties with the Ukrainian police.

People got used to beatings and humiliating insults, to “searches” serving as a pretext for looting or bad treatment. The fact that there were several informers and traitors ceased to be considered unusual.

The “Great Action,” as the second action was called, differed from the first action in many ways: public executions (although not of hundreds or thousands), searches in Christian houses, apparently better and more methodical planning, participation of the Jewish police and groups of “Hitlerjugend” (Hitler’s youth organization) brought from outside. Paramilitary organs of “Railway

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Guards” (Bahnschutzpolizei) and “Forest Guards” also joined. Helmets were commonly worn, a kind of novelty at that time.

The worst murderers proved to be the Ukrainian policemen, Luhovyi, Demianyn and, above all, the depraved sadist Matowiecki. Another horrible assassin, equal only to Matowiecki was Strutynski, also a Ukrainian policeman. The German Piatke of Stryj Schupo (Schutzpolizei), chief of Bolechów’s [Bolechów’s] Ukrainian police, had dogs trained to literally tear their victims to pieces.

Some Jewish policemen showed extraordinary ability, enthusiasm and initiative when searching the hiding, often being praised by the Germans and Ukrainians.

When some 2,500 Jews returned from the woods, villages and hideouts they found a looted and deserted town. Dead bodies were still lying everywhere. … It seems the Germans decided to monopolize this “branch.” They sent great amounts of commodities and furniture to Lwow [Lwów] by lorries. It appears, however, they only took interest in goods of higher quality. …

On October 24, 1942, the Judenrat was ordered to extradite 400 Jews to the Gestapo. The task was carried out by the Jewish police. Only on the third, and last, day the Ukrainian police were approached to “give a hand.” … During this action, whoever had the means to bribe the Judenrat, the Ukrainian and the Jewish police, was released. To replace the freed, poorer people were arrested. In fact, they only recently turned poor since the bulk of the original paupers had already disappeared in the spring. This base practice, in addition to being a means for extorting money, also represented the policy of the Judenrat to get rid of the poor. They were considered an element lacking the ability to survive. Finally the 400 were packed into a freight train and transported to an unknown destination (We later learned it was Belzec [Bełżec]). …

Some weeks after the third action, from the 20th to 23rd of November, the fourth action took place. 300 Jews were caught by the Jewish police. This time it was without the help of the Ukrainian police. Again, they were put into a cargo train. In all aspects this action resembled the third action. But now, the employed were exempted. The equipment of he “policemen” consisted of axes, picks and so on used to break the “bunkers” (i.e.: kinds of hiding places). In order to prevent the arrested from escaping, they used various tricks such as taking away the men's trouser belts, thus making running impossible. They also tied the victims to the policemen with ropes. They held them on leashes like dogs. All this was mainly because they had no real weapons. …

All believed the hour of the final action had come. But after some time it became clear that the aim was only to capture the newcomers from Stryj. Jewish policemen arrived and took the unfortunates out, promising they would be sent to the Janowski camp in Lwow. This was an infamous labor camp in Lwow where thousands died. The group was escorted to the Magistrate. There they were held until the afternoon (pending the digging of the grave). Then they were led, until heavy guard, including the “Ordnungsdienst,” to the Jewish cemetery. There they were ordered to completely undress and had to wait an additional two hours as the grave was still incomplete. Some tried unsuccessfully to escape. All the others were shot. The Jewish policemen intended to leave the cemetery but suddenly the Germans and Ukrainians surrounded them. Prior to being executed, the Jewish policemen performed a kind of military parade with salutes, standing at attention, etc, literally to the verge of the grave. Finally they, too, had to undress. Apparently their commander, the lawyer Pressler, son-in-law of Dr. Schindler, had slapped the face of the Nazi
superior officer. It should be mentioned that early in the morning several Jewish policemen fled, since they felt endangered. On the next day, Dr. Schindler committed suicide.⁶⁹⁹

Throughout occupied Poland, the Jewish police played a pivotal role in the round-ups of Jews for deportation to death camps and the killing fields. Since those who participated believed that their cooperation might save them from a similar fate, recruits were not hard to find. However, the abuses they committed on their fellow Jews, such as extortion, robberies, and even rapes, are inexcusable. The testimony of a group of Jews from Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski is probably one of the most damning reports about this phenomenon.⁷₀⁰ The Jewish police played an important role in the deportations to the death camps in October 1942 and January 1943:

On the first night of the Aktion [of October 10, 1942], the Judenrat was eliminated, and all its remaining members were absorbed into the Jewish Police, which became responsible for life and death in the quarter. …

The Germans soon realized, however, that a large number of Jews had gone into hiding or fled the ghetto during the early phases of the Aktion. With the help of I. Rubinstein, the head of former heard of the Judenrat, and also members of the Jewish Police, hundreds of Jews were assembled in the market square, after they had been lured out of hiding, on the false pretense that they would be sent to work in the Starachowice factory camp. Most of this group was sent to Treblinka.

On January 10, 1943, a second deportation Aktion was carried out, this time against the small ghetto. … The Jewish Police assisted the Gestapo in finding those Jews who had gone into hiding. On that day some 300 Jews were shot by members of the SS and the Schupo.⁷₀¹

“Jumpers” left the ghetto in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski to bring back some of the belongings abandoned by Jews when they were forced to move into the ghetto, considering that they were entitled to inherit ownerless Jewish property. Rubin Katz boasts of the advantage that Jewish looters had over Polish ones; the latter “didn't know where to dig for valuables. It was only fair that we should benefit from what the Poles called ‘Jewish booty’ rather than from them, or the Germans.”⁷₀²

Josef Zelkowicz condemns the Jewish ghetto police in Łódź. He provides details on their motives,⁷₀³ which did not include imminent fear of death or family members held as Nazi hostages. After all, Zelkowicz made the statements in September 1942,⁷₀⁴ at which time the Jewish population of the Łódź ghetto was overwhelmingly still intact, and was to remain so for nearly another two years. Interestingly,


⁷₀⁰ Testimony of Anzel Daches, Majer Gdański, Laja Goldman, Mojżesz Klajman, Chana Kohn, Jakub Libman, and Izrael Serman, dated October 13, 1947, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) achive, record group 301, number 2932.


⁷₀² Trunk, Judenrat, 563; Katz, Gone to Pitchipoï, 87.

Zelkowicz makes it clear that the German rewards to the Jewish police were strikingly similar to that given to Poles in order to get them to denounce fugitive Jews. Zelkowicz writes,

They bought the Jewish police—got them drunk, and drugged them by exempting their children from the decree ... and by giving them a kilogram and a half of bread per day—plenty of bread, plus sausage and sugar—in return for the bloodstained job. ... Who should do it but the Jewish police, who in one stroke have been bought off, intoxicated, and ideationally persuaded.\(^{705}\)

Another resident of the Łódź ghetto recalled:

Once, before one of the most dramatic shpera (curfew) in the Łodz [Łódź] ghetto, the Jewish police needed more helpers for their horrible task of selecting all the children for deportation to the death camps. They also tried to mobilize the ghetto firefighters ... Everyone who agreed to participate in this criminal action would receive a big loaf of bread ... Some firefighters accepted the bread and participated.\(^{706}\)

After bribing their way out of the prison where they were being held for deportation, Seva Scheer and her brother made their way back to the Łódź ghetto. “But then a Jewish policeman showed the Germans where we were hiding, in an attic. One German had a whip and he hit my brother! ... When my brother could hardly walk they took us both.” They were deported to Auschwitz.\(^{707}\)

Dr. Leopold Lustig points out that those who joined the Order Police in Drohobycz tended to come from well-off families, rarely from the social margins, and often were prominent members if the Jewish community.

After work, I stopped by to see Salek Welzer ... His mother says, “Salek has hidden because they’re looking for him to unload potatoes.” In comes Wilek Ornstein, an ordner, former hockey-player for “Betar.” ... Where’s Salek?” “I don’t know,” says Mrs. Welzer, and he hits her in the face, and raises his fist again, but I grabbed his arm from behind and twisted it. People came running so he went off. The next morning, Schönbach comes to the appellplatz. ... Wilek points at me. Schönbach hits me with that signet ring and crushes my nose. That amused him. He ordered a lauspromenade, louse road, to be shaved down the middle of my scalp, so that they could keep an eye on me ...

Fredzio W. went to secondary school with me. His mother died before the war. His father, a pipefitter by trade, muscular as a bull and incapable of speaking in a human way in any language, became one of the most dreaded ordners. When the Germans had taken away most of the Jews and didn’t need so many ordners, they led them in a formation to the cemetery and said, “We swore to

\(^{704}\) Zelkowicz, In Those Terrible Days, 297.

\(^{705}\) Zelkowicz, In Those Terrible Days, 305–6.

\(^{706}\) Michael Moshe Checinski, Running the Gauntlet of Anti-Semitism: From Polish Counterintelligence to the German/American Marshall Center (Jerusalem and New York: Devora, 2004), 38.

you that, in recognition of your good services, you wouldn’t be taken away, so we are going to kill you on the spot.” Later the *ordners*’ new commandant brought Fredzio his father’s cap. “If you want to, you can put it on.” And Fredzio put it on and became an *ordner*. Alek Madfes, also from my gymnasium, talented, from a well-to-do family, his father was in the oil business, became an *ordner* after they had taken his parents away. And Mićko R.—the best soccer player in “Betar”—they took his wife, he turned his own relatives in. And Leonek Felsen, the goal-keeper … All strong, fit, in athletic condition.

There were specialists among them. Bross and Baustein knew how to find children who had been hidden and blackmail their parents. Bross had a furniture store before the war; Baustein had been a sergeant in the Austrian army in the previous war. Handsome Broněk Dauerman, black hair and blue eyes, a butcher who knew his trade, hit where it hurt the most. Poliwa, a snitch with watery eyes, watched where someone was hiding and informed Mensinger, brought in from Lwów by Hildebrand. Meszko Weiss, a pre-war street urchin, headed the *Raubkommando* and searched wealthy homes. They killed Imek Grunfeld’s parents and he went around bloated with hunger, so he joined Weiss.

And the intelligentsia. Yoel Holzman, an attorney, he took our Yetka to *Sammelstelle*. Nemlich, a refugee from the west, who taught us geography in the Soviet school. A first-rate young violinist, Galotti, who father was an Italian Jew and mother a Polish Gentile, became the first commandant of the ghetto police. … Maciek Ruhrberg, a young lawyer, unsuccessful before the war because there were too many lawyers in Drohobycz. His father-in-law, Doctor Rosenblatt, became chairman of the Judenrat and Maciek handled extortions. Educated, speaking good Polish and German, they had better access and took more. After he had robbed enough, Maciek bought himself Aryan papers and fled to Warsaw. He sported a beard and paraded there, elegant as an English lord. But the Gestapo, who had their snitches from Drohobycz in Warsaw, brought him back, beat him until he returned everything, and shot him by the fence.

Nobody else, though, enriched himself as much as Engineer Weintraub. He prepared the lists for Hildebrand—who was indispensable and who wasn’t—and he was the lord over life and death. He had his experts who knew who had dollars and valuables, because he wasn’t from Drohobycz himself, he had drifted to us. Small piggy eyes, fat face, he ate and drank with Hildebrand and Mensinger. …

Baumgarten, Weintraub’s main confidant and supplier, drank with him and the SS men. He supplied them with gold and the best boots from the artisan bootmaker, Freilich. Baumgarten had a lover, Giza Bachman, former secretary to an attorney. She knew how to blackmail people, and his son specialized in servicing beautiful married women. They believed that the world belonged to sons-of-bitches, and, indeed, it did. One of the Wiesenthal brothers—they owned a perfumery on Mickiewicz Street—was with us on Borysławka with his wife and little son. They had money. During a selection in the court, Minkus pulled their boy out. “Herr Scharführer, we need this Jew, could you make an exception?” Minkus, with his red, drunkard’s face, foamed at the mouth and put
the barrel of the gun to Baumgarten’s temple, “Saujude du sollst nicht frech warden!” And afterwards they drank together again.\textsuperscript{708}

The ghetto police in Wilno were a privileged class dominated by right-wing Zionists. They participated zealously in rounding up Jews during various German operations such as the mass deportations in autumn 1941, where they also acted as guards on the trains and assisted in unloading the passengers on arrival in the killing fields of Ponary, and the deportations to Estonia in the fall of 1943.\textsuperscript{709} They robbed evacuated apartments and delivered to the Lithuanian police hundreds of Jews whom they had found in hiding places.\textsuperscript{710} An eyewitness described some of the scenes she witnessed:

In the morning we heard heartrending cries from the courtyard next door. Passageways had been carved out there as was done in other courtyards between buildings. I saw Jewish policemen dragging eight women, children, and old people out of the basement on the far side of the courtyard of the building. The young men and girls resisted, would not give in to the police, and wormed their way out of it. …

One of the carriers ran in with a new communiqué: the police had sent for all doctors and nurses to assemble in the hospital courtyard. About a hundred people in white gowns were lowered down; the police surrounded them and led them to the entrance and evidently from there to the camps as well.\textsuperscript{711}

Mendel Balberszski, a ghetto resident accuses the Jewish council, in conjunction with the Jewish police, of luring Jews to their deaths.

A few days after the small ghetto was liquidated and stood empty, the Judenrat of the large ghetto announced that anyone who wanted to could move over to the liquidated ghetto and receive comfortable accommodation there. Those who rook up the offer would be permitted to take over the items left by the people who had been removed. Many Jews accepted the offer and went to the small ghetto. …

The Jewish police of the large ghetto wanted to get rid of what they termed “illegal Jews”—Jews who had no valid work permit. They were particularly interested in eliminating the older and sick people living in the provisional old-age home. The Jewish police of the large ghetto forced out old and lonely people who had no one to save them. … To drive back Jews to the small ghetto after its liquidation was one of the many cynical exercises of the Judenrat in the large ghetto. As soon as the

\textsuperscript{710} Daniel Blatman, \textit{En direct du ghetto: La presse clandestine juive dans le ghetto de Varsovie (1940–1943)} (Paris: Cerf; Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2007), 423. Among the victims was the father of Mikail Brantsovsky, whose hideout was betrayed by a Jewish policeman. See Biographies: Fania Brantsovskaya, Internet: <http://www.centropa.org>.
\textsuperscript{711} Margolis, \textit{A Partisan from Vilna}, 358.
population in the small ghetto was once more large enough for the Gestapo to become interested, they arrived and with whips and dogs dispatched the whole population to Ponary.\footnote{Mendel Balberyszski, \textit{Stronger Than Iron: The Destructon of Vilna Jewry 1941–1945: An Eyewitness Account} (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2010), 10.}

Belberyszski dismisses the arguments advanced by those who justify their involvement with the police.

In time, the police force grew bigger. It established additional branches—a criminal branch and the gate police at the entrance to the ghetto—as well as a police command office, a cooperative, a public kitchen and a court.

The gate police were under the command of a young captain named Meir Levas from Kovno. He was a pathological sadist who trained his unit in his own sadistic spirit and the ghetto often suffered as a result.

The expansion of the police force reached its highest point during the summer of 1942, when the Judenrat was dissolved and the authority of the ghetto fell into the hands of [Jacob] Gens, who became the chief of police and the sole ghetto representative. At that time the police department employed more than two hundred people. Some had joined the force because they felt more secure there than anywhere else. The police also offered food and accommodation privileges. This influenced individuals to join the force as a way to survive the dark period. It should be said that many of the police did not cause any harm to the ghetto community on their own initiative. They “only fulfilled” their duty as police officers and one of their duties was to send other Jews to their death. According to their own moral understanding they were not guilty at all. They fulfilled their duties not by cooperating with the Gestapo but by order of the Jewish authorities. According to the police logic if there was any guilt in their work, the guilt was first of all of the Judenrat and at a later stage that of Gens. I heard this often in conversations with many policemen whom I had known earlier to be decent and morally honest men.

Haim Malczadski had a conscience that worried him a little. But there were many policemen who had no conscience at all. They were the ones whose power went to their heads as soon as they put on their police uniform. They used their position to live it up as much as they could, often holding drinking parties where food was served in overabundance. They used their position to become rich because they were sure that in the Jewish police uniform they would survive.

Other Jews became business people who dealt in the life and death market; still others acted as agents of the Judenrat, informers. It was known in the ghetto that Dessler had his informers while he was the contact man with the Gestapo. At a later stage these police became open traitors to the Jews of the ghetto. They used to go around and seek out the hideouts and hand the people hidden there over to the Gestapo. They were nothing less than the helpers of the Gestapo and the Lithuanians in destroying Jews.

Much Jewish blood lies on the conscience of many of the Jews who wore the police uniform in the large ghetto.\footnote{Balberyszski, \textit{Stronger Than Iron}, 201–2.}
During the liquidation of the Wilno ghetto in September 1943, a brigade of 100 fighters of the United Partisan Organization was surrounded and killed as a result of treachery by the Jewish police and a Jewish informant.714 One of the informers turned out to be a member of the Jewish underground.

The Germans left after [Jacob] Gens [the head of the Jewish council] promised that he and his policemen would bring the necessary number of workers to the gate. … the police and informers searched for Jews hiding in melinas [hideout] and brought them out by force, while the Jews hid in every conceivable corner. During those last days of the ghetto hatred for the informers and police and for those who betrayed other Jews reached its height and was later manifested in the forest: “I was running around in the ghetto and saw Lotek Zaltzwasser accompanied by police officers open a melina full of crying children and screaming others, and drag the men out,” recounted [Vitka] Kempner. … “He had once been my brother’s friend and even a member of the underground. And he betrayed and abandoned us and went over to Gens. After we went into the forest I returned, found him in hiding and brought him back with me so he might be executed, and I am proud of having done it.”715

After the liquidation of the ghetto in Wilno, in September 1943, Jews found hiding in the ruins of the ghetto were known to reveal the hiding places of other Jews in exchange for a “promise” that they (i.e., the informers) would be spared. Even after their arrival in the killing fields of Ponary, outside the city, Jews continued to reveal the hiding places of other Jews. Hundreds of Jews were betrayed and murdered.

… the Lithuanians have proven good psychologists of the Jews sentenced to death with their tactic of searching for Judases who, for the doubtful possibility of saving their own lives, have betrayed their brethren’s well-concealed hiding places.

Now the Lithuanians confirm the effectiveness of their tactic when they bring a [new] group. They separate 3–4 Jewish men and women and shoot the rest before their eyes. When it is the turn of these 3 or 4 they tell them “you will live,” but they must reveal hiding places. When one of them reveals one, he goes to the city, to the ghetto, but immediately returns and dies. At the same time a new “troika” of Judases is chosen, as in a cycle, with excellent results for the executioners and a fatal ending for the Judases.716

Jewish police from Wilno were dispatched to the labour camp in Rzesza to arrest Jews suspected of smuggling weapons into camp and brought them back to be interrogated and tortured.717 The Jewish police became so experienced in “resettlement” that the Germans would send them to adjacent ghettos to help in the “action.” The Jewish council in Wilno dispatched a squad of policemen, some 30 strong, to carry out

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715 Dina Porat, *The Fall of a Sparrow: The Life and Times of Abba Kovner* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2010), 139.
On October 23, 1942, the Jews of Oszmiana were driven to the assembly place by police from the Wilno ghetto accompanied by local policemen. They “selected” 200 sick and 392 elderly people; 410 were sent off to Zielonka, some 7 or 8 kilometres from Oszmiana, in previously prepared carts. They were put to death in the presence of several Wilno Jewish policemen. According to Meir Mark Dvorzhetsky, the Jewish policemen took part in the actual execution. A Jewish policeman from Wilno named Nika Drezin, who “betrayed melinas [hideouts] freely,” was put in charge of the ghetto in Oszmiana. Other Jewish policemen from Wilno who participated in the liquidation of the small ghettos in the Wilno area were Bernshtein, Natan Ring, Salek Dessler, and Meir Levas. At least three Gestapo agents were planted at the H.K.P. work camp in Wilno: Nika Drezin, Auberbach and Jona Bak.

Squads of the Lwów ghetto police took part in the deportation of the inmates from ghettos in Jaworów and Złoczów in April 1943, and in a number of small ghettos in the vicinity of Lwów. As in many other towns, during the liquidation of the ghetto in Złoczów, a Jewish policeman by the name of Schapira led the Germans to Jewish hideouts to capture the remaining Jews. Jewish policemen were brought from the Kraków ghetto to assist in the deportation from the nearby town of Wieliczka. The Jewish police from Nowy Sącz participated in the deportation of Jews in Stary Sącz.

The Jewish police played a pivotal role in the deportations in Eastern Upper Silesia. The round-ups in Modrzejów in March 1941 were conducted with the participation of the Judenrat and the Jewish police. As Jews came to expect further round-ups for labour camps and deportations, some created concealed hiding places in the ghetto. However, the German authorities and the Jewish police knew who was missing and searched for those in hiding, calling for them to come out. The Jewish police from the Sosnowiec and Będzin ghettos were dispatched to take part in “resettlements” in small ghettos in Eastern Upper Silesia such as Jaworzno in the fall of 1940, Klobuck in June 1942, and Olkusz in June 1942. According to a Jewish witness, their treatment of the Jews was more brutal than the Gestapo’s. Afterwards the Jewish police ferreted out scores of Jews in well-concealed hideouts the Germans had failed to detect, and brought

717 The Words to Remember It, 97.
719 Trunk, Judenrat, 514; Arad, Ghetto in Flames, 342.
720 Kruk, The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania, 411.
723 Trunk, Judenrat, 514.
724 Ephraim F. Sten, 1111 Days In My Life Plus Four (Takoma Park, Maryland: Dryad Press, in association with the University of Wisconsin, 2006), 26–27.
them to assembly points from whence they were deported to Auschwitz. Later on, the German employed the local Jewish police in the final clearance of the Będzin ghetto. Tusia Herzberg recalled:

In the night of 21–2 June 1943 the German police and members of the order police went into the Jewish homes and pulled the Jews out and brought them to a square in the ghetto. There a selection took place … The whole square was surrounded by Gestapo people …

In addition to using local Jews, the Germans dispatched Jews from Sosnowiec to assist in the liquidation of the ghetto in Chrzanów:

The last member of the Judenrat in Chrzanów, whom the Germans left behind to carry out the “technical” liquidation of the Judenrat after all the Jews of Chrzanów had been taken away to the gas chambers—this person, who watched his brothers and sisters being led away to the slaughter, followed the Germans’ command two days after the final “transfer” and demanded that the few Jews who were still hiding in attics and basements come out of their hiding places and report voluntarily to the police. He himself personally went through all the empty Jewish houses, shouting that the Jews should come out of their bunkers, that nothing would be done to them. And the few Jews who still believed him this time fell into the bestial hands of the Germans.

[Major] Lindner and his Jewish helper Moniek Merin understood this, and therefore recruited the Jewish militia to help carry out the last labor action. They didn’t even rely solely on the local Jewish militia from Chrzanów, instead bringing along some Jewish police from Sosnowiec for the purpose. In November 1941 a detachment from Sosnowiec arrived, and with true devotion to the German hangmen, they carried out their vile task. Although officially only those girls who had been assigned by the Judenrat to be taken to the labor camp were to be seized, the roundup by the Sosnowiec police turned into a general hunt for young women. The Sosnowiec militia, or “Merin’s Bodyguards” as they were called, were the equal of their German supervisors in many respects. Without second thoughts, with cynical cruelty, nearly all of them burst into Jewish homes, searching for terrified Jewish girls, dragging them out of their hiding places, and taking them to Sosnowiec and thence to the local transit camp. Afterward the young women, along with similar victims from other towns, were transported to various labor camps.

Jewish policemen from the larger nearby towns of Sosnowiec and Olkusz were used to liquidate the ghetto in Kazimierz near Strzemieszyce. They called in the German police to assist them when things got out of control:

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729 Account of Marian Auerhahn (Głuszecki) in Krzysztof Kocjan, Zagłada Żydów olkuskich (Olkusz: Olkuskie Stowarzyszenie Kulturalne “Brama”, 2002).
731 Bochner, Sefer Chrzanow, 80ff., 99ff.
One night in April 1942, several “Ordners” came to our town [Kazimierz] from Sosnowiec and in the morning made a roundup for Arbeitseinsatz. However, no one was taken because the men had hidden in a nearby forest. The Ordners caught only one 10-year old boy whom they took to Sosnowiec.

In May 1942, at the same time as took place in Sosnowiec, there was a deportation. At 7 o’clock in the morning, five Jewish policemen came by vehicle from Olkusz together with a representative of the Olkusz Judenrat, a Mr. Czarnecki. The Ordners gave each Jewish family a list with specification of items which the families could take with them. The came by vehicle Ordners informed the populace that all Jews would be resettled to Strzemieszyce.

I was ordered to remain so as to guard the property of the Judenrat. Each person was allowed to take three changes of underwear, certain items of clothing as well as food. The total taken could not exceed 10 kg. Everyone had to appear by 10 in the morning near the Judenrat office for registration. Everyone reported for the registration. The person who registered us was a representative from Olkusz. After registration, the Ordners set all the people into columns and led the march by foot on the road to Strzemieszyce.

By 11 o’clock, the entire Jewish population had been removed. Only I remained there. When the column began to march, Jews began to escape across the fields. Men, women and children escaped. The Ordners couldn’t bring the situation under control. Mr. Czarnecki sent an Ordner to Kazimierz to take from there “Schupos” (German armed police).

Immediately, there arrived over a dozen “Schupos” with 4 dogs. The “Schupos” set their dogs upon the Jews and beat Jews. They shot as a deterrent and in this manner completed the column’s march.

The Ordners helped the “Schupos” in the hunting of Jews. The “Schupos” beat Jews bloodily and, with assistance of the Ordners, drove everyone to Strzemieszyce. About 50 persons escaped and weren’t caught. Among the escapees were my sister, her husband and children. Just after the column left, I packed my valise and went to railway station to go to Sosnowiec. After I had arrived in Sosnowiec, just an hour later, an Ordner came to me and demanded I return immediately under threat of sending me together with others to Auschwitz.

The Centrale had been informed by Mr. Czarnecki of my escape. The following day I went to Strzemieszyce. In Strzemieszyce, a member of the Judenrat told me that, after assembling the Jewish people from Czarne Morze, they had all been held in a school building near the Judenrat. There, the Germans carried out a selection and left in Strzemieszyce only the young people who were working.

The remainder, together with a group of older persons and invalids from Strzemieszyce, were taken by the Schupos and assisted by Jewish Ordners, on the following Sunday morning at 10 o’clock to Dabrowa Gornicza [Dąbrowa Górnicza]. Handicapped people were taken on wagons. Some old people were afraid to sit on the wagons because they thought that they would be the first to go for extermination.

The Judenrat board ordered me to go to Dabrowa Gornicza because there a nurse was needed there. The transport of Jews from Strzemieszyce was put into the synagogue where a part of the Jewish population of Dabrowa Gornicza destined for deportation had already been gathered. Everyone assigned to deportation was held in the synagogue and an adjacent building of the
Judenrat. The gathered persons were guarded by German police and Jewish Ordners. I acted there as a nurse. This transport waited three days for departure. During the entire time Jews couldn’t leave the closed two buildings (synagogue and the Judenrat building). Physiological needs were performed on the spot since it wasn’t permitted to leave the building. Jews brought buckets (of waste) out of the buildings under guard of Ordners.

The night before the transport left, several Gestapo persons, with assistance of Ordners, performed a roundup among the Jewish population so as to complete the transport’s assigned quota of victims. During the entire period the Judenrat supplied food for the guarded Jews (dinners, bread, coffee).

On Tuesday noon, the Gestapo and Ordners formed the assembled Jews into a column and marched them to the railway station. Sick persons numbering about 50 were brought in vehicles by order of the Gestapo. All the people were loaded by Germans onto railcars and taken to Oświęcim (Auschwitz). During the deportation in Dąbrowa Górnicza, there were present representatives of the Centrale including Moniek Merin, Frania Czarna, Dr. Lieberman and others. I don't remember all the names.

There were also present representatives of the Strzemieszyce Judenrat such as president Flaschenberg, Laskier and others.732

In Dąbrowa Górnicza, the Jewish police assisted the Germans in deporting the Jews to Auschwitz:

On August 12, 1942, all the inhabitants of Dąbrowa were summoned to appear on Kreutzstrasse at 7:00 A.M., on the basis or orders issued by the Gestapo and the Sipo (State Police) from Katowice and Organisation Schmelt. The aim was to stamp their identity cards (the so-called Lichtbildausweise). There were between 2,500 and 3,500 Jews gathered in the yard. A witness to these events, Karol Herszkowicz, reported: “At about 100:00 A.M., Germans arrived with arms and the police with guns. There were eight of them: groups of three went to the roofs of the houses and were standing there with guns ready for use in a shooting position, while Jewish Police [Ordners] stood around the people with whips in hands.” A commission divided the people gathered there into three groups: one group was to remain in the town to work in the workshops, the second was to remain only temporarily in Dąbrowa, and the third group was to be transported to Auschwitz. As a result of the selection, about 1,500 people were deported. … an official of Organisation Schmelt based in Sosnowiec who was in charge of the Aktion, was assisted by Dreier, the military police, and the Jewish Police.733

During a round-up of Jews in Plissa near Dzisna, a policeman named Yakov helped the Germans by pointing out the places where some Jews were hiding in the ghetto.734 In Raków near Mołodeczno, Jewish policemen prepared a list of Jews and handed it over to the German police.735 In Brańsk, a Jewish policeman pointed out escaping Jews and the head of the Judenrat tracked down the hideouts of 70 Jews

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who had tried to avoid deportation. These Jews were then apprehended and executed by the Germans.\(^{736}\) According to Isaiah Trunk, the trial in Israel of David Neiman, a policeman from the Ostowiec ghetto, “gives an idea of the deplorable role the Jewish police played during the ‘resettlement’ in some of the ghettos and of the attitudes of the inmates towards them: the mere fact that a bunker became known to a Jewish policeman was enough to scare the hidden Jews and to compel them to scatter.”\(^{737}\)

Non-police informers played a similar role in many localities:

In May 1942, there was a deportation from the nearby town of Markuszow [Markuszów]. Hundreds of Jews, tipped off by the Judenrat that they were going to be sent to death camps, fled into the forest at Wola Przybysław [Przybysławskaja]. Many of them escaped to Kamionka. Twenty of them were recaptured when [Jewish] informers tipped off the Nazis, who ordered the local Judenrat to round them up. …

All the men and women who were rounded up that day were taken to the meadow … and shot.

One of those who escaped from Markuszow to Kamionka was Blinka Rubinstein, a beautiful, brown-haired, blue-eyed girl. When I met her later, she told me that, after being captured by the Judenrat police, she and the other Markuszow escapees had been handed over to the Polish police and the Germans. While they were standing in front of the police station, one of the Jewish informers who had tipped off the Germans walked up to her and said in Polish, “You are a Czech. Don’t say a word.” He pulled her out of the lineup and led her to a spot where she could slip away.

I imagine that the informer, Moishe Klerer, did not have the heart to send such a beautiful young woman to what he knew would be certain death.\(^{738}\)

A number of Jews, among them a painter named Brethmelt, helped the Gestapo to locate hiding places during the the deportation of Jews from the ghetto in Przemyśl.\(^{739}\) A bunker in which several hundred Jews took shelter was betrayed by a Jew who had been apprehended by the Germans; only two Jews managed to hide and avoid detection.\(^{740}\) According to another account from that city,

There was a bunker in the Ghetto that involved lifting the top of a stove and there was a staircase to go down. People were ingenious the way they built these bunkers in the Ghetto. When they discovered one, they [i.e., the Germans] would promise the people they would spare their lives if they would tell of others. They would spare their lives for a couple of hours, that was all.

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\(^{737}\) Trunk, *Judenrat*, 558.


\(^{740}\) Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach*, 173.
So they gave away where my aunt and uncle were hidden with their children. The Germans were afraid to go down the stairs and the people would not come up. So they threw Molotov cocktails down the stairs and burned them alive.\textsuperscript{741}

The Judenrat in Tłuste near Stanisławów was notorious for its thievery and misappropriated property collected for various purposes such relief for the poor and bribes for the Germans. When one of its few honest members protested, he was harassed and denounced to the Germans as an NKVD confidant.\textsuperscript{742} As Baruch Milch explains, the Jewish council worked hand in glove with the Jewish police and other collaborators:

I agreed to sit on the Judenrat before I knew what this would entail … At first I cooperated and delivered anything I could find, even wedding rings. However, after I observed some Judenrat officials cheating and pilfering, I quarreled with them and resigned. My act backfired; from that moment on they made my life was miserable. The head of the Judenrat was an acquaintance, a doctor, who retaliated at the professional level. …

My place on the Judenrat was taken by one Dr. Aberman, a quiet, polite man who showed his true colors later, during the Aktionen. Dr. Aberman aided the Jewish and the Ukrainian police in their Jew hunting, and was named the Judenälteste (chairman of the Judenrat), and exercised great cruelty. Disregarding medical ethics and his kinship with the persecuted Jewish community, he acted in ways that, he believed, would help him and his family to survive unscathed.

To command the Jewish police, the authorities appointed a vicious and mentally disturbed Jew who was an epileptic. He caused the community great suffering and with his own hands dragged his parents out of hiding at the climax of a sudden Aktion and delivered them to the killing ground in the cemetery.\textsuperscript{743}

The Jewish police in Kolomyja was actively involved in policing the ghetto and rounding up Jews for deportation and execution:

Several weeks before the move into the ghetto, the Judenrat began to recruit the A.D. [\textit{Ordnungsdienst} or Jewish police], and in order to be a member of the A.D., money or influence was needed. People believed that membership in the A.D. would give them a better chance of going out from the ghetto more easily and thus enable them to provide their families with all they needed in order to survive. And by then each Jew had already suffered great need and hunger. People had also heard from other cities where ghettos had been established earlier that the Jewish police had earned a lot of money. The members of the A.D., however, had abused their power. They were supposed to watch the ghetto gates. But they used to help the Ukrainian police search the Jews when the Jews came back from work in the evening. They searched to see if the Jews had hidden a

\textsuperscript{741} Account of Teodora (Cesia) Zimmerman Miller in Hartman and Krochmal, \textit{I Remember Every Day…}, 49.
\textsuperscript{743} Baruch Milch, \textit{Can Heaven Be Void?} (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2003), 76–78.
little bit of food in their clothes for their families in the ghetto. And since each worker, out of great need, was forced to “smuggle,” the A.D. extorted from him a portion of the food or all of the food, or a cash payment. The A.D., also took away or, better said, robbed the Jews who were taken away of their remaining possessions; they could step out of the ghetto without being stopped and trade or sell the items. They also helped the Gestapo in the time of the “actions”.

In the ghetto there still remained several hundred people. (When the ghetto was established, there were over eighty thousand, including those from the surrounding areas.) Some held that there were still 700 people in the ghetto and others said there were 1200 people. No more searches were carried out. Whoever could do so lived in hiding. Mostly, these were old people and children.

Four days after the Hallerbach action, the Judenrat received the order to shoot 500 old people. This time the Gestapo did not come to the action. It was given over to the Jewish A.D. to carry out and the A.D. copied their masters very well. Without pity, every hiding place was torn down. And if they couldn’t find the hidden ones, they forced the sons and the daughters to give up their parents. And if the daughters refused to reveal the hiding place, took the mothers and their children to the slaughter. Shameful bargaining began. Sons bought back their mothers or fathers for several hundred dollars. They took the money and in place of an old one, they sent a young life, a child.

For the required number of corpses had to be correct. There were also situations where someone took the ransom money, freed the old person, and soon told another A.D. about the hidden one, and the second one took the victim since there was no money left to buy back the person one more time. Every day they needed new victims. The children’s action came right after the action against the old people which had lasted several days. It was claimed that the homeless and orphaned children were not productive and were a burden upon the city. So they all have to be put to death.

The A.D. also took care of this work. They did not only search for homeless and orphaned children. That would be too much trouble for them. Wherever they saw a child, they put an end to him. In some cases, if the parents had money, they were able to buy back the child. They brought the children to the prison, just as they had done with the old people.744

The Jewish police in Tarnopol was indispensable in uncovering hideouts built by the Jews. According to one Jewish witness, “if not for the treacherous Jewish militia, it would have taken the Germans ten years to discover these hideouts.” The Jewish police “throughout the night … plundered [evacuated Jewish] homes” and was also “rewarded for its efficient service with monetary bonuses of 50 zlotys … and those with stars received boots, pants, etc.” from the booty that had been gathered from the victims.745 A diary penned during the war as these events were occurring is particularly vivid and scathing. Aryeh Klonicki devotes his harshest criticism to the Judenrat and the Jewish ghetto police, and does so as an eyewitness. He faults them for beating Jews, for taking all the Jews’ valuables for themselves, for enriching themselves through

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the taking of bribes, and even of throwing Jewish children out of windows. Klonicki assigns, first the foremost, the role of “greedy” people helping themselves to the belonging of the Jews to the Jewish ghetto police. He comments,

But the main source of profit offered itself during the “actions” against the Jews, when the policemen would rummage amongst the clothes of the dead, extracting dollars and other valuables.

Here you have a new chapter in the history of our martyrdom: The descent of Jewish morals to their lowest depths. Do not think for a moment that distress has ennobled our souls. The very contrary is true.

Clearly, this repulsive conduct was the result of severe wartime demoralization. Robbing the dead was not the characteristic of any specific nationality.

The Jewish police from Tarnopol gained notoriety in surrounding towns, where they were deployed in various operations. In Czortków, the Order Police from Tarnopol took part in the deportations to the death camps. A survivor from Rohatyn writes: “Jewish police from Tarnopol came to Rohatyn and behaved as badly as the Germans.” After the Germans decreed that Jews turn in their gold and silver, “several Jewish traitors” accompanied the Border Guard when they made their rounds in Skala Podolska, looting Jewish houses in search of gold and silver. Since the Judenrat was finding it increasingly difficult to collect the required number of labourers, the Jewish police, with the help of the Ukrainian police, began to forcibly remove people from their homes and assembled them for shipment to a labour camp. The Jewish police then patrolled the streets searching for more Jews to include in the contingent.

An account from Skalat states that Jewish policemen from Tarnopol participated in helping the Germans search for Jews in hiding.

The town of Skalat [Skalat] was to have been declared Judenfrei following the mass murder during the “Sobbing Graves” ‘action’ in April 1943. However, since a sufficiently large number had managed to hide, an order came from Tarnopol permitting the surviving Jews to return to the ghetto. Again they were told that they would be permitted to live there peacefully. Most importantly, they were to maintain their strength and sanitation, as they would still be needed as laborers. To encourage them further to believe that they would not be killed, the Tarnopol Gestapo

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745 Żaneta Margules, “Moje przeżycia w Tarnopolu podczas wojny,” Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego, no. 36 (1960): 78.
746 Aryeh Konitski, The Diary of Adam’s Father: The Diary of Aryeh Klonicki (Klonymus) and His Wife Malwina, with Letters Concerning the Fate of Their Child Adam (Jerusalem: Beit Lohamei Haghetatot/Ghetto Fighters House, 1973), 41–42.
747 Konitski, The Diary of Adam’s Father, 41.
750 Tracy, To Speak For the Silenced, 86.
751 Tracy, To Speak For the Silenced, 88–91.
sent down ten Jewish policemen, led by one Aba Tennenbaum, assigned to maintain Law and Order and, at the same time, to serve as tools in the execution of the Germans’ plan.

The Jewish police from Tarnopol exerted themselves to instill calm and to persuade the people that as long as they were around there would be no new slaughters. This time, however, no one believed them. Every evening, an exodus would begin. As night came on, people sought out lodgings among the Gentiles or crept stealthily into barns and stables to spend the night. At dawn, learning that all was quiet in the town; they would return to the ghetto, only to roam again the next night …

The ghetto was emptied of many people every night. … The police searched the empty houses during the nights, taking whatever they liked of the furnishings, and also taking the opportunity to note down suspected hiding places or bunkers.

Generally, the Jewish police from Tarnopol behaved abominably. In addition to maintaining close relations with the officials of the local camp and with the Germans, they engaged in drunken revelry, robbery and rape.⁷⁵²

A Jewish witness recalled conditions in the ghetto in Zbaraż near Tarnopol shortly before its liquidation:

The better nourished Jewish militia members suddenly acquired a maximum of 130 new recruits. This event reinforced our fear that mass executions would soon be implemented. Mr. Gruenfeld, the despicable collaborator, knew precisely what the Nazi masters expected him to achieve. The local Jews feared his presence as much as that of the SS overlords. … German SS soldiers, Ukrainian militiamen, and the Jewish auxiliary police made sure that we poor devils would not succeed in escaping our predetermined destiny.⁷⁵³

A survivor from Mikulińce near Tarnopol recalled:

The Germans kept rounding up and sending us away to hard labor. … There was also a Jewish Militz [militia] which used to escort us to and from the labor sites, and also to our execution. Some Jewish militiamen were worse than the Germans. Not one of them survived.⁷⁵⁴

According to an account from Radzyń Podlaski,

The most inhuman order of all consisted of providing a number of Jewish people for extermination before a certain date. For Lichtenstein and Gruenblatt [who stood at the head of the Judenrat] in Radzyn [Radzyń]—and others in other cities—their punishment was the task of deciding who would die sooner, and who later. … Money, kinship, friendships and other relationships with these

⁷⁵⁴ Trunk, Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution, 113.
two men were the decisive factor for one’s resettlement. Some judgments were postponed, but more were annulled.

It is no wonder that these two men who had the absolute power of life and death over the Jews of Radzyn were feared and hated by everyone. …

In the nearby town of Międzyrzec Podlaski, the Jewish police and informers struck fear into the hearts of those Jews who still survived the deportation. In May 1943, relying on Jewish informants to locate ghetto bunkers, members of Reserve Police Battalion 101, Ukrainian SS auxiliaries, and the Radzyń SS demolished walls to uncover hidden Jews.

Miedzyrzec [Międzyrzec] was a collecting point for Jews for the whole area. … At this time there was no Judenrat, no administration, only a brutal Jewish police force which was known to cooperate with the Gestapo. …

Every few weeks people were deported from Miedzyrzec, usually to Treblinka. The first task for arriving Jews was, therefore, to build bunkers and underground hide-outs. …

The Jewish police, including its agents and informers, distinguished itself by its brutality. …

An Aktion against the Jews … It was like hunting wild animals. The police were the beaters and the SS the hunters. …

About 25 men, women and children were in our bunker. … We were in the bunker for two days and two nights when we heard a new wave of attacks on our house. …

Just when we thought that the search was over, the Nazis reappeared, this time at the toilet entrance to our bunker which we had considered absolutely safe. Later we learned that they had discovered a neighboring bunker and were given the location of our hide-out by a young man who knew something about it. Under the threat of smoking us out with grenades, they ordered us to leave the bunker immediately. …

We crept out of the bunker with raised hands. … In 1947, in Marburg and [sic] der Lahn, I recognized the man who had revealed our hiding place. I found no reason to reproach him at this time, but I did not want to talk to him either.

After the Aktion, Lubicz, a longtime SS informant, was named the “ghetto commander.” He recruited a Jewish police force that turned over unregistered fugitives to the German gendarmerie. These Jews were shot. Lubicz persuaded the Germans to strip and search Jewish deportees to death camps in order to confiscate their valuables. Afterwards, he looted some of the valuables that had been seized from a storehouse. When the Germans found out, Lubicz pinned the deed on other Jews who were promptly executed. Lubicz demanded bribes to allow Jews to remain in secure positions, and personally captured Jewish fugitives. Lubicz’s wife, by the name of Tysz, used to organize orgies in the ghetto for the Germans.

755 Schupack, The Dead Years, 56–57.
After some Jewish partisans issued a death sentence against him, Lubicz helped the German gendarmerie organize a raid in which four partisans were killed.\footnote{Testimony of Lejb Goldberg, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 3502.} Similarly, when some Jews who had escaped the deportations and other towns arrived in Łosice, tipped off, the Germans conducted searches throughout the ghetto and executed all the escapees they found.\footnote{Dean, \textit{Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945}, vol. II, Part A, 401.} On occasion, there were retaliations against informers and looters. In Łosice,

Soon after the deportation, the gendarmes announced that the large ghetto was off-limits. Anyone found there without permission would be shot. The Germans wanted to prevent looting, since they considered any abandoned belongings to be Reich property. However, the inhabitants of the small ghetto, who worked in teams to “clean” dwellings in the old ghetto, had been pilfering long before that. … several people were murdered [by the Germans] for attempting to steal confiscated property that had already been placed in storage.\footnote{Weinstein, \textit{Quenched Steel}, 90.}

After one of the last deportations in the Białystok ghetto in February 1943, looting and denunciations abounded. The Judenrat published a list of 35 ghetto residents who were caught looting abandoned Jewish homes. They were detained for a few weeks and lost their work permits.\footnote{Żbikowski, \textit{Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945}, 965.}

The Germans, aware that they were having less success in rounding up the Jews with each successive day, tried a new tactic—encouraging people to inform by granting them immunity from deportation. Each informer would be issued with a document stating “Dieser Jüden verräter ist befreit von Transport” (This Jewish traitor is exempt from the transport). Dozens of people chose to save their lives by becoming turncoats: “Three soldiers go by led by an old woman—a mayserte [Yiddish for “informers”]. Five Germans are led by a young lad—a moyser [“informers”]. They make a beeline for places no one would have suspected of hiding people, and expose their wretched inhabitants.” This tactic, which resulted in the exposure of hundreds of Jews, caused a moral degeneration in the ghetto. … The few dozen informers in the Białystok ghetto were responsible for hundreds of deaths, and the Germans were pleased with the results of this tactic.

Looting was another phenomenon that ate away at the moral fabric of the ghetto. People left their hiding places at night, entered abandoned apartments, and took food, property, and silver. Most of the looters were members of the underworld, but some were honest people driven to this extreme by poverty and hunger. The Judenrat put up a notice threatening heavy penalties for looting, but the temptation was too great, and few heeded the warning.\footnote{Sara Bender, \textit{The Jews of Białystok During World War II and the Holocaust} (Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2008), 201–2.}
On Saturday, February 13, 1943, a day after the end of the aktion, the Germans erected a gallows near the Judenrat building and hanged three Jews for looting empty apartments. On the same day, the ghetto Jews began hunting for informers. The hunt continued for about a month: “They are hunting down informers and beating them to death. One has only to point to an informer, for hundreds of people to set upon him. … They have already hanged three informers and lynched another three. They are thrown on to wagons while still breathing and taken to the cemetery. The police turn a blind eye to what’s going on.” The Judenrat also condemned the informers, and on February 19, it published a list of thirty-five ghetto residents “who in those dark days, looted empty or abandoned apartments. Most of them received two or eight weeks in jail, or open-ended prison sentences, and had their work permits permanently confiscated. Among those arrested were the Yudowsky brothers, who moved to Białystok after the aktion in Słonim. Rumor had it that even in Słonim they had been Gestapo agents.

In Białystok, they were exempt from wearing the yellow patch and roamed freely through the city, terrorizing both the Jews and the Poles. During the aktion, the Yudowsky brothers denounced Jews to the Germans and took every opportunity to extort money from the Jews. … after the aktion, Yaakov Feyerman, of the underground shot one of the brothers, but only wounded him. This incident, which created a furor within the Gestapo, was exploited by the Judenrat to show up the Yudowsky brothers in their true colors. The Germans arrested them and their families, and later shot them.764

Another report on the 200-strong Jewish police force in the Białystok ghetto states:

Unlike the Judenrat clerks, the Police members were paid regular salaries. “The first wave of the people who joined the ghetto police were criminals. A group called ‘The Black Hand’ terrorized and blackmailed people. They were purged, however, and the second wave of joiners were the members of the intelligentsia, a lot of mama’s boys who believed it was safer than doing other work,” recalled Charles Zabuski (Zabuski and Brott 1996). Contrary to this view, Lipa A. described the Jewish police as “the best young people in the ghetto” (HVT-1842). Although seemingly contradictory, these two statements are not mutually exclusive. Among the first wave of recruits to the Jewish police were Pfenigstein, who served as the police superintendent, and Grisha Zelikowicz, a low ranking serviceman. Both actively engaged in extortion, blackmailing of rich Jews and informing on ghetto inhabitants to the Gestapo. Pfenigstein, who acted independently, was neutralized rather quickly and killed by his German masters who did not look favorably on his clandestine attempts to amass personal wealth (Bender 2008). Zelikowicz and his collaborators in the Jewish police turned out to be a more serious threat because they had an ambition to gain control over the Judenrat financial department and probably even to oust Barasz. However, Zelikowicz was also outsmarted by Barasz and his allies, and ended up in the Gestapo jail. Yet, even Zelikowicz, who was considered “the most negative personality in the ghetto,” even by people whom he assisted, was capable of compassion when it came to people he knew. The father and the sister of Lipa A. were among the deportees to Prużany. Lipa’s mother, who was friends with Zelikowicz’s sister tried to bribe him to obtain the family return to Białystok. Zelikowicz helped and refused payment for his efforts (HVT-1842).

764 Bender, The Jews of Białystok During World War II and the Holocaust, 211–12.
The mosrim (literally “givers away” in Hebrew and Yiddish) became the plague of the Białystok ghetto during the February Aktion because they were extremely effective in discovering the hideouts.

“The three soldiers are going with an old lady—an informer. Five Germans—a lad leads them—an informer,” wrote Mordechai Tenenbaum (Tenenbaum-Tamaroff 1984). As a compensation for their services, the Germans gave the informers a document stating that “this Jewish traitor is exempt from the transport” (Bender 2008). The fear of the mosrim was so high that when Jack R. and his friend went out of their hideout to search for food and accidentally discovered a bunker with hiding Jews, the people in this bunker wanted to kill them. Their lives were spared only because among the people in the bunker was a lady from Jack R.’s hometown, who knew his family (HVT-1516).

After the Aktion, a witch hunt started in the ghetto and informers or suspected informers were lynched by the outraged mobs. “It was a death penalty” if someone betrayed a hideout, recalled Avraham K. (HVT-3639). Some informers were identified by the members of the Jewish police, who could walk freely around the ghetto during the Aktion and therefore saw the mosrim at work (HVT-1842). However, it was “enough to walk on the street and someone would call you an informer from behind to be killed. No one asked, no one interrogated. Just kicked them to death” (HVT-3639). A friend of Avraham K. killed his girlfriend after discovering that she betrayed a hideout to the Germans. “He was from a family of butchers, so he just took out a knife and killed her” (HVT-3639). Zvi Yovin was a teenager at that time and he vividly remembered taking part in the lynchings (OHD-110(11)). The graves of the mosrim were desecrated (OHD-110(22)).  

The Jewish underground in Białystok was also infiltrated by agents working for the Jewish police, who then carried out raids on their premises. One of them, a certain Aleks, was later killed by Jews who left the ghetto for the forests.  

In Grodno,

The ghetto lay behind a high, thick wire fence with a single gate, where a [German] gendarme stood with a Jewish policeman. Like mushrooms after rain, young men with truncheons appeared, recruited by the Judenrat. They had blue ribbons on their caps and armbands on their sleeves. With their sergeants, officers and police chiefs, they kept order with a firm hand. Initially considered “Purim police,” they slowly turned into the lackeys of the gendarmes and later, when the ghetto was liquidated, were traitors to the people and faithful servants of the Gestapo. The people could “smell” them and hated them, not because Jews did not like order, but because people sensed that they were synonymous with Hitler’s rule.  

Like faithful dogs, they stood at the barrier, standing and taking money to turn a blind eye to every Jew smuggling in a pound of potatoes, grain, flour or other vital commodity. For them, the gate was a source of blackmail, bribes and a life of comfort. They wallowed in prosperity at the expense of their hungry brothers. …

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Then rumors spread about the liquidation of Ghetto No. 1—that the deportations would begin and soon Grodno would be Judenrein. …

The ghetto police went from house to house in precise accordance with the lists, gathering the victims in the Great Synagogue. People went there, resigned, laden with rucksacks and baskets, holding their children by the hand or carrying them in their arms. Thousands of people were crammed into the narrow space, standing on their feet for hours on end, in their own urine, unable to move a limb …

The “redeemers” arrived early next morning in the form of Ukrainians and [German] gendarmes who, on their last march to the station, chased the masses along with wooden clubs. The [Jewish] police tried to seize me and my little family for deportation. The evening was restless. Station workers returned to the ghetto, and told us that 40 empty railway wagons stood ready on the siding. The workers who did night work were not allowed out of the ghetto. …

Then, of all places, my brother, Shlomo Reizer found a hiding-place in the synagogue attic. …

The Angel of Death enjoyed himself in the ghetto, and everyone felt his eerie breath. He filled the little streets, the cellars and attics. The [Jewish] police were extraordinarily active, searching everywhere with electric lamps and tapping the walls with hammers to see of they were hollow. The Gestapo warned them that if a sufficient number of victims were not assembled by morning, they themselves would be packed up with their wives, brides and children.

People paid great sums of gold for an hour of life—especially when the Gestapo told the police that no harm would come to them, that they would let them live. The policemen worked like angels of destruction to save their own lives. They discovered one hideout after another, from which the stench of nitrogen poured forth. They discovered people with weak nerves who could not stand it, who went mad, dancing, jumping, clapping their hands and singing. (The police took those people to a place where the Gestapo finished them off at a stroke.) …

The following morning they “sniffed out” our hiding-place and we had to disappear. … There was a well-camouflaged little brick door 30 centimeters square in a brick enclosure, and it moved on iron hinges. Judenrat officials had prepared it for themselves. …

The Gestapo and the [Jewish] police were still rampaging in the streets and deported about 6,000 people.767

Survivor accounts from Belchatów, a small town near Łódź, illustrate a number of factors at play in the destruction of the Jewish community such as denunciations and intrigues among the Jews themselves. The assault on the Jews was led by the local ethnic Germans (or Volksdeutschen) and the German military, with the Jewish council and Jewish police being coopted as needed, including for the final liquidation of the Jewish community.

While marching in, they [the German military] lit fire to a portion of the town, especially the Jewish part. … The German baker’s son … was giving signals to the German military. Immediately, as he was doing this, the Germans began to throw firebombs on the Jewish part of the

767 Leib Reizer, In the Struggle: Memoirs from Grodno and the Forests (New York and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and
town, and was later said that this was organized by the local Germans … The robbing of the Jewish homes was carried out by the local Germans … unashamedly in the open.

The local Germans took a great part in these sadistic actions. Especially prominent were the Belchatower Germans, Willer and Bretkreitz, and Dolke from Zelow [Zelów]. … The Germans considered it their patriotic duty to every day to find Jews whom they could “honor” with beatings. … And anyone who wanted to [could] beat the Jews; 10-11 year old little German boys, tugged at elderly Jews and beat them.

In the beginning, when the Germans first arrived in Belchatow, all the positions were filled with Folks-Germans, [Volks-Deutschen, ethnic Germans living outside of Germany] … They filled the positions in the city administration, in the police force, and as commissars over Jewish fortunes. In time, however, Reich-Germans [Reischs-Deutschen] took their places.

Smuggling and illegal dealings grew, because between Belchatow and Piotrkow [Piotrków Trybunalski] was the border between the German Reich and the General Gouvernement. Textiles were smuggled out of Belchatow, and leather and other articles were brought in. The persons engaged in this knew that their lives were in danger, but they had no other choice. Starvation forced them into it. The majority of their earning they had to give to the bribed gendarmes. They were dealing with all kinds of extortionists and blackmailers. They too had to be cut in. The Jewish police, Shmuel Jakubowicz’s gang, also had to be bribed. Then a battle started between the richer and the poorer smugglers. The wealthier smugglers, who had the greater wherewithal with which to bribe the gendarmes, helped to liquidate the poorer ones. The smuggling took place only at night after police hours. They took a sack or a backpack on their shoulders and, with careful steps, slipped through the fields and meadows to the border. Others would be waiting to get the merchandise from them, Jews or Christians from Piotrkow and surrounding areas. Also waiting for them were German border guards with bloodhounds.

The role that the Judenrat played in Belchatow during the German occupation was the same in all the cities of Poland: they obediently fulfilled all the German commands and even, in certain cases, collaborated. Often, they voluntarily told the German officials and the Gestapo what was going on among the Jews. The majority of those in the Judenrat and the Jewish police were people with no integrity, who sought a way to make a living by selling out the impoverished masses.

The Judenrat aided the German government in a series of actions against the Belchatower Jews. This was in the effort to deport Jews to the camps in Poznan [Poznań] in August 1941, as well as creating a list of very sick people, who were also deported.

The other members of the Judenrat, who remained until the end, assisted the Germans in the liquidation of the Jews of Belchatow.
The role of the Jewish police in Belchatow was absolutely no different than the role of the police in other occupied cities. The Jewish police obediently fulfilled all the German orders.

The Jewish Police in Belchatow was created and confirmed by the German government on the 15th of October 1940. A young criminal element found its way into the Jewish police, which blackmailed the smugglers, and squeezed sums of money out of the Jews by beatings, persecution, and the like. Also to be found in the Jewish police were young citizens, who had the money to bribe the individual members of the Jewish police. From [others'] misfortunes, they made an easy living for themselves and wangled their way out of forced labor camps. These were people with weak moral resistance and who, of course, did everything precisely as the German government told them to. Among the Jewish policemen, there were almost no proletarian elements, except for someone like Note Szpigelman, who, even before the war, had been thrown out of the proletarian ranks for embezzlement. The Jewish police in Belchatow consisted of 33 persons. These are their names: Yisroel Baum; Avraham Bogdanski; Hershl Bram; Yakov Galetski; Yechiel Fishl Dichtwald; Leybish Zuchowski; Szame Grinberg (who for a certain time was also on the Judenrat); Avraham Meyer Goldberg (khmal[?]); Moshe Goldblum; Shimoni; Josef Goldberg; Hershel Jakubowicz; Moshe Klug (who was also a member in the Judenrat); Yankel Lipszyc; Moshe Mendel Lipman; Fishl Levi; Kive Lipmanowicz; Yakov-Mendel Lejb; Tuvia Machabanski; Yitzhak Miller; Wolf Przemsławski; Lejb Rozenewajg; Itzik Sztrauch; Note Szpigelman; Moshe Wielniwicz; Itik Wishniewski; Henoch Zuchowski; Ber Markowicz; Melech Galster (also a member of the Judenrat); and Berish Grinberg. The latter was the wagon worker in the Poznań Camp and distinguished himself by beating the Jews and taking their food away from them. In addition there were: Jakob Sztern, Mendel Dzialowski, and Berish Piula. The latter, along with his brother, played a shameful part in the Poznań Camps. He was a camp “kapo” and beat [the Jews] black and blue. Many Jews became crippled because of him. He was responsible for the deaths of many people, who were sent to the crematoria because of him. The Belchatower police distinguished itself by assisting the Germans in the rounding up of Jews in the aktsion [action] of April, 1942. Together with the Germans, they went down into the cellars and up into the attics to search for hidden Jews. At that time, they succeeded in dragging another 400 Jews out of their hiding places. These Jews were sent out to be liquidated.

The Judenrat also helped in this evacuation.

In the beginning of 1942 the Germans arrested 16 Belchatow Jews, as so called “plotters”. Ten of them were hung … the Jewish police, in the accompaniment of the gendarmes, brought the 10 Jews who had been designated to be hung. They all were with bound hands.

At the beginning of June 1942, Jews were once again required to gather in the courtyard of Klug’s factory. Having learned from the previous “resettlements,” the Jews were not as quick to report. They hid in cellars, in attics, in the woods. The Germans wreaked havoc: they shot a woman named Gliksman; they shot Lewkowicz, Zerach Cymberknap, all to no avail. The Jews did not come out of hiding. If it hadn’t been for the Jewish police, who were assisting the gendarmerie [German police] in their search and pointing out the hiding places, the Germans would not have accomplished much
on their own. At that time, the Germans succeeded in dragging 400 Belchatow Jews to the Poznan camps. It was seldom that anyone taken away ever returned home. In the rare case that someone did succeed in escaping and returning [home], Jewish informants collaborating with the Gestapo turned him in.

In fact this matter presented itself differently: the abovementioned Yecheskel Zwierszynski escaped from the Poznan Camps, returned home and hid in various places. On the evening that he was shot, he was actually at home. Someone let the Germans know, and they came right into his house. He was not shot in the German cemetery, but while he was trying to jump out of the window.

In the Poznan Camps, the Germans utilized a group of Belchatower criminal youths. They were installed as “kapos” [inmates in charge of work teams in a camp] and “stube-dienst” [“chamber-service”—inmates in charge of a chamber]. Because of their cruelty, these underworld people were absolutely no different than the German beasts. The Belchatower hairdresser, Szwarcberg, worked as a “feldsher” [an old-time barber-surgeon] in the Nekla Camp. He was the expert on all illnesses. He has hundreds of deaths on his conscience. He is guilty in the death of Fradl Wolfowicz’s youngest son, who died at work. He is also guilty in the death of old Szjtnicki and his son Moshe. He sent people to work with broken ribs, with bones broken in two by beatings. A second kapo, Berish Fila, beat people violently. He broke people’s hands and feet and then turned his victims over to the Germans to be sent to Auschwitz. He himself survived the war and wound up in Germany in the American Zone … [The following] distinguished themselves as murderers: Mayorek Nus, Melech Krawitski, Berish Grinberg, and Avraham Pila. They took everything that they owned away from the Jews of Belchatow, every package of produce that came from home. The unfortunate camp prisoners had to share every bite with them. They were the masters of the inmates’ lives and deaths. Whoever tried to oppose them was reported and recommended for transportation to Auschwitz as having sabotaged the work effort. These louts broke the bones of Avraham Lipsycz and Asher Jakubowicz, because they didn’t want to give away their food. Asher Jakubowicz died of these wounds while at work; Avraham Lipsycz was turned over for transportation to Auschwitz. The starvation in the camps was so impossible to endure that, ignoring the fact that people in the camps knew that stealing was punishable by shooting or hanging, they nevertheless tried to steal whatever they could and at least once be sated. For stealing a few potatoes in the Poznan-Wronczyn Camp, Yerachmil Szwarcberg, Welwel Walder, and two other Belchatower Jews, whose names are uncertain, were hanged. One of the four hanged succeeded in extricating himself from the noose on the gallows and was still alive, but the Germans shot him. Also hanged for trying to escape was Avraham Liszczanowski.

The liquidation of the rest of the Jews who remained in Belchatow began on the 11th of August 1942, at 6 o’clock in the morning. The whole town was locked in and surrounded by newly arrived killing squads and the local German gendarmes and police force. All of those who had tried the previous night to escape to Piotrkow were, for the most part, shot. The women, Zuchowski and Pilakowicz, were killed as they tried to escape into the woods. Hans Biebow, the hangman of the Lodz [Łódź] Ghetto, led the liquidation. He brought with him a division of the Lodz Jewish “Special Police” [SonderPolizer]. The local Jewish Belchatow police also helped. First thing in the
morning, Itche Winter came into the tailor’s factory and removed the Jewish policemen, who guarded the factory, and gave them the job of gathering all the old and sick people together on Zelower Road. There cars with Gestapo were already waiting for them and took them immediately to the Chelmno [Chełmno] death camp. These were the first victims. Thus started the final liquidation of the Jews in Belchatow.

After work, there was a repeat of everything that occurred yesterday. Once again we had to undress naked while being beaten. The second night we were sent to sleep in Machel Piotrkowski’s house. On the first floor the brutes were sleeping, the Jewish Police from Lodz.

[In August 1942] … a group of police from the Lodz Ghetto, that Biebow had brought with him to liquidate the Jews of Belchatow. A lot of Jewish policemen also helped to rob for themselves. … The Germans required 25 benches to be brought and all 25 men had to lie down upon them. The Jewish police from the Lodz Ghetto lashed out upon them for so long, until the Germans told them to cease.768

Groups of rich smugglers established themselves, and they competed, fought, and informed on one another. The Jewish merchants and workers paid dearly to the German police, to the Jewish smugglers, and to extortionists. … A number of cases against groups of smugglers were adjudicated in the special court that was established in Lodz. In July 1941, based on the testimony of a Jewish detective, six Jews from Belchatow, who wanted to cross General Government border, were arrested in the fields of Dobrzelow [Dobrzelów]. The aforementioned court sentenced them to 1½ years of hard labor (read: death).

In August 1941 the deportations to labor camps commenced. Approximately 2000 men assembled in the yard. Jewish and German police guarded the fence and gate. … This time also, the wealthy Jews redeemed themselves with money.

The Belchatow Judenrat’s goings-on were tumultuous. The continuous interference of the German authorities with regards to the Judenrat’s composition, the number of members, caused the constant substitution of persons, imprisonment, and even the death of a number of the Judenrat chairmen. The source of this interference—as was the source also in other settlements, for example in Pabianice—was jealousy and conflict in the Jewish community, between groups and cliques, and, understandably, also informing to the German authorities as a result of these relationships. The opponents and the Judenrat members, that since they could not attain any standing in the pre-war Kehilla, now they were making careers. They also accused them of laziness, passivity, corruption, and gaining wealth at the expense of the community, by tattling to the Nazis and by cooperating with them to the detriment of the Jews.
A Jewish police force was established in Belchatow. … About 30 men served in the Jewish police … The pre-war Left argued that the police were underworld persons and licentious petty bourgeois that obtained their positions by bribing the Judenrat. There were members of the proletariat among the Jewish police. The public accused them of Jewish persecution, of accepting smugglers’ bribes, of taking ransom from persons that were freed from being sent to work, of aiding the Germans during the destruction of the settlement, of capturing hidden Jews and sending them off to their deaths. Some say that, in the Poznan [Poznań] camps, some of these Jewish police served as Kapos.

On Purim (March 18, 1942), a public hanging of ten Jews took place by the order of the Gestapo, with the official reason given: in order that the smugglers should see and fear. … All the Jews were brought to the courtyard near the synagogue, were lined-up in fives, and were brought to the hanging place. The German policemen, with readied machine guns at hand, surrounded the masses of people. … At ten o’clock German and Jewish police brought the condemned, handcuffed.

The final destruction of the Jewish settlement in Belchatow started on August 11, 1942. … By German orders, the entire Jewish police force was mobilized. They were ordered to gather to Zelow street all of the elderly, children, and sick, and from there they were transported by wagon to the Chelmno [Chelmno] death camp. … To these deportees were added also hidden Jews, who were uncovered in the interim. During these three days, those Jews that were chosen to clean up the quarter and to gather the Jewish possessions returned to the synagogue, and there they were strip-searched and their bags were searched. This work was done by the Jewish policemen that were sent from the Lodz [Łódź] ghetto. This work continued for a number of days, and thereafter these men were deported …

As we can see from these accounts, Poles played no role in these events. The Germans utilized the Jewish leadership and police to carry out the “Final Solution” in Bełchatów. Some Jews were able to live relatively well during those times because of their lucrative black market activities, and others were able to survive at the expense of fellow Jews. Groups of smugglers took goods from Bełchatów, which was incorporated into the Reich, to the city of Piotrków, which was “across the border” in the Generalgouvernment, where they could be sold at a very high profit.

Despite ghettoization and a climate of dark despair, “the Hafts found themselves prospering as never before.” The “smuggling ring” of Harry’s older brother, Aria, supplied the family “with more money than they could ever spend. Their small house was filled with food … not just bread and potatoes, but meats and fruits and candies …” Harry’s girlfriend, Leah, was the daughter of another local family prominent in the black market. …

Harry was first transported by bus to Poznan [Poznań], where the Nazis immediately sought to recruit a group of Jews who would help them maintain discipline. “The local Jewish criminals and bullies,” Haft writes, “saw an opportunity to save their own skins.” Later, Harry noticed that he “knew most of the Jewish cops as petty thieves from Belchatow.” Ironically, Harry’s lot improved in Poznan where he regularly engaged in burglary “in exchange for food and some protection.”

The same held true for other ghettos such as Piotrków Trybunalski, where the Germans relied on the Jews themselves to help run and then liquidate the ghetto:

The newly established Jewish Militia (“Order-Keeping Police,” or Ordnungsdienst, OD for short) was relentless in its attempts to implement the rules laid down by the German authorities. The militia’s duties included the task of supplying workers for the Nazi war machine, most of the time forcibly. Also, a new breed of informers laid the foundation for distrust and fear among families and the best of friends. … the informers delivered “violators” to the Seventh Bureau.

My grandfather’s second cousin on his mother’s side, Josele Lazar, was a man of considerable influence at the Gestapo headquarters. … Many Jews who were in the servitude of the Nazis adopted the latter’s mannerisms in their attempt to please their masters. Thus, most of the OD members made every effort to dress and carry themselves with the arrogance characteristic of their masters.

… we huddled behind curtained windows each night as we watched our neighbors and friends being driven away from their homes. The Gestapo officer’s voice could be heard throughout the neighborhood as he announced, “You are being resettled! Come out into the street immediately! …”

People filed out of their homes onto the street. … Neighbors were quickly rounded up and herded through the streets in orderly columns. The Jewish Militia was on its exemplary behavior as it aided the SS mercenaries in completing their task.

The remaining ghetto population of some six thousand, save those performing forced labor at the two glass factories, assembled on the streets of the ghetto. The Nazis planned the Aktion to the minutest detail. Aided by the surrogate Lithuanian and Ukrainian SS as well as by the Jewish OD, they combed all of the abandoned dwellings. Anyone found inside was summarily shot, their bodies dumped unceremoniously on the sidewalks.

Meanwhile, the people who had remained hidden in their houses outside the Small Ghetto filtered back in. Those several hundred “illegals” were of concern to Warszawski [a Judenrat member] and

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his aides, who feared that the clandestine influx might provoke a further selection. Indeed, soon the Germans began intensive searches assisted by the Jewish police. The search uncovered several hundred Jews, including entire families. They were incarcerated in the Great Synagogue. Here, the murderers committed brutal atrocities with satanic pleasure. They carried infants out of the building, smashed their heads, and hurled their bodies into basin heaters over bonfires. The first group of people was sent by horse carriages to nearby Tomaszów Mazowiecki, where the deportations to Treblinka were still going on.\textsuperscript{772}

Another witness from Piotrków recalled:

The ugliest part of our predicament was that we had some informers in our midst. There was Josek Szwartz from Litewska Street, who would denounce rich Jews to the Gestapo. They, in turn, usually liquidated the informers after their information was exhausted. The worst stool pigeon of them all was Joine Lewi. Before the war, he was a furrier and used to partake in amateur theatres. What was happening to some of our people? He associated himself with William of the Schutzpolizei. William was the “phantom” of the ghetto. He would come in with his big German shepherd dog and terrorize the ghetto population. Aside from robbing people at will, he would say to his dog: “Man, get that dog.” (meaning the Jew). His dog, trained to attack, would hunt Jewish man or child, bite the victims and tear their clothing. We had informers—beside our own—refugees from other towns. We had to be careful and watch out for them.

Soon the small ghetto began to get crowded. On November 4, [1942] Szymon Warszawski, our Judenrat chairman ordered all “illegals” to come out of their hiding places to be registered. He promised to obtain for them legal status in the small ghetto. Most of them came out of their bunkers, because they were hunted by the informers. After a few days, all the new “legalized” people were picked up by the Jewish police and taken to the synagogue and jailed. Later they were taken out and added to out-of-town transports for extermination.

There was another bloody execution at the cemetery on April 21, 1943. Some Jews obtained “Aryan” documents in order to escape from the small ghetto, but they were denounced by our informers.\textsuperscript{773}

When a few Pabianice Jews tried to escape from forced labour camps in surrounding towns, most were caught with the assistance of the Jewish police from the Łódź ghetto. Two of the escapees who were caught were hanged in public in the Łódź ghetto.\textsuperscript{774} It is not surprising therefore that many Jews recall times in the ghetto when they feared Jewish police and informers more than the Germans. Fanny Solomian-Loc states that that was the case in Pińsk, especially during the round-up of Jews. There, as in other towns, the

Judenrat held drunken orgies with young girls.\textsuperscript{775} Chaim Rumkowski, the leader of the Judenrat in Łódź, was known to put people on the deportation list because he himself wanted to get rid of them and to sexually exploit girls and young women.\textsuperscript{776} (The members of the Łódź Jewish council and their families benefitted from special shops and rations—enough to live quite comfortably.\textsuperscript{777}) A Jew who witnessed the abuses of the Jewish police in the ghetto in Stolpe also stated that a stronger aversion had grown toward them and the Judenrat than the Germans.\textsuperscript{778} Mojżesz Bahn of Kielce recalled that the Jewish police were feared more than the Germans, since the latter were more likely to accept a bribe and allow one to escape.\textsuperscript{779} In Chęciny, despite the fact that there was no permanent German outpost, the 30-member Jewish police were known for their brutality which surpassed that of the Germans.\textsuperscript{780} Henryk Gotlib, who commanded the 14-man Jewish police force, reportedly abused fellow Jews with frequency.\textsuperscript{781} In Koluszki, near Łódź, Riwen Berliner, who commended a five-man unit of the Jewish police, “always beat his fellow Jews during his daily rounds of the ghetto.”\textsuperscript{782} In Maniewicze, in Volhynia, the Germans “were assisted by the Jewish police who at times were no less cruel than their ‘colleagues,’ the Ukrainians.”\textsuperscript{783} A Jew from Włodawa stated that the Jewish police behaved worse than the Germans.\textsuperscript{784} A survivor from Jędrzejów wrote that there were “very few” in the Jewish police force, whose strength reached 20 men, “who had any humanity in them. Most of them behaved like beasts of prey, some even worse than the Germans.” The excelled in rounding up Jews for various tasks and deportation.\textsuperscript{785} A survivor of the Warsaw ghetto had nothing favourable to say about the corrupt and servile Jewish police: “I hated them. Everybody hated them. … Had I possessed a gun, I would have murdered Jewish policemen and even tortured them! My hatred toward them was simply eating me up.”\textsuperscript{786}

The loathing that most Jews had toward the ghetto police is noted in many early memorial books, as the following selection illustrates:

The ghetto police were generally an affliction in all ghettos. This point is attested to by all of the books of the Holocaust period that were written about the ghetto police in other ghettos. Shneor Vaserman writes the following about Chelm [Chelm]: “For the murderers (the Nazis), it wasn’t enough that they alone murdered. For their sadistic pleasure, they instituted that Jewish extermination was also carried out by Jewish hands. That, incidentally, was the devilish tactic in all


\textsuperscript{777} Rees, \textit{Auschwitz}, 105.


\textsuperscript{779} Urbański, \textit{Zagłada Żydów w Dsyttryckie Radomskim}, 96.

\textsuperscript{780} Urbański, \textit{Zagłada Żydów w Dsyttryckie Radomskim}, 98.


\textsuperscript{783} Tarmon, ed., \textit{Memorial Book}, 52.

\textsuperscript{784} Testimony of Nachum Knopfmacher. June 28, 1961, Yad Vashem Archives, 03/1787.

of Poland, and everywhere their bloody paws reached. The Jewish police were recruited from the dregs of society.” (“Yizkor Bukh [Memorial Book], Chełm,” Johannesburg, 1954, pages 90–91).

Melech Neishtadt declares: “Between the broad Jewish masses and the ghetto policemen, a thick wall was set up. The entire population of the Jewish quarter had an attitude of deep hatred to the servants of the Germans.” (Khurbn un Vidershtand fun di Yidn in Varshe [Destruction and Resistance of the Jews in Warsaw], New York, 1948, page 84). …


In Pinkas Młave [The Record Book of Młave (Mława)], we read: “As commandant of the Jewish police, the authorities nominated Shalom Gutman who became the terror of the ghetto. With body and soul, he collaborated with the Germans and created great miseries for Jews. He informed on all that was taking place in the ghetto. He murdered and beat. He carried out the German decrees with pleasure.” (“Pinkas Młave” under the editorship of Dr. Yakov Shatzki, New York, 1950, page 406).  

Even in a very small town like Komarówka Podlaska near Międzyrzec Podlaski, the Germans relied heavily on the Jewish police to carry out the Final Solution. As Marian Finkielman recalled,

Toward evening I arrived in this town, in which a deportation was to take place the next morning. A Jewish policeman stopped me and led me to a shed with several people already inside. More arrived throughout the night. The policemen made sure that the German order to deport people for extermination was carried out precisely.  

Jews were also conscripted to dig grave pits and to transport fellow Jews to the sites of their massacre. In Rabka, the Germans organized a Jewish grave kommando who worked under the watchful eye of Jewish kapos.  

When the Germans took the first half of the Jewish community to their place of execution in Brona Góra forest near Bereza Kartuska, 25 wagons driven by Jews transported the victims.  

When thousands of Jews were massacred in Zaluz near Sanok, Jewish policemen loaded the guns for the Gestapo executioners who shot the Jews as they fell into a large pit.  

In one case, a Jew by the name of Chaim Siegal took on the identity of a Ukrainian (Kyryl Syholenko or Sygolenko) and became the commander of …

786 Testimony of the Brothers Avrach, in Tarmon, Memorial Book, 51.
790 Warshawsky, Drohiczyn, 316.
the Ukrainian police in Dąbrowica, Volhynia, where he took part in the annihilation of the Jewish population.  Zygmunt Prinz, a Jewish policeman in Kołomyja, teamed up with the Ukrainian police to extort money from Jews, among them a rabbi. Two Jews from the village of Klukińce near Tarnopol joined up with the pro-German Ukrainian Insurgent Army and took part in a murder expedition directed at local Poles. In one case, a Soviet prisoner of war who was half-Jewish became the orderly of the commandant of the hard labour camp in Treblinka.

An eyewitness recalls the following scene he witnessed in Warsaw: “That same evening, sixteen skilled labourers marched in fours, led by a rabbi’s son in an S.S. uniform.” Gypsies apprehended in “Aryan” Warsaw were taken to the prison on Gęsia Street where they were guarded by functionaries of the Jewish police. Jewish policemen escorted Jewish prisoners from the Gęsia Street prison to the execution site where they ried them to posts before they were shot. A Jewish woman imprisoned in Lublin Castle recalled her Jewish interrogator: “one of the people there, a very nicely dressed Jew, came over and asked me the same question in Yiddish. When I told him again that my mother had a German lover, he began hitting me.”

A similar situation prevailed in German prisons and camps where the immediate perils faced by Jewish inmates often stemmed from fellow Jews who acted as kapos (chiefs of work detachments) and informants. Stasia Alapin, who was thrown in a cell full of Jews at the Gestapo premises in Warsaw, recalled that “one of the women had been put in the cell as an informer.” In Kraśnik, “Jewish supervisors, afraid for their lives, regularly handed over to the Gestapo Jews whom they thought were ‘thinking about escape.’ Like the Stein brothers.”

A Jew who arrived in Majdanek recalled: “We got out of the [railroad] car. No Germans awaited us on the ramp, only Jews with horsewhips. They were brutal. They yelled ‘son of a bitch’ at everybody.” In the camp, “SS men with whips and dogs, aided by Ukrainians and former Jewish POWs (yentzes), were pushing, whipping, and kicking the Jews. … The SS, it seemed, were giving the orders. The Ukrainians and

798 Testimony of Bajła Kaselberg in Markowska, Archiwum Ringelbluma, 132–33.
799 Wrobel, My Life My Way, 63.
802 Wiszniewicz, And Yet I Still Have Dreams, 76.
yentzes were carrying them out.” 803 “The Czech and Slovak Jews in camp aren’t much better than the Germans. When it came to the Jews, every one of them was armed with a club and ready to beat up any victim.” 804 Israel Mittelberg, another prisoner of Majdanek, recalled:

We were subjected to a horrible examination [on arrival]; even our anuses were checked. Nor did the Czech Jewish barbers return our valuables. Moreover, on one occasion, when I attempted to win one of them over, he yelled at me so much that a German guard came and gave me a violent beating. Those who had swallowed the gold coins later had to take the block-elders into their confidence, and that was fresh cause for torture and blackmail. …

In the yard, we met many inmates we knew. Many were working in the registration offices. They served loyally, sometimes a little too loyally, at the expense of their own brother Jews, in whose place they might easily have been. …

On that very first day in Majdanek, we began a search for those who had denounced the whereabouts of the bunkers [in the Warsaw ghetto], or those who had collaborated with the Germans. There were a few inmates in Majdanek—the block-elders of barracks six and seven—who executed retribution, bloodily settling accounts with the informers. The one in charge of my block was a character by the name of Heniek Kulik, the son-in-law of a reputable family in Warsaw, the tailor Nissan, who in turn was the Mendzickis’ son-in-law. That scoundrel addressed us in language fit for the gutter, cursed us with the crudest Russian expressions to prepare us for camp life. …

… the name Kulik was familiar to me. … We discussed his family whom I knew well … For the promise of a little soup, he found informers who would eavesdrop on conversations and denounce anyone who had any money. The barrack supervisor insisted that the money be given to him. When anyone refused he was given fifty lashes.

One of the Kapos, Bobi, was a particularly well-known looter of money and a blackguard. He was only fifteen but looked like a grown man. That scoundrel … had come to Majdanek with his parents and, in order to find favor with the Germans, personally hanged them at the Germans’ request. His methods of torturing could lead one to his death in just a few minutes. Bobi beat me, but I had no money. He then left me alone. He would always visit the camp elders, looking for people to persecute. …

And now, a new spate of ordeals was beginning for me. A new supervisor by the name of Osfiss, another of Kulik’s brother-in-laws, joined us, who even surpassed the other two in vulgarity and callousness. He dispatched any inmate without money to do the heaviest jobs and subjected them to agonizing hardships. He confiscated our bread rations and demanded cigarettes in exchange. He would serve us one-half liter instead of three quarters and sell the leftovers. We were completely at the mercy of these three brother-in-laws.

We reported the soup scoundrel to the kitchen. Osfiss was given a bloody flogging, and lived to take revenge on us. He organized night searches, embittered our already miserable lives. The three flogged us until their arms ached. …

804 Trunk, Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution, 204.
… Jews in position of power saw to it that no one should go short of beatings, our daily bread.
… our own Jewish Hitlerite servants exhibited their skills: Kulik, Osfiss and Nissan. They woke
us in the middle of the night and listed the crimes each one of us had committed. This one had
relieved himself incorrectly, (pardon my vulgarity); that one had spat; that one had sewn on his
number wrongly—and other crimes of this sort. For these wrongdoings each received ten, fifteen,
and even twenty lashes. The Germans did not perform all the torture themselves; they also trained
their servants.805

Another inmate of Majdanek recalled:

d the elder of our block, Moshe, called Poer, who was known for his crudity and brutality. He had
been a porter in Warsaw … He hit us in the morning and in the evening during roll calls using the
excuse that we were not in a straight line. In reality, he wanted to become the pet of the kapos and
the SS. I often saw Moshe Poer kicking Jewish prisoners in the face or stomach so hard until they
were half-dead and some actually died later. Naftali Gaslen, known as the “killer”, was of the same
caliber. He had been a thug in Warsaw. They knew each other well. These two brutal underworld
types were especially at home in Maidanek.

One character who was unique even in Maidanek was a 15-year-old Jewish boy, called “Bubi”.
He was small, fat, well-dressed, and moved among the kapos, the prominent prisoners and even
close to the SS. … The 10,000 prisoners of Field 4 were under his command, sometimes for hours.
They were forced to carry out all of his orders: “Attention! Caps on! Caps off! Right! Left! Keep in
step! Double time, Line march! March!” With club in hand and his childish voice, he ridiculed and
taunted us to the full satisfaction of the SS. We found out that this boy was a “pupil” (dependent
and accommodating in every way) of the head kapo. He had earned his reputation with the SS by
putting the nooses around the necks of his father and mother in Maidanek.806

There are many such accounts attesting to the cruelty of the Jewish kapos in Majdanek.807 According to
Shiye Goldberg, “The Kapo beat the inmates just to find favor with their German masters.” A Jewish
inmate recalls:

Who can forget the pump, with the water trough around it, in which a Jewish Kapo (I think a
murderer from Lemberg [Lwów]) would on each night, grab a Jew by the beard, and turn him with
his face down, and hold him in the water, until a Jew would expire. The longer the Jew flailed with
his feet, the higher the Nazi murderers would carry on and laugh.808

805 Mittelberg, Between Two Worlds, 48–58.
806 Schupack, The Dead Years, 126. For additional confirmation of the exploits of Bubi, who went around the camp
with a whip, beating everybody who he did not like, preferably old people, see Jerzy Kwiatkowski, 485 dni na
807 Donat, The Holocaust Kingdom, 193.
As in other camps, “There was a black market in [Majdanek]. Those who bought from the Poles now sold the food to camp inmates at a good price.”\textsuperscript{809} Shamay Greier, the head of the Judenrat in Lublin, took part in the liquidation of Majdanek:

He was with the SS commandant when the latter ordered all the Jews to prostrate themselves. He then poked each one after the other, saying “You go”, “You stay”, “You go”, “You stay”. Those ordered to go were taken to their death, and this game went on until the camp was vacant.\textsuperscript{810}

On arrival in Majdanek, Poles also became the victims of Jewish block or barrack leaders:

We arrived there morning 26th [of March, 1943]. We marched two km from the station to the camp, escorted in every 2–3 meters by Ukrainians with machine guns. We entered the camp, which gave us depressing impression. It was scenery itself and people there as skeletons. Only Jews were there holding through not so bad. The Jews were at that time assigned to block leaders – robbing us, by leaving to us only one third or one fourth of our food rations.\textsuperscript{811}

The Jewish kapos in the labour camp in Chełm treated fellow Jews with cruelty, and partied hard. According to Kalmen Wewryk,

There was a kapo there named Scherer, who used to live on my street in Chełm. … He had been our friend, and yet this tall kapo used to beat me mercilessly in the camp. … I saw a man I knew, Tishler, a carpenter. He had had a wife and 4 children all shipped to their deaths. And yet Tishler was dancing and singing and partying with the other kitchen kapos. He looked well because he ate well.”

Wewryk witnessed even more atrocious behaviour in the Sobibór death camp where Jewish kapos led Jews to the gas chambers, where well-fed train commando Jews insulted their starving co-religionists and refused to share their food with them, where Jews betrayed other Jews to the Germans, and where kapos would party with attractive Jewish women prisoners and rape pretty young girls in front of their mothers. In his memoir we read:

Some of the women … [to] please “their” kapo, would change clothes 3 or 4 times a day. Sobibor had no shortage of clothes, all taken from the incoming transports. … the ordinary Jewish prisoners were terrified of the kapos. If a Jew didn’t obey a kapo, that Jew was reported to the Germans who took him away to his death. … most [kapos] had become brutalized. … I was afraid of my kapo as he was of the SS. He carried a big whip, was well-

\textsuperscript{809} Goldberg, \textit{The Undefeated}, 140, 141–42. Goldberg states: “The Poles came every morning for an eight-hour working day. They were fairly decent people.” Ibid., 140.

\textsuperscript{810} Goldberg, \textit{The Undefeated}, 134.

dressed, had his own room and a private life.” “The train kommando prisoners … were terrific squealers. There was one Oberkapo from Berlin (we called him ‘Berliner’) who spoke an excellent, refined German. … When Oberst Franzl went on a furlough, this kapo thought that his chance had come—he would show Franzl how devoted he was, how efficient! If he saw a straw in the wrong place, he beat the nearest Jew mercilessly. He caused many Jews to be sent to the gas chambers. He was so bad and so sadistic that … the other kapos got together and jumped him … he was beaten to death.” “There was a one-eyed kapo from Warsaw—Porzycki … He was a brutal kapo with murderous instincts. … I remember Bunyem, a short, stocky kapo. He used to beat people terribly.812

Other survivors of Sobibór write:

We were informed of this by the Jewish “Kommandant” who … was worse than a German. He was later killed too.

Another time again, a tunnel leading out beyond the wires was discovered. … Right at the last minute, the Jewish “Kommandant,” yimakh shemoy, found out about it and gave the all away. As soon as the Germans were informed, they massacred another 200 people in the third camp, so that everything we tried was betrayed, every attempt failed. …

Our most active member was Yosif Pelts … he succeeded in escaping … The next day, Moyshe “Kommandant” ran to tell the Germans that two were missing from the first barrack. We were fortunate, because the Oberschaarführer wasn’t there, only the Unterschaarführer, who was less sadistic and selected ted men, instead of hundreds, to be shot. …

Now this Moyshe “Kommandant” … decided then to escape with us—about twenty people. … He saw that this group was now too large, so he put it off for another day. A German Jew learned of all this and informed the Unterschaarführer that Moyshe “Kommandant” was behind it. The German immediately summoned Moyshe “Kommandant” along with three others … and shot them all.813

… a group of six Jewish capos from Poland agreed to organize an escape. … They were already supposed to carry it out one night, but that time it did not work out, either, because there was a provocateur, a Jew from Germany, Berliner, who said that the Germans had promised they would kill off everyone, but would leave him. He went to the Germans, told them about the plan and the next day the Germans hanged all six of them on the second square in front of everyone.814

In the middle of spring, in the first days of May [1943], a rebellion which was promptly put out burst on the camp. The intended escape never did take place and I had not known anything about it, just like it had happened with the first one.

Everything was done very fast. I never knew what had actually happened and how the plan had been found out. My companions did not know anything either. On the following day, the henchmen

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813 Trunk, Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution, 279–81.
appointed a new Commander to replace Moses. He was a German Jew from Berlin, which was soon to be called Kapo Berliner by us. To the position formerly held by Krajcewicer, they appointed another Jew, also German. It soon became obvious that the Nazis intended to place German Jews in the main trustworthy positions.

They did that on purpose, since the Jews who had come from Germany were not only more obedient but also more subservient. Even suffering the horrors of Nazism, they still believed in the Fuhrer and his gang. Their faith was such that they even thought they would be spared. My companions and I did not trust them any longer. They were already known as inveterate stool pigeons, such terror did the Germans instil in them. Any insurrection would never be able to count on their participation.

Soon after the aborted escape and considering the circumstances under which it had been stifled, we came to the clear undisputable conclusion that the denouncer had been Kapo Berliner. From that day on we never believed anything the German Jews ever told us and we lost the least bit of trust we still had in them.

Oberkapo Berliner came to be considered a dangerous, infamous individual, absolutely deprived of any scruples. As a matter of fact, it was his habit to abuse his subordinates only to please his masters, the Nazi scoundrels. It has already been said that this story is intended to be the faithful report of the whole truth, which took place at those sadly remembered times.

Unfortunately, the immense majority of Jews who had come from other regions of Europe did not inspire confidence in the Polish Jews. Our distrust was notably worse when we dealt with the German Jews. Numberless times we had heard them say that they did not believe Hitler would destroy them and that the Germans were not as bad as they seemed. They thought we magnified the facts and that we would all survive in the end, meaning specially the Germans in Sobibor [Sobibór]. So they tried as the best they could to collaborate with the monsters. …

A few days later, something strange happened. it came about in the afternoon, at the time of the evening roll call, after work. Since he had taken over the command of Camp 1, the Nazi Frenzel had become the man in charge of receiving the results of the counting.

Once this had been done, he told Mundek, the chief tailor, to step out of the group and gave him twenty-five whiplashes. Next, he told me to do the same and the same punishment was applied on me. Everyone was surprised and no one could understand the reasons which had led the hangman to do that. Even now I cannot guess the reasons for that unexpected punishment, since I had not done anything to deserve it. However, our suspicions pointed to the Oberkapo Berliner, who would be the only person who would denounce us at the least transgression. Maybe he had learned that Mundek and I had both given some pieces of bread to half-dead Jews in the transport from Majdanek and he had decided to denounce us to Karl Frenzel.

Our hate for Berliner grew everyday, because he was just like the Germans. As he was a Jew, we craved for killing him even more than we wanted to kill the Nazi scoundrels. The autumn of 1943 was nearing and the days were becoming shorter. As evening fell earlier than before, the schedules were changed and the roll call was taken sooner. Although we were sent inside the sheds earlier, our work went on as usual. We were already used to life in the camp and we were in control of our

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814 Testimony of Icek Lichtman, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 1204.
emotions. We could even think of ourselves as cold, unfeeling men, deprived of fear or feeling. We really tried to reason out, with no fantasy, any possible way of escaping from that hell. …

From the very beginning one suggestion was accepted by all, with no exception, as being essential to the success of our venture—to eliminate the “Oberkapo” Berliner. Besides, being a habitual stool pigeon, Berliner was very sharp and suspicious. If he only imagined anything was being plotted, we would be irretrievably lost.

Unfortunately it had to be so, and we were sorry for that, because he was also a Jew. However, he had let himself be led by the Nazi technique, and had finally become one of its apologists. He thought he would save himself by acting like that and, to reach his egotistical aim, he did not measure consequences and he was always flattering the henchmen. He had been responsible for the death of many innocent people and, had he survived, he would have been one of the most prominent figures among the criminals who were judged in Nuremburg.

As we considered him our number one enemy it would be better to erase him from the list of the living than risk total failure in our venture. With his death, many Jews would be still saved from that infernal maze.

Everyone of us became conscious of his participation in this first and daring coup in the general fight plan. However, there still was the urgent need for total control over our emotions so that nothing would hinder the next steps in the operation. All was coldly planned and we only waited for the proper occasion to carry it out.

The first days of October were already passing very quickly when luck smiled on us. Wagner as well as the Commander-in-Chief “Trottel” had gone to Germany on a visit. With “Trottel”’s absence, another bandit Deputy Commander Niemann, had taken over the general command of Sobibor. However, Karl Frenzel and the other SS officers were still in their posts.

We agreed that, on a certain night, after we had come back from work and the general call had been done, we would be free to carry out the plan. We would then go to the Kapo’s lodgings and we would try to catch Berliner by surprise, in case there were any need for that.

And thus it was done. When the day came and the hour got closer, we started to move towards his shed. This movement was very careful although seemingly careless. Four of us were in charge of doing it, while some other companions would stand nearby to deceive the other “Kapos” and prevent their entering the lodgings. In the attack group there were Mundek, Bunio, Pozycki and myself.

As we entered, we saw Berliner all alone. We went in and without the waste of a single minute, got hold of him, immediately covering his mouth to prevent his shouting. Totally unable to move, the traitor could not even thrash about or cry for help.

Our plan consisted of beating him in such a way as not to leave any haematomas on his face, arms or any other visible parts of his body. Based on that, we only hit him below the belt so as to reach his entrails and produce severe internal ruptures. Our intention was to destroy him only on the inside, and we were very careful not to hit him externally.

When the man was in a state when it would be impossible for him to survive or even babble a few words, we stopped the operation and calmly left for our lodgings, although our wish was to finish the killing. We slept peacefully that night as if nothing had happened. On the next day, we reported to duty at the usual time. The first call was done and, as it was only natural, Berliner was not there.
Then Pozycki informed the Nazi Frenzel that the “Kapo” Commander was sick. No one ever doubted that, not even the other “kapos” who lived in Berliner’s lodgings.

At noon, straight after lunch the Commander of Camp 1 came again for the usual counting, at the time we came back from work. As Berliner was still absent, again Pozycki took a step forward and said the Chief-Kapo was still sick in bed. Again all of us kept quiet, since those who did not know what had happened could not suspect anything.

The beating we had given Berliner had been so violent that no one could really be able to perceive that something strange had happened. Certainly his companions who slept in the same shed, must have thought he was sick and asleep, since, after the severe beating, we had put him in his bunk, and covered him up to his head with a blanket.

We had not killed him immediately because we did not want to raise the German’s suspicions. However, we did not fear anything since Berliner would never be able to recover enough to talk and denounce what had happened to him. He had been left totally inert. He could not move or say anything. There was no doubt that our act had been vile and our aggression cowardly.

But there was a vital need for this prophylactic measure. However, the first stage of our operations was not complete yet. We still had to give Berliner the “coup de grace” and for that we drew a Machiavellian plan. It consisted of using the old aversion that Karl Frenzel felt against him and of which the Nazi made no secret. We settled everything and started to carry out the second stage of our manoeuvre.

It was already late in the afternoon when the presumptuous Nazi officer came to the tailor shop, with his peculiar elegance, to try on his new clothes. Mundek used the opportunity to hurt his vanity.

The tailor told Frenzel that Berliner usually said in front of everybody, that he enjoyed complete autonomy in Sobibor. He even used to say that he only respected Wagner, since he did not attribute any importance to the other SS officers.

As he was not yet satisfied with his story, Mundek added that I too knew everything and that I had heard Berliner say that many times. Finally, to impress the truth of his words, Mundek called me to the shop so that I, in person and in the presence of the Germans, could testify to what he said.

I went there and my accomplice immediately asked me if was not true that “Kapo” – Oberkapo Berliner was always saying that, inside Sobibor, he would only obey Wagner’s orders. I did not even wait for Mundek to finish his question and promptly answered that it was true, that what he was saying was the whole truth. However, in order to make that well-rehearsed plot act as a bomb, I decided to add that Berliner affirmed he was a German Jew, much superior to us, and that he thought he was as important as a Scharfuhrer. Besides, all that, he still said that Karl Frenzel was a real fool.

On hearing these last words, the Nazi had his natural colour changed. Astonished at the pseudo-revelation he became purple with anger and, seeing his pride deadly hurt, he told us—“ All right—You will see how this piece of shit will end”. The rest of the afternoon was uneventful. When our work was done, the usual roll call was performed and all of us went back to our sheds. The next task was up to the nurse, the Czech Jew Kurt. At this time of day he used to make his rounds. After he had gone through all the sheds, he headed towards the one where Berliner was. While he pretended to be examining him, he gave him some drug which would make him sleep to eternity.
As Kurt had some knowledge of his profession and knew how to put an end to Berliner—he had administered to the patient something which was really lethal. As a matter of fact he had just performed euthanasia, since the “Kapo” would actually never recover. Our plan had been carried out to perfection and we had gotten rid of the dangerous Jew. May God be merciful to him.

On the following morning, the roll call was taken once more and as it had to be, Berliner did not answer it. For the last time Pozycki went to Frenzel and told him the “Kapo” – Commander was still in bed. With a hard face, the German officer replied—“Is that so? All right. Get this piece of shit and take him to Camp 3” Not wasting a second, two of our men left the shed and went straight to the place where the corpse was. They wrapped him in a blanket and carried him away. A new “Kapo” – Commander (Oberkapo) was immediately appointed. He was a Dutch Jew.815

There are numerous testimonies regarding brutality of Jewish kapos at the Auschwitz concentration camp and its subcamp, Birkenau, the death camp where most of the Jews were murdered. One prisoner in each work detail or prisoner block or barrack was appointed as a Kapo (“head” or “overseer” or “supervisor” or “elder” or “leader”). The mass murder of Jews in Birkenau could not have been accomplished without the help of Jewish prisoners from the Sonderkommandos. Sonderkommandos were work units of death camp prisoners, composed almost entirely of Jews. About 120 SS personnel were assigned to the gas chambers and lived on site at the crematoria. Several SS personnel oversaw the killings at each gas chamber, while the bulk of the work was done by the mostly Jewish prisoners known as Sonderkommando (special squad). Sonderkommando responsibilities included guiding victims to the gas chambers and removing, looting, and cremating the corpses. On average four SS-men and 100 Jews from the Sonderkommando were needed to operate a crematorium. The Sonderkommando numbered around 860 prisoners at any given time, peaking at 1,000 men when the Hungarian Jews were killed in 1944. In total, almost 2,000 Jews were placed in these units and almost none survived.

Konrad Charmatz describes the dreaded Jewish kapos he encountered from the moment he arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau:

Soon after that the head Kapo, the notorious “Pinkus,” delivered a speech to us, each word striking us like a hammer blow. Pinkus was a Polish Jew who had lived in France. When he spotted Dr. Suchodolsky … he scorned and insulted him, telling him that not only was he going up the chimney, but he was going to torture him slowly first. …

Then we were assigned to blocks at Birkenau … He [another house elder] made sure the “animals are properly settled in their stalls.” Those who did not please him or who complained about their crowded bunks, he pulled down on a long bench. There he beat and kicked them to death. Later his victims were tossed out of the barracks like old rags. In the morning a cart collected all the dead and took them to be incinerated. …

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815 Szmajzner, Inferno em Sobibor, English translation “Extracts from the Tragedy of a Jewish Teenager” posted online at: <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ar/sobibor/smajzner.html>.
I could not forget the crooked, ugly face of Pinkus, the elder of the “Zonder Block,” who led the gang that received and sorted out the new arrivals. To this task brutes were assigned, men without feelings. Pinkus (if I am not mistaken, his last name was Chmelnitsky) was the most notorious of all the block elders. He had come to the camp with a French transport and was a true sadist who enjoyed brutalizing his victims and drawing their blood. … His helper, a certain Ziduna, a Jew from Lodz [Łódź], also excelled in cruelty. …

The camp commander, an SS storm trooper named Schilinger, stood and watched how hard his Jewish servants were working. Pinkus strutted through the crowds of new arrivals, always looking for another victim to beat with his truncheon, all the while looking up at his patron to see if he was pleased.817

David Faber recalls another Jewish kapo he met in Birkenau:

A barrack leader, a Kapo, stamped in and stood just inside the door.

“Listen!” he shouted. “My name is Potok, and I’ll make you wish you’d never come here. You’ll wish you’d never met me.” …

He walked along the bunks, grabbed the foot of a man on the middle row right under me, and yanked him onto the floor. No one spoke as the man lay sprawled on his stomach.

The Kapo bent over, his face close to the prisoner’s.

“You look like you hid something,” he said. “I’ll bet you’ve got a fortune in your body. Give it to me!”

The man rolled onto his back, his hands held out palms up.

“No, sir.” I could scarcely hear him. “I don’t have anything, sir.”

“You don’t?”

The man spoke louder. “No. Nothing, sir! Nothing!”

Potok smiled. “I’ll find out.”

He took a long, thin knife from a scabbard on his belt. “Give it to me, or I’ll cut you open.”

“Please don’t!” The man tried to get up, but Potok pushed him down with his foot.

“Turn over!” he yelled and kicked the man in the head.

817 Konrad Charmatz, Nightmares: Memoirs of the Years of Horror under Nazi Rule in Europe, 1939–1945 (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 84–88. Charmatz also describes the “sadistic” and corrupt kapos he later encountered at a labour camp for Jews on Gęsia Street in Warsaw, where he was transferred: “One of the most sadistic of all the Kapos was a little fat man, power-drunk, with bloodshot eyes. Once, while running through a labyrinthine cellar, I ran into him just as he was raping one of us slaves, a young Belgian boy with blond hair.” Ibid., 117–19. The block elders are described as “mostly criminals, sadists, homosexuals and underworld scum.” Ibid., 127. Many of the kapos the author met were homosexuals or became such in the camps. They preyed mercilessly on young men who became their servile “pipls” (or servants), and also on their enforcers who spied on the prisoners. Ibid., 117. When Charmatz arrived at a labour camp in Mühldorf, about 80 kilometres from Munich, he found that “Many of the Greek Kapos [Jews] were especially false and brutal.” Ibid., 184. Other testimonies also conform that many prisoners—Jews and Poles alike—were raped by Gestapo men and fellow prisoners. Young boys, known as piepels or bumboys, were especially vulnerable to abuse by homosexual kapos. These boys would then disappear after their kapo tired of them. See David Gilbert, as told to Tim Shortbridge and Michael D. Frounfelter, No Place to Run: A True Story (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2002), 76; Sam Pivnik, Survivor: Auschwitz, the Death March and My Fight for Freedom (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2012), 130. Young men were often sexually abused by homosexual prisoners in Nazi camps.
Crying, the prisoner turned to lie face down on the floor. Potok cut open the man’s pants, the jabbed the knife into his anus and cut away pieces of flesh.

Screams rang through my head, and I covered my ears.

The screams stopped, and the Kapo laughed. “You know,” he said, “he didn’t have anything.”

He pulled other people from the bunks, made them lie on their backs, and crushed their windpipes with his heavy boot. Then he’d turn them over and butcher them the way he had the first man.

The rest of us lay in our bunks, some watching, some with eyes closed.818

Joe Rosenblum recalls a cruel German Jewish kapo:

We spotted Hans Eisenstein. Hans was a golden angel, a Jewish Kapo. …

Aside from Mengele, the biggest threat to my personal safety was Hans, a German Jew. Hans was in charge of the 140 ramp workers on the night shift. … He liked beating us with the standard-issue cane, about an inch in diameter and three feet long. Hans enjoyed making people suffer and wanted to prove his loyalty to the Third Reich. By this time, Germany was so obviously losing the war most other Kapos had stopped beating us. Not Hans. … Sometimes, when we would return from work, Hans would make us run double-time. … But if Hans caught anybody, he would pound him repeatedly with his cane. He didn’t need any excuses to beat us. He also ran through groups, assaulting whoever was in his way.

What Hans and many of the other Kapos did to us was beneath human behavior, especially what they did to their own people. … They treated us all as if we were animals, they tried to turn us into animals, and they acted as if they were animals themselves.819

Peter Kleinmann, from Transcarpathia, recalls one of the many Jewish kapos he encountered in Auschwitz:

When we entered the barrack a Kapo, an SS, and a Wehrmacht man stood at the entrance and counted us as we filed past. Neither the Wehrmacht nor the SS entered the barracks but stood directly outside. We did not speak—we still believed that we would be going to work. The screams of the Kapos penetrated every corner of the barrack. In my barrack there were mainly Hungarian Jews. Everybody understood the Kapo’s instructions, which were given in Yiddish.820

Konstanty Piekarski, a Polish prisoner of Auschwitz, recalls a Jewish prisoner, a strongman by the name of Schmelling,
who succeeded in impressing the Germans with his tremendous physical strength. Some kapos had tried to match their strength with his, but were no competition for the big man. Consequently, Schmelling became a privileged prisoner within the penal block. As a Jew he could not leave the block, but he received as much food as he could eat. In return the SS men required demonstrations of his muscular power—in particular, to prove that he could kill a man with one blow. Other Jewish prisoners were supplied as the subjects, and the SS men eagerly bet on either Schmelling or his victims.821

Avraham-Berl Sokol of Wysokie Mazowieckie, who arrived at Auschwitz on January 17, 1943, recalled:

They brought us to Block 20, beating us continually. After some time they took our clothes and we were ordered to stay outside in the biting frost (January 18th, 1943) for several hours. Many froze to death in the deep cold. Then they brought us to the bathroom and tattooed a number on the left hand. My number was 88966. For them I was not a human being but a number. When they yelled at me to get beaten, they were not calling my name but my number. The Jewish “Capo”—Merva of Makov (?)—trying to please the Germans, ordered me to “bend down” and with a thick stick he beat me very hard. This is the way we lived—hunger, fear, cold and beatings were our daily treats. Many signed up to Block 7 at their will, the block of death. This was the block they used to take people to the gas chambers, this is how we were shaking (?) in the claws of death and we were hoping.822

Rosa Katz describes her confrontation with Jewish kapos on her arrival at Auschwitz:

Then we had to leave all our clothes in a big pile, and they gave us those horrible Auschwitz uniforms with the stripes. … We were pushed around again, marched off again to the barracks. … In the morning we were rushed out, the Kapos you know, they make horrible shriek voices, and those were Jewish people … And if somebody cried, they were hit, you know, the Kapos was hitting them, and not only the people who cried but the people next to them …823

Judith Strick Dribben describes the conduct of Jewish women kapos when she was taken to a shower room in Auschwitz along with a group of Polish women:

A plump girl entered. She wore good clothes, a sweater with a red yellow Star of David, and an armband embroidered “Sauna Kapo.”

She demanded in German, “Who is ready for the next room?”

The women started crowding around the door. Suddenly the girl produced a big belt. She began beating the naked bodies and heads, leaving red welts.

“Keep in line,” the girl yelled. …

Not far from us stood a tall, white-haired Italian woman. For some reason, she had attracted the attention of the Sauna Kapo, who hit her with the belt on the face, neck, and breasts. The woman became furious.

“Disgraziata putata (‘disgraceful whore’),” she shouted.

Before we could grasp what had happened, the kapo, helped by two other well-dressed girls, dragged her down and kicked her until she lay bloody and silent on the floor.824

Irene Shapiro recollects her experiences with Jewish overseers at Auschwitz-Birkenau:

We promptly line up in front of two barracks overlooking the railway ramp where we left our train just a while ago. We are about to get the first taste of crazy Sally, our Block Aelteste (barrack elder), and her adjutant, the Stubendienst (barrack orderly) Mela.

Sally is a toothless Polish-Jewish blonde who screams at us in garbled German and who kicks and hits us more often than she screams. With each reprimand, she points to the distant smokestacks and foretells that we will all go there if we don’t change the nonchalant way in which we obey the rules of the camp. …

Cruelty of punishment is in evidence everywhere and at all times. … Every Capo (Camp Policewoman) feels free to kick and punch her subservients, and so does every block-Elder or other camp official in a striped uniform. Since many of these officials in the women’s camp happen to be Hungarian [Jews], we soon learn some of the Hungarian orders that are barked at us, such as “Nem lekhet (it isn’t allowed),” “Kifele (get out)” and “Diorshan (hurry up).” All these Hungarian phrases will remain with us for a long time.825

Sara Plager Zyskind attests to the cruelty of the Jewish kapos in Auschwitz, especially one from Slovakia:

After a large group of girls had been gathered together, our Kapo began arranging us into rows of five abreast. She was now joined by several other guards, stout like herself, their hair short and stubbed as if it, too, had been cropped not long ago. These women’s dresses were so short that they barely covered their hefty thighs. …

… All three Kapos ran wildly about, wielding their truncheons and striking blows on the heads of anyone near them. The red-head flailed her victims with almost ecstatic fury. …

825 Irene Shapiro, Revisiting the Shadows: Memoirs from War-torn Poland to the Statue of Liberty (Elk River, Minnesota: DeForest Press, 2004), 231–32, 236. Margareta Czuckermann, another Hungarian Jew, also reported that prisoners were punched and tortured by the female SS guards and female Hungarian inmates, who worked for the SS. See the testimony of Margareta Czuckermann, May 25, 1989, Holocaust Memorial Center, Farmington Hills, Michigan, Internet: <http://www.holocaustcenter.org/page.aspx?pid=506>.
During the day, I had heard it whispered that these women were Jews ... This made their cruelty all the worse. ... 

“If you’re Jewish, why do you help the Germans torture us? Why do you beat your own sisters? Haven’t you any feeling of pity? ...”

The Kapo didn’t move. Leaning on her truncheon, she seemed to be listening patiently to every word I said. When I stopped talking, she said in heavily accented Polish, “Finished?”

“Yes, I replied.

“Turn around,” she commanded. I did and immediately found myself in a pitch black world with stars twirling about my head. ... Suddenly I felt water on my face. I opened my eye and realized that I was lying on the floor, with the enormous Kapo standing over me and dousing me with a strong jet of water from a hose. ... 

“Get up!” she commanded. I got to my feet wearily. ... “Climb onto the oven and get down on your knees!”

The Kapo took four large bricks, placed two in each of my hands, and ordered me to raise the bricks above my head. I couldn’t do it—they were too heavy. Blows fell on my back until, with a stupendous effort, I managed to raise my arms. I felt as if every bone in my body was broken. I don’t know how long I was kept there holding the bricks above my head. ... 

I dragged myself back and either passed out or fell into a deep sleep. ... 

Like a pack of hounds after their game, a large number of Kapos stormed into our midst, stepped all over us, and brought down their cubs with full force upon our heads. ... 

It was a horrible spectacle watched with demonic glee by the German officers, while the Kapos, who seemed to have been waiting for this opportunity, assaulted us again furiously under the pretext of restoring order.826

Ester Löwi described the cruel treatment meted out to Hungarian Jews in Auschwitz by Jewish kapos from Slovakia: “From 2 o’clock in the morning there was a roll call. It lasted until 7 o’clock. They would have to stand for 5 hours. Jewish women from Slovakia, block elders, oversaw this, and would beat people.”827 A Polish Jew also speaks scathingly of block elders from Slovakia:

The most terrible and most eager executioners of German orders, often in most extreme form, were block-/dormitory leaders from Slovakia. Forgetting that they could share the lot of humiliated comrades, they motivated Lagerälteste to punishments. They were merciless at the line-ups where weak women fainted from the exhaustion in the hot sunshine. It happened to me several times. I fell down at the line-up—block leader revived me by beating and forced me then to stand up.828

Orna Birnbach (Blauner), from Slovakia, recalls: “We walked to (what I now know was) block 4 in Birkenau. A Jewish Polish capo girl came over. These girls were queens. They hated the Hungarians, they

827 Testimony of Ester Löwi, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 113. 
told us we were still dancing while they had already built the camp.”

Mala Liss Brandsdorfer describes her experiences with Jewish kapo helpers in Birkenau:

My first work group was called the 105th Kommando. We were about 150 women divided into three groups of 50. Each group had a Vorarbeiter, or Kapo. They were our work leaders. Many of the Kapos were criminals. They were known by the black triangles on their clothing. Ours was a German prostitute. She was in charge of our work details. A lot of the Kapos were street women from Germany.

Each Kapo had one or two Jewish helpers, and over each Kapo was an SS man. When we were working the SS man usually stayed in a hut nearby. We were watched over by the Kapos and their helpers. …

The Kapos would often leave us in the care of their helpers. A few of the helpers were no better than the Kapos, but most of them would help us if they could. Most of the Kapo’s helpers were Jewish girls, and they would help by watching for the Kapos and the SS.

We stayed in Ravensbruck for about 2 weeks. … I ran into a girl named Hadasa. Even though she was Jewish she had had a privileged position in Auschwitz. She was an assistant to a Kapo from the 103rd Kommando. But here in Ravensbruck she was in the same position as the rest of us.

In Auschwitz I had received many beatings from Hadasa. Not just me but all of us in the kommando. Once she caught me in the toilet. She beat me until I was black and blue. It was because she had seen me switch groups during work so I could do some trading.

Many other Jewish prisoners recall brutal Jewish kapos and block elders in Auschwitz-Birkenau:

The commander of our barracks was a Jewish woman from Czechoslovakia; she wasn’t much older than I—in her early twenties, I would guess—but she was hardened and cruel, and it pleased her to demean us. Radomske [radomska] karwa—Radomer whore—she called each of us. That’s the greeting she used the very first time she came into our barracks, and she called us whores routinely afterward. … When winter came and the cold tore at us, digging its fingers deep into our chests, when we were maybe just a little slow to get outside to stand for our endless appels, she would come into our barracks and beat us with her stick, curse us as whores, and make us move faster.

Such gratuitous cruelty. And from a Jew. … She was cruel in an almost casual way, as if her malice were a habit and not something that arose only in outbursts, in sudden response to some infraction, real or perceived. Her viciousness was her essence. …

One might think that women guards would be kinder than men, gentler in their treatment of other human beings. But in my experience, this wasn’t true. The women guards, Jews as well as the SS. Were no less sadistic.

829 Interview with Orna Birnbach (Blauner), Internet: <http://leschroniquespurple.com/post/44656510490>.
The saddest part of all this, and something I can never forget, is the way the Blockälteste [block elder] and her helpers treated us. Though they were Jewish women, they acted more like wild beasts from the forests, beating us and kicking us all the time, and showing us no pity at all. They, themselves, lacked nothing, though. They were mostly veteran inmates …

I was brought with the group into Birkenau … This is how we were processed: I was pushed in front of a table. I had to stretch my arm out and have a camp number tattooed on it. A Kapo, a French Jew, stood on the table and made sure everyone kept order. When the needle was stuck in, I jumped from pain, and the Kapo kicked me right in the mouth so hard, a tooth flew out and blood ran all over my chin. And the Kapo screamed with laughter like an animal at the way I doubled over.

Birkenau was like hell. … Every Älteste [elder] beat us. We were whipped for the smallest “sin.” They beat me day and night. Our lives became cheap—which was what the killers wanted.

A Jewish survivor who lived through Birkenau recalled her first block elder, a 15-year-old Jewish girl named Cilli, but known as the “Little Devil”. Cilli was too weak to beat the prisoners, but at least she slapped their faces left and right. Historian N. Glicksman writes: “In Auschwitz the kapo of the night shift in the ‘Union’ factory, the Czech Jew Weiss, treated his group very brutally. … The kapo B.A., on his way to the United States, confessed his sinister deeds in Birkenau. A Hungarian woman, the daughter of a rabbi, was notorious for her disgraceful attitude towards the Jewish women under her command. “

(One of the Jewish kapos from Birkenau, Eliezer Gruenbaum, wrote a memoir that is to be published in English translation.)

Thomas Buergenthal, who survived Auschwitz-Birkenau as a child, vividly recalled the Jewish kapos he encountered there:

After we had been tattooed, we were assigned to our barracks. Ours was a wooden structure like all the others in the Gypsy camp, with a mud floor that divided two long rows of wide, three-level wooden bunks. Once in the barrack, we were greeted by a burly prisoner with a cane. This, I was to learn right away, was the Blockältester, or barrack boss. He kept pointing to the bunks and yelling in Polish and Yiddish, “Ten men to each level!” Whoever did not move fast enough for him was hit or kicked. My father and I found a bunk, picked the middle level and were soon joined by eight other inmates. Then we were ordered to lie on our stomachs with our heads pointing towards the middle of the barrack. I can’t tell whether we were given blankets, but I am sure that we had no mattresses.

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832 Trunk, Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution, 109.
833 Trunk, Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution, 189.
Although we were not given anything to eat that evening, the very thought of food was forced out of my mind by what happened that night. Into the barrack strutted two or three well-fed inmates with canes and clubs. They wore armbands that identified them as Kapo. Kapos were inmates who, together with the barrack bosses, ran the camp for the SS and terrorized their fellow inmates, day in and day out. Right after the Kapos had greeted our barrack boss, one of them yelled in German, “Spiegel, you son of a bitch. Get down. We want to talk to you!” As soon as Spiegel stood before them, the men surrounded him and started to hit him with their fists and clubs: on his face, his head, his legs, his arms. The more Spiegel begged for mercy and screamed, the more the Kapos beat him. From what I could make out as the Kapos yelled while beating him, Spiegel had apparently denounced one of them to the Gestapo in Kielce, with the result that the denounced man had been sent to Auschwitz some two years earlier.

Spiegel was soon on his knees and then flat on the ground, begging to be allowed to die. He was covered with blood and no longer really trying to protect himself against the blows that continued to rain down on him. The Kapos then picked up Spiegel and began to push and pull him out of the barrack. We did not see what happened next. Later we heard that the Kapos had dragged Spoegel to the fence and that he died on the fence. Our camp, like the others in Birkenau, was enclosed by a highly electrified fence that emitted a perennial buzz. … Spiegel must have died by being thrown against the fence or by crawling into it. Gradually, I came to realize that it was not uncommon for inmates to commit suicide by what was known as “walking into the fence.”

It is difficult not to wonder whether it ever occurred to these Kapos that they were no different from Spiegel. He denounced fellow Jews to the Gestapo because he believed that he was thereby prolonging his own life, whereas the Kapos allowed themselves to become the surrogates of the SS by beating their fellow inmates, forcing them to work to total exhaustion, and depriving them of their rations, knowing full well that by these actions they hastened the deaths of the prisoners. And all that in order to improve the Kapos’ own chances of survival. Thus, besides testing the morality of those who became neither informers nor Kapos, the concentration camps were laboratories for the survival of the brutish. Both Spiegel and the Kapo he had denounced had been friends of my parents. Both had been with us in Katowice. At that time they had been my “uncles.” I seem to recall that the Kapo whom Spiegel had denounced had been a dental technician or a dentist in his prior life; I never knew what Spiegel’s profession had been. Had they not ended up in the camps, they probably would have remained decent human beings. What is it in the human character that gives some individuals the moral strength not to sacrifice their decency and dignity, regardless of the costs to themselves, whereas others become murderously ruthless in the hope of ensuring their own survival?

… In those early days, I was also introduced to the Auschwitz feeding system. We would be awakened early in the morning and made to line up in front of a big kettle from which an inmate with a ladle would pour out a liquid that looked like black coffee. Next to him stood the barrack boss, cutting slices of black bread. The bread was frequently moldy and the slices rather small. I soon noticed that not everyone got the same amount of bread. Those the barrack boss did not like would get a smaller piece or no bread at all, while his friends and he himself would keep whole loaves. Complaints would invite a beating. In the evening, we would be served the day’s only other meal. It consisted, as a rule, of some tasteless, watery turnip soup. Since we got no bread in the
evening, I would try to save a little piece of my morning bread for later in the day, hiding it very carefully so that it would not be stolen.\textsuperscript{836}

Sometimes the victims of choice of Jewish kapos and block elders were Christian Poles. Avraham Harshalom (Friedberg) recalls:

The head of the interrogation block [Block 11] was the Jewish prisoner Jakob Kozolczik—a mountain of a man, all muscle. Before the war, Kozolczik had made a name for himself as ‘Schimschon Eisen’ (‘Samson the Mighty’), displaying his feats of strength the length and breadth of Poland. … he endeavored to be lenient towards Jews, while tightening the screw principally upon the Poles, whom he heartily detested …\textsuperscript{837}

Shavti Perelmuter contrasts a Polish block commander favourably with the Jewish kapos he encountered as a prisoner at Auschwitz:

I became sick with typhus and I lay in a terrible condition … it is only thanks to my block commander, the Pole, Ludwig [Ludwik], that I was able to stay alive. … he had been thrown into Auschwitz as a political prisoner. I have no idea what it was that I did, or for what reason he showed me so much sympathy …

My medical crisis lasted for 12 days, there was one occasion when Ludwig didn’t allow me to go to work, but he hid me under some straw in the barracks so that I wouldn’t be discovered in an inspection. …

In Auschwitz camp I had the opportunity to be exposed to see and to really hear and know the behavior of the block commanders and their helpers. The commander of Block 27 was a certain Greenboim, and he was from Warsaw. He distinguished himself with his brutality towards Jews. There was another one from Warsaw, Yosela and Laibeshel from Radom.\textsuperscript{838}

\textsuperscript{836} Buergenthal, A Lucky Child, 68–70.
\textsuperscript{837} Avraham Harshalom (Friedberg), “Jakob the Kapo,” Alive from the Ashes (Tel Aviv: Milo, 1990), Internet: <http://www.purs.org/yzkor_pruzhany/alive_jacob.htm>.
\textsuperscript{838} Shavti Perelmuter, “Jewish Resistance in the Ghetto and the Camp,” in Deblin-Modzjitz Book, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Deblin.html>, translation of D. Shtokfish, ed., Sefer Deblin-Modjitz [Deblin-Modrzyce] (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Residents of Demblin-Modzjitz, 1969), 501ff. The kapo from Warsaw identified as Greenboim may be the same as Eliezer Grinbaum or Nonek Greenbaum or Grynbaum mentioned by other Jews. He was known to call Jewish prisoners “parszywy Żyd” (“filthy Jew”). Although he was turned over to the French police in Paris, where he was spotted by some survivors after the war, he was released and fled to Palestine. See Moshe and Elie Garbarz, A Survivor (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 83; Stefan Grajek, Po wojnie i co dalej: Żydzi w Polsce w latach 1945–1949 (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2003), 65–66; Moshe Prywes as told to Haim Chertok, Prisoners of Hope (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 1996), 60. A Jewish prisoner remembers with gratitude how her Polish “block trusty” tried to protect Jewish prisoners from being sent to the ovens. See the account of Anna (Chana) Kowitza, posted online at: <http://voices.iit.edu/frames.asp?path=Interviews&kpage=kovit&ext_t.html>. Another inmate mentions a Polish kapo in Auschwitz who allowed Jewish inmates to hold a religious service and guarded the entrance to the barracks to watch out for the SS. See Judy Weissenberg Cohen, “‘The Kol Nidre I always remember,’” The Canadian Jewish News, September 24, 1998. Other accounts that mention kind deeds by Polish kapos and block elders in Auschwitz can be found in Niewyk, Fresh Wounds, 15, 205, 210; and Charmatz, Nightmares, 101–102. Walter Plywaski, formerly Władysław Pływaski, wrote the following about Polish kapos he and his brother, teenagers at the time, encountered in Auschwitz and Dachau (“I Remember,” Jewish Magazine, September-October 2007):
I am now 77 years old and those awful times of Shoah, the Holocaust, still live in my mind flickering like the dark red and black columns of flame and smoke I saw on my arrival at night on the selection platform of Auschwitz-Birkenau. I remember not running to say goodbye to my mother after the command was given by the SS and their hunting dogs, the Kapos, “Men right! Women left!”

I had been told about half a year earlier by my father that in Auschwitz any woman with a child was as good as dead. My father had information, both from his prewar Gentile Polish friends and by listening to a secret underground radio used in the Lodz [Łódź] ghetto by a small group of men to hear from BBC true war news. I also remember that I did not have my left arm tattooed with a number because by the summer of 1944 the holding yard for the slaughterhouse of Birkenau stopped tattooing those within it. I suspect that was since the average life expectancy there was but two weeks, the logic of it was “why waste government money on ink?” on those who will not last much longer. …

I remember being overly clever with my brother in going to a barracks where we heard that there were double or triple food rations to all underage twins. We lied that we were fraternal twins. The barracks was, of course, a holding pen for Dr. Mengele’s so-called medical experiments. One of the Polish Gentile Kapos in that barracks took me aside and told me what my brother and I were facing there. He told me that he would try to get us out as soon as he can manage, and he did just that probably on the third day there. He was a total stranger to me. He smuggled us out and we rejoined our father and the men’s camp barracks.

I remember lying awake at night in the barracks and listening through the night to the high-pitched screams from the outside. I was told by someone, probably the barracks leader Kapo, that we were hearing children under the age of eight being burned alive to save the German government’s money on Zyklon-B. …

My brother and I arrived in the main Dachau camp somewhere in January 1945. There I was separated from my brother and sent to the so-called infirmary, because I had malnutrition holes in both my lower legs. Two Polish Gentile Kapos at the infirmary told me that I was being held to become a guinea pig for malaria experiments there. They said that they will try to get me out of there, if at all possible. They began to show up at my bedside several times per day, bringing me pieces of bread, a slice of sausage or even a hard-boiled egg, such as these I hadn’t seen for years. After a few days the holes in my legs began to heal and probably only within one week these two Poles put a corpse into my bed and smuggled me out into the general camp where I rejoined my brother in the quarantine barracks.

And so I remember many things which are horrifying, but I also remember many things which tell me that among groups of people, even in the most extreme situations, there are also those few “weird” individuals who for one reason or another find it possible to be humane rather than being merely human. My brother and I were helped by several other Polish Gentile prisoners in the Dachau camps. Such men truly deserve the Latin phrase “Ecce Homo”.

There are a number of Jewish testimonies describing Polish prisoners of Auschwitz very favourably. Halina Nelken, a Jewish woman from Kraków, writes of the solidarity of Polish and Jewish prisoners in the Plaszów concentration camps, and the assistance shown by Polish inmates of Auschwitz, the camp’s first inmates, to later transports of prisoners including Jews. These anonymous benefactors, who may well not have been the “norm,” were known by the name of “kochany” (“darling”). While they did not have much to offer—perhaps some scraps of food or clothing—their attitude had a great impact on the new arrivals. Nelken relates similar displays of solidarity shown to her by Polish women inmates at Ravensbrück. See Halina Nelken, And Yet, I Am Here! (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 232, 248, 272. Sigmund Gerson and Eddie Gastfriend, two young Jews imprisoned in Auschwitz, speak of the “loving” attitude of Father Maximilian Kolbe and all the Polish priests toward the Jews in the camp. Eddie Gastfriend states: “There were many priests in Auschwitz. They wore no collars, but you knew they were priests by their manner and their attitude, especially toward Jews. They were so gentle, so loving.” See Patricia Treece, A Man for Others: Maximilian Kolbe, Saint of Auschwitz (New York: Harper & Row, 1982; reissued by Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Indiana, 1982), 138, 152–53. In a letter published in the New York Times on December 27, 1998, Marianne Sann wrote: “I want to, and must attest, to the fact that I was saved by Catholic fellow prisoners, at their great personal risk, in Auschwitz and again in Mauthausen.” She went on to say, “Just because the Nazis preferred to incinerate more Jews than Roman Catholic Poles does not mean that Polish non-Jewish victims do not deserve a cross of remembrance and place of honor among their fellow Jews. The Polish inmates felt the icy winds of doom just acutely as I did. … I hope the Polish Government will not be pressured to remove these symbols of respect.” Berek Latarus from Łódź recalled: “One time I stole a bread and they took me to shoot me, but a non-Jewish guy from Cracow, he was my friend, and he ran and took me away from the Germans! This non-Jew was on good terms with the S.S., he used to smuggle them cigarettes, and we called him the ‘Jewish father’ because he was sticking up for us all the time.” See Lewin, Witnesses to the Holocaust. 60. Ada Omieljanczuk, a Jewish woman, attributes her survival to Polish fellow prisoners of Auschwitz who shared their food parcels with her. See Tadeusz Andrzejewski, “Wileńscy strażnicy oświęcimskiej pamięć,” Tygodnik Wileński (Vilnius), February 3–9, 2005. Two Jewish sisters who were imprisoned in Auschwitz recalled with gratitude the extra bread they received from a Polish prisoner. See Rena Kornreich Gelissen with Heather Dune Macadam, Rena’s Promise: A Story of Sisters in Auschwitz, Expanded Edition (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2015), 67. Moishe Kantorowicz credits the Polish prisoner Leon Kulowski with saving his life by arranging his transfer, with the agreement of a Polish kapo, from a hard labour task whose only exit was
Polish inmates of Auschwitz also recall the cruelty and corruption of many of the Jewish functionaries and ordinary prisoners:

After two days journey, late evening we arrived to Auschwitz. We stopped at the side track, seeing surrounding us wires (fences.) Approached directly by Jews (probably members of “Sonderkommando”), ordering men to line-up separately from women. They warned us, to get rid of money—gold and foreign exchange. The latter to be punished by death. We were then led by Jews and SS-men to the camp. On the way there I saw a huge ditch on fire, and Jews started shouting that Germans prepared it for us. I could see on a distance group of people surrounding the fire, I heard terrible screams and I think I have seen a SS-man pushing people into that fire. Behind death, to an inside mechanic shop job and by giving some of his food to Kantorowicz. See Moishe Kantorowicz, My Mother’s Bequest: From Shershev to Auschwitz to Newfoundland (Canada: n.p., 2004), Book 4. Two Jewish survivors from Ciechanów recalled that Polish prisoners in Auschwitz who received food parcels from home gave their camp-issued portions away to Jews and other prisoners. See Noach Zabludowicz, “My Experiences in World War II,” and Moshe Kolko, “Ciechanow Jews in the Uprising in Auschwitz,” in A.W. Yassini, ed., Memorial Book for the Community of Ciechanow, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/ciechanow/Ciechanow.html>, translation of Yisker-bukh fun der Tshekhanover yidisher kehile (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Ciechanow in Israel and in the Diaspora, 1962), 337, 382. Historian Yisrael Gutman credits a Polish prisoner, who hid him and fed him without expecting any reward, with saving his life when he was imprisoned in Auschwitz for several months. See Piotr Zychowicz, in conversation with Israel Gutman, “To nie Polacy założyli obozy, tylko Niemcy.” Rzeczpospolita, May 30, 2012. Salvatore Katan, a Jewish prisoner of Auschwitz-Birkenau from Greece, was warned by a Polish inmate not to volunteer for a castration experiment in exchange for extra rations. See the testimony of Salvatore Katan, March 2, 1986, Holocaust Memorial Center, Farmington Hills, Michigan, Internet: <http://www.holocaustcenter.org/page.aspx?pid=607>. Salvator Moshe, a Greek Jew, credits a Polish bookkeeper with saving his life. See Salvator Moshe, Oral History Transcript, Internet: <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/HolocaustSurvivors/pdfs/Moshe.pdf>. Ben Kawer, a Polish Jew who, together with his brother, was transferred from Birkenau to the sub-camp of Buna (Auschwitz 3), befriended a Polish Christian worker living in a nearby town who, at great personal risk, managed to bring into the camp various food items on a regular basis which the brothers shared. This person even offered Ben the opportunity to escape from Buna, but Ben would not leave without his brother and only one could go. In gratitude, he later attempted to nominate this person for the Righteous Among Nations award presented by Yad Vashem, but he was unable to find any trace of this friend. See the testimony of Ben Kawer, June 28, 2005, Holocaust Memorial Center, Farmington Hills, Michigan, Internet: <http://www.holocaustcenter.org/page.aspx?pid=609>. A number of Poles at the camp hospital helped the Jewish doctors working there to survive. See Bartoszewski and Lewin, Righteous Among Nations, 478–79. Assistance given to Jews by Polish inmates of Auschwitz has been documented by Yad Vashem, which has recognized as “Righteous”: Stanisława Sierzputowska, Jerzy Pozimski, and Jerzy Radwanek. See Gutman and Bender, The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations, volumes 4 and 5: Poland, Part 1, 256; Part 2, 638, 658. Jerzy Radwanek, a member of the Polish underground in Auschwitz, used his position as camp electrician to provide widespread assistance to Jewish prisoners. He came to be known by them as the “Jewish uncle” of Auschwitz. See the profile of Jerzy Radwanek under “Poland” in the web site of The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, Internet: <http://www.jfr.org>. Another tribute to Polish prisoners, among them doctors, in various concentration camps was authored by Zofia Hauswirt—see Wroński and Zwolakowa, Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945, 311–12. In an inhumane and poisonous environment like Auschwitz, one should not take these acts of kindness for granted A Hungarian survivor, a rabbi, recalled: “The Polish Jews discriminated terribly. They blamed us that we had the privilege of living such a good life in our own homes while they were taken into Auschwitz two years earlier than us. ‘Now we should suffer!’ they said. ‘We should work and they shouldn’t have to work.’ And they kept constantly picking on us, for no reason. We are Jews too; we didn’t send them to Auschwitz.” See William B. Helmreich, Against All Odds: Holocaust Survivors and the Successful Lives They Made in America (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 176–77. (That author also mentions a perception—common among German Jews—of Polish Jews as “boors and parvenus.” One German Jew confided, “Even today, there is still a different psychology between German and Polish Jews. I don’t really relate to most of them.” Ibid.) Helen Lewis, a Czech Jew who was an inmate of Birkenau, the camp which held primarily Jews, did not have fond memories of the Jewish prisoners from Poland, “some of whom had become completely brutalized with the years they had been there, and who were more frightening and dangerous than the SS.” See Anton Gill, The Journey Back From Hell: Conversations with Concentration Camp Survivors (London: Grafton Books, 1988), 411.
the wires stand our men, seasoned Häftlings (prisoners) who reassured us, that the fire was not for us—they were burning Jews.

We were led to a barn at the Brzezinka [Birkenau]. … Morning time, we were ordered into a column of rows of 5, and to the bath. … We were led to bath, started registration, and we had to leave our jewellery, cash, and our belongings. We could keep part of our food supplies, groats, sugar, butter. We, my 11-years old sister me and our mother, held together. Jews at the bath were worst in tormenting us; they pushed us, grasped our belongings taking just anything they liked. From me, for example, they took a pretty painted wrap (handkerchief) and just on my eyes one Jewish (woman) wrapped it into her pocket. We got other, civilian cloths with a “Streifen” (Vertical, red strap, painted on with oil paint over shoulders of a dress), dirty and with lice. We got no shoes. Later on, gathered behind the bath in column of rows in 5 and then our Aufseher approached. When she left us soon after, just to fetch list of our names, the seasoned Polish prisoners neared us. Men gave us their bread, coffee, especially for mothers with children and for small children. Women enquired on their relatives, friends, sometime recognising between us their sisters or some more removed relatives. Crying was heard all over, tears and welcome. The Aufseher returned shouting on us as we were scattered all over—some women were slapped in faces, which gave me a shocking impression. We were led then by Aufsehers and SS-man to camp “B”. There we were spread to different blocks, me with my mother and sister to block 26.839

During arrival of the Jewish transports “Lagersperr” (camp barrier) was established. Huge ditches covered with spruce padding were already prepared. Young Jewish were separated for labour, older send to gas chambers while children thrown directly into fire. It took place just 2–3 km from the camp. Children were just thrown into those ditches and burned. Once a Polish transport arrived—80 persons—Jewish guard (capo) wanted to send all those to the gas chamber as well, but SS-man showed up and took the whole group to the camp, and threw the Jew into fire.840

In our station (Revir of the sick-bay), we were constantly submitted selections. I was selected (to extermination?) three times, but bribed myself through block guard, Jewish-Slovak, with my rations. She wrote in other numbers on the list of selected From our block of 300 persons, half of us were sorted out (for extermination). Selections were carried on 2 to 3 times a week.841

A group of Jews from Płońsk was charged with the job of bringing the clothes of prisoners put to death in Birkenau for disinfection at the sauna. This allowed them to obtain money and valuables, which they then used to buy food in the camp as well as to help other members of the block. In 1943, the group decided to fight the Germans and take revenge on the kapo who abused the Jews. Moshe Aharon Pszewoznik deposed:

At the end of 1943, a Jew from Lodz [Łódź] (known as Moshele Hassid) ordered me, my brother, Elazar Miller, Mendel Frankenstei and Shimon Pas (the latter being the one whose wife and five children were cremated, and whose valuables he recognized among the objects the victims left behind) to go and kill the murderous “Romanian” Unterscharführer. We were about to carry out the order when a Jewish kapo … told the Germans that a revolt had been planned. As a result, 900 Jews were killed. About six months later, the revolt took place.842

Some of the kapos had already acquired a history of abusing their fellow Jews before arriving at Auschwitz, and they continued in this path after being transferred to other camps afterwards. Henoch (Henryk, Chaim) Klaajman (Klajnman) was one of more than 40 Jews who served in the Jewish police force in the ghetto of his home town of Płońsk. Believed to be a confidant of the German authorities, Klaajman not only mistreated Jews, but also divulged their hiding places and appropriated his victims’ goods and money. The Płońsk ghetto police were notorious for their abuse of power and brutality, even killing fellow Jews. In one case, when the Płońsk Jews discovered that the commander of the Jewish police in nearby Pomiechówek, Mejloch Hopenblum, was stealing packages addressed to Jews in Płońsk, they reportedly “popped out his eyes” and “spat in his face” before killing him. The Płońsk Jewish council was equally corrupt. Its members took bribes from exemptions from the lists of workers for labour assignments and assigned their friends to easy jobs. They often feasted well at the expense of others. From 1942 to 1945, Klaajman was a kapo in Auschwitz and then Stutthof, where he mistreated his fellow prisoners by beating them. He had been so brutal to his fellow inmates in Auschwitz that he had earned the nickname “Chamek kapo.”843

Stanisław Taubenschlag (Townsend) faced the unwanted sexual attention of a Jewish kapo in Auschwitz who was a homosexual. Later, towards the end of the war, when Taubenschlag was in the process of being transported to Nordhausen, he had to deal with Siegfried, a vile Jewish kapo who had deduced Taubenschlag’s Jewishness and persecuted him.844 Roman Frister tells of having been raped by a Jewish prisoner in Auschwitz who “liked young boys.” He tells of losing his forage cap, a capital crime, and stealing another prisoner’s cap. He witnesses the innocent victim of his misdeed being shot.845 Jewish women prisoners who pretended to be skilled labourers to survive in Auschwitz had to guard their secret from fellow Jews: “One lies more convincingly than another; they are afraid to tell the truth because there are many spies around. The worst are the German Jewish girls.”846

842 Testimony of Moshe Aharon Pszewoznik, dated January 25, 1948, Yad Vashem Archives, M1-M1E/1744 (historical questionnaire, the Central Historical Committee, Munich).
843 Dean, Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945, vol. II, Part A, 25–26; Gabriel N. Finder and Alexander V. Prusin, “Jewish Collaborators on Trial in Poland, 1944–1956,” in Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, vol. 20 (2008): 139–41. After the war, the Jewish Social Court referred the Klajman’s case to the Polish Regional Court in Plock, which found him guilty of brutally murdering Jews in the Płońsk ghetto, as well as in the Auschwitz and Stutthof concentration camps, where he was a kapo. Klajman as sentenced to death in 1949, but the penalty was later commuted to life imprisonment.
844 Taubenschlag (Townsend), To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland, 90–91, 113–15.
845 Frister, The Cap, or the Price of a Life, 240–43.
The Germans brought a group of 60 young Jews from Stoczek near Węgrów to Treblinka, where they served as auxiliaries in policing the camp. Armed with sticks, they shoved, jostled and struck the prisoners. They also seized money and other valuables from new arrivals. Jews imprisoned in Treblinka recalled their mistreatment at the hands of fellow Jews:

Everyone was ordered to undress. Next to those undressing themselves stood so-called kapos with sticks. (They had yellow armbands on their forearms with “Kapo” written in black letters.) In exchange for gold and cigarettes they helped individual persons get through to those set aside for work detail. The kapos hit us when the SS were there or when someone did not undress himself fast enough.

Another amazing characteristic of the Germans is their ability to discover, among other peoples, hundreds of depraved types like themselves, and to use them for their own ends. In camps for Jews, there is a need for Jewish executioners, spies, stool pigeons. The Germans managed to find them, to find such vile creatures as Moshko from the vicinity of Slonim [Słonim], Itzig Kobyła from Warsaw, Chaskel the thief, and Kuba, a thief and a pimp, both Warsaw born and bred.

One of the workers was a young Warsaw Jew whose nickname was ‘the Gypsy.’ … His job was to ransack the victims’ suitcases and collect delicacies … Once, when the Gypsy spotted a worker secreting a piece of candy in his clothes, he jumped down from the cart and demanded that he put it back. The worker, a newcomer in Treblinka, saw no reason to obey the orders of another Jew, even one who held an official position. The Gypsy began hitting him with his riding whip but the worker, undeterred, pushed the Gypsy … At this, the Gypsy, the murderers’ lackey, struck and killed the helpless Jew.

One of the many Jewish informers denounced the “very humane” camp elder Rakowski, who was planning to stage a revolt of the Jewish prisoners. Blau was a particularly dangerous kapo who had many people on his conscience. He and his wife had reached Treblinka from their place of residence, Kielce, where he had collaborated with the Gestapo. … Blau enjoyed certain privileges: he was first appointed Oberkapo and then kitchen commandant. He surrounded himself with a gang of criminals of the worst kind, who kept him informed of everything in the huts—prisoners’ discussions, plans, and so on. Blau handed out double portions of the best kinds of food to his cronies, at the expense of the rest of us …

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848 Testimony of an anonymous escapee from Treblinka in Markowska, *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, 189.
850 Weinstein, *Quenched Steel*, 59–60.
Other prisoners provide equally damning testimony about Jewish camp officials who behaved cruelly toward their fellow Jewish prisoners, both in the hard labour camp, which also held Polish prisoners, and in the death camp for Jews.

But the conduct of the Jewish block or barrack heads was truly beneath contempt. They were worse than the guards, and infinitely worse than the Polish heads.\textsuperscript{852}

The place [Transport Square] is packed with people. On one side are women with small children; on the opposite side, men, forced to kneel. In the middle there are SS men, Ukrainians with weapons in their hands, as well as a group of about 40 men with red armbands. These are Jews, the detachment of “Reds.” In Treblinka slang, they are called the “\textit{Hevra Kadisha}” [Burial Society].

Kapo Jurek, the leader of the “Reds,” had been a Warsaw rickshaw driver so corrupt and debauched, no deed was too foul for him. This brute would not hesitate to take aside a girl, already naked, on her march to the “bath.” Promising to save her life, he would do the worst, and then push her back into the line. He is dressed elegantly, as that sort of person could easily afford to be in Treblinka. He works his whip on Jewish heads frequently and with gusto. As foul and corrupt as he was, his language was even worse. … Most of the “Reds” were recruited from the Warsaw underworld and did not fall short of their Kapo.\textsuperscript{853}

The slightest suspicion was enough to put away prisoners singly and in groups. It became a field day for the worst elements—the informers, the administrative helper Chaskiel, and block elder Kuba were at the fore. Not only the prisoners, but even the Kapos and some Germans were afraid of Chaskiel, a sleazy, vile creature from the Warsaw underworld, a stupid and conceited youth. All day he would run around in the square and in the workshops like a wild animal in search of prey, peering into every corner. He even searched bread-bags and pockets. Woe to anyone who he caught with something not “kosher,” or cooking or napping on the job! (We dreaded him more than we did the Germans.) Nothing would help—neither tears, nor the intervention of his own “comrades.” … The matter was sure to be brought to the attention of the administration. … Chaskiel enjoyed the complete confidence of the administration. He was the custodian of the keys to the storehouses and gorged himself on the best of everything. He claimed that the Germans had even promised to take him along to Berlin after the war. …

The other extremely active informer was block elder Kuba, an “intellectual” from Lodz [Lódź]. He would constantly run around in an attempt to please and serve the Germans at the expense of single prisoners as well as groups; he was never satisfied that he had done enough. Here’s an example: When there were no more transports, and the goods had all been sorted and sent off, the groups of “Reds,” “Blues” and others were transferred to work inside the ghetto. A group of “Reds”

\textsuperscript{852} Israel Cymlich and Oscar Strawczynski, \textit{Escaping Hell in Treblinka} (New York and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and The Holocaust Survivors’ Memoirs Project, 2007), 38.

\textsuperscript{853} Testimony of Oskar Strawczynski, in ibid., 131–32. See also the testimony of Szymon Goldberg in Rubin, \textit{The Rise and Fall of Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today}, volume II: \textit{District Lublin}, 380–81, which mentions Jewish kapos like Jurek, Chaskiel and Kuba, who beat and denounced Jewish inmates; and Mark S. Smith, \textit{Treblinka Survivor: The Life and Death of Hershl Sperling} (Gloucestershire, United Kingdom: The History Press, 2010), 130,
was assigned to do the resurfacing of our square yard. As the first shovelfuls of earth were lifted, the usual Treblinka garbage pit was uncovered. Among the garbage and shit are piles of photographs and documents, treasures in gold and jewelry, as well as human corpses. We beg the workers: “cover it up and keep quiet, let’s try to preserve at least these remains of the slaughtered Jewish people.” Kapo Jurek, another “fine” man, finally relents, but Kuba would not stand for it. He runs around searching until he finds the Oberscharführer. A detachment of garbage-sorters is set up. Each photo and document is carefully exhumed and burned. Money, gold and valuables are cleaned and set aside in strongboxes. …

Kuba also excelled in the fight against “speculation.” It became virtually impossible to get money out and to bring food in. Workers were searched upon leaving the camp and returning. …

Kuba, Chaskiel and their agents had everyone under surveillance. They would constantly search around and under the bunks and in the bread-bags, and were often successful. The traitor Kuba also organized a special guard around our wire fence, through which some guards used to trade and hand over parcels to their Jews. Nevertheless, despite all these difficulties, the trade did not stop.

In time, three levels of society were established—similar to life outside. The upper class, the aristocracy, was composed of the commandants, the Kapos, the warehouse supervisors and the doctors. They lived in luxury, indulged in wild parties, got drunk, and sank ever deeper into debauchery. There were about 30 women in Treblinka. Most of them were employed in the German, Ukrainian and Jewish laundries. Some sewed underwear; one was a dentist; another was a doctor; and yet another was a nurse in the Ukrainian infirmary. A few of the women were employed at various handicrafts such as knitting or crocheting. The women did not work hard; they dressed luxuriously and behaved disgracefully.

Five of the women had husbands in the camp and their behavior was irreproachable. The rest, without exception, the young ones as well as the old ones, had “admirers” selected from the Treblinka aristocracy. These rich admirers supplied them with the best of everything. The women went to the parties, got drunk, and enjoyed themselves to the utmost. Not only did they behave in a despicable manner, but they also used the most lewd and obscene language. They, our Treblinka women, were not squeamish even about Germans or Ukrainians! They were not subject to any physical punishment. Generally, they were punished with housework; they were forced to remain in their barracks during their free time. They were not allowed to meet with their lovers or to attend the wild parties. Indeed, this punishment was very hard to bear! …

The middle class in Treblinka consisted of tradesmen in the workshops as well as some of the more ingenious “speculators.” … Because the tradesmen would do all kinds of jobs for the guards, they often received bread, meat, cigarettes, and occasionally even whiskey. As so, in the workshops, even at the worst times, we did not suffer too severely.\footnote{Testimony of Oskar Strawczynski, in Cymlich and Strawczynski, \textit{Escaping Hell in Treblinka}, 152–54.}

Betrayal foiled many escape plans and led to numerous executions of inmates in Treblinka:

\footnote{133, which mentions the kapos Kuba and Paulinka (or Perla) as informers.}
Our first earlier attempt [to escape] was unsuccessful and twelve—who had been betrayed by a prisoner, a man from Częstochowa who used to make wire mesh for a living—paid for it with their lives.\textsuperscript{855}

It was found out later that two Jews, one of them a blacksmith, Szymon from Kosów and someone from Ryki, whose name I cannot remember, were the ones who betrayed us. The SS men selected 30 workers and killed them.\textsuperscript{856}

The Jewish order police from Treblinka were also utilized in manhunts carried out by the Germans to capture Jewish escapees and punish Poles who assisted them.\textsuperscript{857} Escapees from Treblinka also had to contend with being stripped of their money by unscrupulous fellow Jews.\textsuperscript{858} The Germans were also known to stage the escape of Jewish kapos turned Gestapo agents, as was the case with Stanisław Dorosiewicz, who subsequently infiltrated a Peasant Battalions unit near Staszów and was responsible for the death of a number of Jews.\textsuperscript{859}

One did not have to be a k apo or informer to turn on fellow prisoners. An inmate of Buchenwald provided the following riveting testimony:

In spring of 1944, our column—Poles and Jews—were employed in earth moving … The SS construction officer supervised us personally. Even for strong men the work was very difficult … One wanted so badly to rest for a moment, but the constant blows and kicks, the unceasing shouts forced our tired arms to keep shoveling on and on.

Then the gaze of the construction officer fell upon two Jews whose strength had given out. He ordered a Pole named Strzasza to bury the two men, who could hardly stand on their feet. Strzasza froze with horror and refused. The construction officer took the shovel and beat him with it. He ordered him, “Lie down in the trench immediately!” Thereupon he forced the two Jews to cover with dirt the prisoner lying in the trench. These two men then did it out of fear for their lives, hoping to escape the same gruesome fate themselves. When only Strzasza’s head still peered out, the construction officer called “Halt!” and had him pulled out again.

Now the two Jews had to lie in the trench, and the construction officer again gave Strzasza the order to cover the two with dirt. Slowly the trench filled with dirt; one shovelful after another was dumped in. The face of the Polish comrade was contorted with terror; drops of sweat fell from his forehead. But the construction officer stood next to him with the look of a wild animal that hypnotizes its victims. The trench was now completely covered. The inhuman SS executioner stamped the dirt smooth himself and laughed while doing it.\textsuperscript{860}

\begin{flushright}{\footnotesize\textsuperscript{855} Testimony of Izrael Bramson, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 106.\textsuperscript{856} Testimony of Szymon Grynszpan, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 1185.\textsuperscript{857} Mariusz Bechta, Między Bolszewią a Niemcami: Konspiracja polityczna i wojskowa Polskiego Obozu Narodowego na Podlasiu w latach 1939–1952 (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej and Rytm, 2008), 414.\textsuperscript{858} Alexander Donat, ed., The Death Camp Treblinka: A Documentary History (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979), 141–42.\textsuperscript{859} Mieczysław Korczak, Życie na włosku—bis (Staszów: Staszowskie Towarzystwo Kulturalne, 1997).\textsuperscript{860} David A. Hackett, ed., The Buchenwald Report (Boulder, Colorado, San Francisco, and Oxford: Westview Press,}}

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A Jew who was imprisoned in the SS camp in Oleine, Latvia, recalled:

And then there were the Jewish kapos, among whom Danziger ‘distinguished’ himself with his brutality. Any Jew who happened to cross his path he beat up mercilessly. One day my mother Rachel-Leah was his luckless victim. He kept beating her until she fell down in a faint. She died the next day.861

According to a scholarly study, the Jewish kapos in Gross-Rosen were noted for their unusual cruelty.862 Henry Freier, who worked in the kitchen in Gross-Rosen under a Jewish kapo, recalled: “I was beaten up by this man every day.”863 Peter Kleinmann recalled: “My Kapo was a Polish Jew and was merciless.”864 Harry Jubas remembers how prisoners, who froze for hours on endless Appels, were hit by Jewish kapos.865 Dr. Mojżesz Zabramny, a Jew, was prosecuted in 1946 for mistreating prisoners in the Gross-Rosen concentration camp.866 Former Jewish prisoners of the labour camp at Görlitz, a filial of Gross-Rosen, accused several Jewish functionaries—Abram Kon, Zygmunt Widawski, Mieczysław Jakobson, and Marian Borenstein—of mistreating fellow prisoners, by beating them, sometimes savagely, and stealing their food rations. Kon was also charged with mistreating Jewish labourers as head of a garment facility in the Łódź ghetto.867 Regarding the labour camp of Markstadt, another affiliate of Gross-Rosen, a Jewish prisoner recalled:

Daily we were sent to hard work, [such as] erecting ammunition factories, where a few deaths [would] occur every day. In this camp, Jews were made as overseers for other Jews. The “Judenälster” [“Jewish Ältester”] was Brukmajster; his perfunctory servants were Herzel, Mojszel, and Basok. They were the beaters, and would daily beat their own brethren with deadly blows, murdering hundreds of Jews.868
Icek Kuperberg describes his experiences in camps at Faulbrick (Feldberg?) and Niederorschel (a branch of Buchenwald), respectively:

The Jewish captain in charge in the [Faulbrick] camp was named Sandgood. He dressed as a German and collaborated with them. For example, when a soldier complained about someone, it was his pleasure to put the man, completely nude, on a special chair so that he could not move. The soldier whipped him with 25 lashes. Two people had to take the victim off of the chair and bring him to his room.

Around New Year’s 1945, a transport of people arrived from Czestochowa [Częstochowa], Poland. They worked in an ammunition factory. Among them were two particularly infamous men. One was a fellow named Kolsky whom the Germans appointed as the executioner of the 25 lashes. Whenever he punished someone, though, instead of administering the 25 lashes, he flogged the person 50 times until the person died. The other man’s name was Gewirtz. He was the Judenelandester (Jewish camp captain) in camp Brande in charge of the sick people. In 1943 the camp leader, Ludwig, asked him to deal with the very sick. Instead, Gewirtz killed about 1,000 people on his own. They were bound and laid down on the floor in wash barracks. Water was then poured on their foreheads until they died. My brother, Eliyakum, was among them. Somehow the new German camp leader found out about these two men and their histories. They were terribly beaten and locked up for five days without food. In time, they simply disappeared.

In the labour camp of Budzyń near Kraśnik, German personnel were characteristically scarce and the authorities relied on Jewish inmates to basically run day-to-day operations.

Only a few Germans ran the camp. All the administrative jobs were performed by Jewish functionaries (there were about two hundred of them), and they constituted the most privileged group of prisoners. They had a better barrack, a better kitchenette, and they received a lot of food.

The kapos at Budzyń were also Jews, as were the police. Informers were also to be found. Jewish inmates of that camp wrote:

These were Jewish POWs who were put to work to prepare the camps and were responsible for camp discipline. … The Kapos laid open valises in front of us and started yelling: ‘Hand it over. He means it. This is no game.’ This was said in Yiddish, which Felix [SS-Oberscharführer Reinhold

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870 Wiszniewicz, *And Yet I Still Have Dreams*, 81.

871 Ibid., 245. Idel Bekerman reported that the Judenrat in Kielce managed to send Jewish blackmailers and denouncers to Auschwitz. See her account in Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 191.
Feix, the camp commander from December 1942 until August 1943 understood and enjoyed. 
The kitchen was under the supervision of former Jewish military prisoners …

Smoliar [Symcha Binem Smolarz], who was responsible for the Jewish workers in the factory … was a ruddy lad from Lodz [Łódź] … He would scream, curse, beat people with his fist or the whip in his hand … He was despised by everyone including the camp leaders. He received his punishment after the war when he was brought to justice in a Polish court and sentenced to imprisonment. The assistant camp commandant Szepiaski … beat the prisoners to a lesser degree. … Similar to him was the Camp-Fuehrer Widunos, who treated his group as one would treat flocks of cattle who were being driven from place to place.

There were informers and perhaps collaborators also of various forms. Of course, not all of them were known, but there was one who was known and recognized by everybody. He was a middle aged man of about fifty, a refugee from Danzig who arrived in Budzyn with the Warsaw group and became a member of the ordnungsdienst [police] by virtue of a request by Feiks rather than an appointment from the camp directorship, as was usual. His name was Samos.

With the help of agents from among the prisoners themselves, the Gestapo learned about preparations for escape. Eight Jews were arrested in the camp on the 13th of February 1944 according to the instructions of the agents. During the investigation at the Krasnik [Kraśnik] Gestapo, the information from the agents was confirmed. Information about false identification cards found in the camp was also received. During the search of the premises of the prisoners, 12 identity cards and more than 20,000 złotes [złotys] in cash was found. … The investigation, carried out by the Gestapo, did not give a definite explanation of how the Jewish prisoners had received these identity cards. Everyone said that after the liquidation of the labor camp in Poniatowa, an unknown Jew had come from Warsaw to Krasnik who sold the identity cards for 5,000 złotes a piece.

On the 19th of February 1944, the chief of the Gestapo in Krasnik sent over a report about the results of the investigation, enclosing the 12 false identity cards for the commandant of WIFO* and S.S. Streichel in Lublin. …

In the matter of the identity cards and the preparations to escape, the Gestapo implicated 40 prisoners from the S.S. camp in Krasnik and Camp WIFO. All were shot between the 14th and 18th of February 1944.

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873 Daniel Freiberg, “Budzyń,” in David Shtokfish, ed., Sefer Krasnik (Tel Aviv: Krasnik Societies in Israel and the Diaspora, 1973), 242; translated as Book of Krasnik, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/krasnik/Krasnik.html#TOC225>. Freiberg writes that the Jews in the camp from nearby towns were better off than other prisoners since they were helped by the Poles with whom they had left their property for safekeeping and most of the met Polish acquaintances in their workplaces who would helped them out. Ibid., 241.
874 Ibid., 249.
875 T. Brustin-Bernsztein, “Jews in Krasnik During the Years of the Hitlerist Occupation,” in ibid., 310–11.
Jewish prisoners were known to harass Jews who spoke Polish, as one inmate recalls: “the simple people around me … so often scolded me—‘Red Yiddish! Speak Yiddish! Don’t speak Polish! That’s not our language!”

Jewish inmates also facilitated the smooth operation of the camp at Starachowice. A group of privileged Jews, the so-called Prominenten or camp elite, consisting of the Wilczek clique—named after the head of the camp police, Jeremiah Wilczek—enjoyed markedly better food, clothing and housing than other Jews, were free to travel to nearby towns, sold borrowed Jewish goods to Poles on the black market, and perhaps helped the Germans choose who was to die. In the opinion of some inmates, the camp police was “worse than the Germans.” Jeremiah Wilczek and his son Abraham had been agents of the Jewish police in the ghetto in Wierzbnik (Starachowice) before the deportation, “who even advised his masters concerning whom to beat to get the information they wanted.”

According to one of the prisoners,

From now on, it was announced, several prisoners would be executed for each escapee. The idea came from Wilczek, the chief kapo whose title was ‘The Jewish Elder’. …

Among these privileges was being allowed to live with his wife and sons in a separate, well-furnished, well-equipped shack and to move freely about the camp at all hours. Sometimes, under the pretext of visiting the steelworks, Wilczek even left the camp without an escort. He was in charge of distributing the food, of which his lackeys had plenty while the other prisoners went hungry, and he was responsible for the work shifts, deciding whom to send to hard labour and whom to assign to easier jobs in camp/ This power was reinforced by a network of informers who strengthened his position among the Germans, too. The dozen or so hand-picked prisoners who worked for him as kapos while taking advantage of the rest of us were completely loyal. They knew that on a whim they could be sent to work at the blast ovens. Hated and feared, these Jewish policemen obeyed all German orders. It would have been impossible to enforce discipline at Starachowice without them. Wilczek’s son was their direct boss. …

It was Wilczek Junior who approached the Germans with his father’s idea of dividing us into pairs to patrol the inner fences in shifts, each pair equipped with a whistle and white smocks that would enable the tower guards to identify us in the glare of the searchlights. Any attempt to approach the fences would be instantly punished. Each thwarted escape would earn the patrol a loaf of bread. Each successful one would cost it its lives.

After the liquidation of the camp, when the prisoners were being transported by train to Auschwitz, eighteen members of the Wilczek clique were killed by other Jews in revenge for their misconduct. (The Jews on this transport were not gassed, and most of them survived the war.)

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876 Wiszniewicz, And Yet I Still Have Dreams, 85.
879 Browning, Collected Memories, 78–81; Browning, Remembering Survival, 228–33.
Like many labour camps, Skarżysko-Kamienna was virtually run by Jews and had its privileged—the camp “aristocracy”: the Jewish commandant of the camp, the Jewish police commander, and the so-called skilled workers: tailors, shoemakers, and other craftsmen. They lived in separate barracks and received better food rations which they exchanged for various services, including sexual favours. Childhood friendship was no shield from abuse, as Adam Neuman recalled:

This time, my persecutor was a Jew from my hometown! He belonged to the camp “aristocracy” and had a permanent job in the German cooperative of the Camp. … He noticed that a kidney was gone and he ordered us to confess which one of us had stolen it … He had known me from childhood and he was my senior colleague on the Maccabee Sports Club team, so, of course, I expected that he would act compassionately and overlook the incident. How wrong I was! When my turn came to be searched, he pulled out the kidney from under my shirt and, in front of everyone, he slapped me across the face. … I was totally humiliated—but this time by one of my own people!

Another Jew who was sent to the Hasag (i.e., Hugo Schneider Aktiengesellschaft, a privately owned German armaments company that used camp inmates as forced labour) labour camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna recalled, “We also had a Jewish foreman named Nathan who fit right in with the gang of murderers—a Jewish sadist.” Josef Morgenstern recalled the Jewish kapos as “refined in cruelty and more feared than their masters.” According to Morgenstern, “fawning and informing to the authorities were the order of the day.” Louis Kaye remembered Jewish kapos as being more cruel than the German guards. Elsa Thon (Balbina Synalewicz) recalled her encounters with the Jewish police during her stay in Skarżysko-Kamienna:

The police counted us, then ordered us to enter the barracks, yelling and swearing at us to make us hurry up. …

Suddenly, a policeman turned to me, and ordered me to make a list of the people in the barracks. He was short and bad-tempered. …

The next morning, as the bad-tempered policeman entered the barracks, he shouted, as if to remind us of who was in charge. Wanting us to fear him, he treated us to a display of what could happen if we didn’t obey.

A woman, tall, maybe fifty, approached him to ask for a blanket, because she was cold. He kicked her viciously in the belly. As she doubled over from pain and burst into tears, I thrust myself

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880 Adam Neuman-Nowicki, Struggle for Life During the Nazi Occupation of Poland (Lewiston, New York; Queenston, Ontario; Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 48–49.
881 Neuman-Nowicki, Struggle for Life During the Nazi Occupation of Poland, 50.
883 Alvin Abram, The Light After Dark II: Six More Stories of Triumph After All Hope Had Gone... (Toronto: AMA Graphics Incorporated, 2000), 100.
between them to protect her from a further blow, pleading, “Do you have a mother? Why are you doing this?”

His brutality was entirely unnecessary, as far as I could see—there wasn’t a single German around. …

Each morning we were awakened by a policeman with this song:

Wake up! Your mothers are whores!
I’ve been calling for half an hour!
You are still sleeping!
You are sons of bitches!

Remembering this still brings tears to my eyes. We had been oppressed and humiliated by the Nazis. Was it necessary for these policemen to add pain to our degraded existence? Or was it supposed to be a kind of entertaining diversion for us? …

One day, the bread was delivered at the same time as the soup was being distributed outside the barracks. The man pouring the soup into the dishes was also an orderly in the infirmary. I asked him to serve me first so I could get back and divide the bread before it was stolen.

“Stay in line!” he yelled at me.

“If the bread is stolen, the others will kill me!” I pleaded. He got furious with me. “You whore!” he shouted, slapping my face so hard that I couldn’t speak for days. I threw away my dish, went into the barracks and divided the bread, then threw myself down on my bunk. I lay there unable even to cry. My face twisted. I felt hatred, for him, for the rest of the police, for all the oppressors who imagined themselves the lords of our lives. Who could imagine that such low instincts could emerge in other human beings?

Especially, I felt rage against the orderly who had hit me. … He could have poured the soup into my dish with no problem; everyone standing in the line agreed. He had plenty of time. It was well known that no one left the infirmary alive. …

Not all the policemen were as bad as this one. Some were even worse. Remembering the bad ones still brings back the anger. …

But that sort of thing [i.e., taking advantage of women prisoners] was routine there. Even the chief of police was a philanderer. He had a wife and a lover; what’s more his wife had her own lover, and that lover was having other casual affairs, and so on …

The chief used to invent ways to amuse himself by humiliating us. He would order the girls to stand naked outside the barracks at night. Some of the staff would then take them away, supposedly to protect them from further shame, and would rape them. There was no such thing as consent. These women were trapped. What made it worse was that so many of these atrocities were committed by our own people. …

I was sent one day with a small group to gather spent bullets at a place where the Nazis practised target shooting, very near the forest. Near the range was a small mechanic’s shop where two Poles worked. … We worked near them. The older man talked to me when the policeman and the SS weren’t around.

After a few days, the older man started bringing me sandwiches from home, cigarettes, or a few zloty [złoty]. He told me he had a daughter my age and was sad about what happened to us. …
Every day, the older man tried to convince me to keep looking for a chance to break away from the group. He told me how to find his house. … He also made me a beautiful aluminum soup-dish with a handle. … But one day the policeman who took us to and from work saw me talking to the old man. On the way back, he grabbed my cigarettes and money, and walked very close to me. I couldn’t even think of escaping. …

The next day, I told the Polish man that I was afraid to accept anything further from him. But he still brought me hairpins and wooden clogs, with leather straps for shoes. He did what he could to help me. I remember him with affection.

I was sent back to the munitions factory, and then came winter. My shoes were worn out … The soles of my feet touched the ice and snow on the ground with every step. I had asked for shoes at the warehouse, but had been refused. …

So one morning when we were marshalled for work, the head count was one short. One of the policemen came into the barracks, where I was sitting on my bunk. “Come out, they will kill you,” he yelled.

“I’ve had enough,” I said, staying put.
“Get down, you can’t stay here.”
“I’m not going anywhere until I get shoes.”

They went off to the factory without me. An hour later, a German foreman came in, asking me why I refused to get to work. Without a word, I showed him my broken shoes. He smiled. “Come with me, you will get shoes.”

I walked with him to the factory. … As we passed by the office window, he stopped to ask for a piece of paper, then he wrote out an order that I should be given shoes. … After work, I went to the warehouse and got a pair of clogs.885

One of the few Jews who was prosecuted after the war for collaborating with the Germans was Henryk Gnat, a block elder at the Skarżysko-Kamienna camp accused of mistreating fellow prisoners, by beating them, physically abusing them, and stealing their rations. Former camp inmate Regina Finger testified:

We work sixteen hours a day … From the hell in the factory we come back to the jaws of the camp. I have no hope that German hirelings and bandits such as Teperman, Krzepicki, Gnat, and the others would treat us better than the Germans.886

Israel Mittelberg described conditions at Skarżysko-Kamienna, after his transfer there from Majdanek, and his subsequent peregrinations.

At night, when we walked into the barrack, we found a group of Jews with a Jewish camp commandant, Jewish police, some Jewish supervisors, and Jewish quartermasters. … In exchange for a piece of bread we gave away our clothing. …

885 Thon, I Wish It Were Fiction, 103–9.
A great deal of difference existed between those of us who had just arrived from Warsaw and those who had come from the nearby small towns. … the others had come directly from their homes, still in possession of valuable items they were hiding. … Also, the Gentiles with whom they had left their belongings used to help them from time to time. It was, therefore, much more difficult for us. The inmates resorted to stealing hunks of bread from each other, or an additional bowl of soup in the kitchen …

The Jews who had arrived from the provinces ahead of us held all the service posts. Therefore a kind of antagonism grew up between them and those from Warsaw; among us, many refugees from Lodz [Łódź]. … The commandant Mordechai, a butcher by trade, had bought off the chief, thus achieving complete jurisdiction over us, which he knew exactly how to exercise. He released whoever had money from the drudgery of work. When I asked him for an exemption, he simply laughed. He disliked us intensely. He did not care whether someone was really ill. For money, he let his good friends go home and we had to work on their behalf. Wagons of shoes would arrive from Treblinka for distribution. Mordechai would then order the shoemakers to take the shoes apart looking for hidden wealth. They would keep the shoes that were in better condition, and pass the rubbish on to us.

The doctor also would issue an exemption for money; without money, one was obliged to go to work, regardless of the state of his health. After fifteen months of loading shells, I fell ill. On my way from work to camp, I had a very painful attack and could not walk. My friends supported me. Lenczner, a Jewish policeman from Volbram [Wolbrom], noticed it and admonished me for not walking in the ranks. My complaints simply went unheard. He continued to kick me in the spine with his heavy boot in the very spot which was causing me the most pain. He tortured me the whole way. He survived the war. …

After much haggling Dr. Rotbalsam came and, for money of course, gave me some ointment. All he wanted was money. He also survived. Mordechai had an assistant in our barrack by the name of Bakalasz. He refused to help anyone with anything. When I made a request of him, he would reply, “Ah, you’ll die soon, so many people are dying, you’ll also be among them.” Mordechai had several other assistants, among them the brothers Avram and Hershel Band of the same town, Volbram … There were also the brothers Moishe and Kalman Gastfreund, tailors by trade. They were bad people. …

There were other thugs such as Dafner and Heinak. For spilling a little coffee they beat me so, that I was swollen for two weeks. They could have taught the SS officers a thing or two about how to perform beatings. There was a man from Crakow [Kraków], Gershon Lesman; he and his two brothers had a lot of money, so they lived well. For five hundred zlotys [złotys] he became a policeman.

When I worked at passing turf over the wire fence, I once opened the gate for the people of my group to come into the camp. Lesman punished me for that by kicking me with the tip of his boot, inflicting excruciating pain in my back. I suffered another attack. Lesman is still alive and became very rich after the war. …

So strong was the antagonism that the “veteran” inmates informed on the newcomers, refused to work with us, and so on. They used to talk of seven people and twenty newcomers having died on any given day. However, there was such a discrepancy between the death rate of the old timers and
the later arrivals that soon the antagonism petered out. Every day forty people died. Of our group, which had numbered eighty, only seven remained at the end.

When the Germans realized that the mortality rate was threatening the numbers for work, they doubled our bread ration. …

Dr. Zaks, a native of Crakow [Kraków] whom we had the misfortune of knowing in the Skarzisker Workshop A, followed us to this new camp [in Sulejów near Piotrków, where the Jews obtained food from the Polish inmates until the Germans put a stop to it] and also here he applied the same methods as he had in the workshop. He declared all the sick, the elderly and the weak as being fit for work, thereby contributing to their death, for, as they could not carry out the work satisfactorily, the Ukrainians and Germans wore them out and beat them to death. …

[Later, when he was transported to Buchenwald:] There was a policeman in our wagon by the name of Korn, who had already harassed us in Silev [Sulejów] and continued to beat us with his spurs here in the train. I resented his behavior deeply and interfered in the fight for which, of course, I got my share of blows. That fellow, who had tormented us so, received his due in Buchenwald.887

Morris Kirsch stated that the Jewish kapos in Skarżysko-Kamienna were often cruel, administering beatings and taking away the prisoners’ daily rations of food as punishment, sometimes for doing nothing at all. When the inmates were transferred to another labour camp in Częstochowa, the kapos became even worse as they stole more and more food from the prisoners.888 For this reason, many of the prisoners starved to death. Harry Haft was taken to Jaworzno where there was a working coal mine that served as a slave labour camp. German soldiers and Jewish kapos would march the workers to the job site and back.

On his first day of work, as Harry was being shackled, he looked into the face of the Jewish cop locking him to the chain, and he knew the man’s face. It was Mischa, a hoodlum from Belchatow [Belchatów]. He was the type of guy who would profess to be your friend and then steal from you. Their eyes locked. …

Mischa spotted the disruption and ran toward Harry. With the guards watching, he planted himself directly next to Harry’s face and screamed: “Left, right …” in his ears. He kicked Harry and hit him hard in the back with a baton. …

From that day on, Mischa took a personal interest in Harry. With the guards’ permission, he would beat Harry daily on the way to the mineshaft. Those first days of work in the Jaworzno coal mine began with a beating from his Jewish neighbor.

There were days when Harry would beg Mischa to leave him alone. Mischa seemed to enjoy showing the guards how he kicked and struck Harry with his stick.889

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887 Mittelberg, Between Two Worlds, 60–68.
889 Haft, Harry Haft, 52–53.
Conditions in other labour camps were equally as bad, as the following testimony from Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki near Warsaw illustrates.

As a result of the humiliating and degrading conditions, the demoralization planned by the Germans set in among certain elements of the Jewish community, and the Germans knew well how to use local Jewish trash for their devilish schemes. The lowest characters and scum of the Jewish underworld could hardly resist the nomination conferred upon them by the Gestapo henchmen. They became the leaders and policemen. Thus, in the camp Pomyjkhov [Pomiechowo], a Jewish degenerate named Maylekhel played the role of the leading oppressor. He helped put an end to the harrowed Jewish inmates. But Meylekhel’s sway did not last. Jews of Plonsk [Płoński], who together with the Jews of Novy-Dvor experienced his brutal rule, did away with him.890

Survivors from Strzyżów near Rzeszów recall the cruelty of the Jewish foremen (“kapos”):

After the great expulsion from the ghetto in Rzeszow [Rzeszów], which took place on November 15, 1942 only four thousand people remained in the ghetto. One day upon returning from work outside the ghetto, we noticed an excited crow that was milling around one area of the ghetto. This part of the ghetto was called “Drukerówka” [Drukerówka]. The Kapos were extorting contributions from everyone. When I came closer I was hit in the face by a Kapo's whip. The Kapo was a local Jew from Rzeszow—Mr. Kleinmintz. There were not many local Jewish Kapos anymore. Most Kapos were from Lodz [Łódź] and Kalisz. Not realizing what I was doing, I hit him back and he fell. I quickly ran home but mistakenly entered another house where I encountered a few more Jewish policemen, including the sadly infamous “Itchele” from Kolbuszowa. I hit him too and he fell down the stairs.

I was finally overpowered by a few policemen and taken to the German command post which was located in the same building as the Judenrat.

The entire ghetto was in uproar. It seemed like a revolt. Luckily there were no Germans in the ghetto when I was brought there. While I was led by the policemen, we encountered Mr. Lubasz, a well-known and beloved Jew in the Rzeszow ghetto. The man knew me from before the war. He calmed down the placement and he followed us until we reached the Judenrat. Meanwhile, as I found out later, other policemen caught my younger brother Samuel who was only fifteen years old and they took revenge on him by beating him savagely. When we came into the Judenrat, Abraham Brav and Sheingal, the two remaining members of the Judenrat in Strzyzow [Strzyżów] and also members of the Rzeszow Judenrat, happened to be there. They saved my life by taking me out of the hands of the placement because by then, German policemen had arrived in the ghetto. Brav and Sheingal locked me up in the office of Dr. Kleinman, the chairman of the Judenrat, and kept me there for an hour until the arrival of Dr. Kleinman. Faking anger, Dr. Kleinman scolded me. I

890 Aryeh Shamri and Dov First, eds., Pinkas Novi-Dvor (Pinkas Novy-Dvor) (Tel Aviv: The Organizations of Former Novy-Dvor Jews in Israel, the United States, Canada, Argentina, Uruguay and France, 1965), xvii. This source points out that it was the town’s ethnic Germans who were the directors of the German extermination program: “Two underworld gangsters of the Novy-Dvor Folksdeutschen [Volksdeutschen], the brothers Wendt, assumed leading positions in town in order to annihilate the Jewish population.”
denied and showed a receipt proving that my contribution had been paid. And that is how the matter ended. My brother and I realized that our lives had been saved by a miracle.

My second encounter with a Kapo occurred in Huta Komarowska [Komorowska] camp. This camp was under the command of the German commander—Shubke—who was not a bad man. … However, there was one commandant in the Huta Komarowska camp—the infamous Schmidt (whose trial is taking place right now in a German court). He was helped in his cruelty by the Jewish Kapos—the brothers Rybner, Mr. Straucher, Elimelech Kirschenbaum and others. We worked very hard cutting timber and during the work we were brutally tortured by this commandant and his helpers, the Kapos. Once we complained to commandant Shubke and he called in the Kapos and reprimanded them for their bad treatment. The next day the Kapos were mad at us and took revenge. They ordered that every second day would be penalty day, which meant working without food and without our shirts at a time when the mosquitoes were sucking our last drop of blood. If someone attempted to straighten his back or stopped working for one second, he was beaten with a truncheon over his back. The worst of them all was Elimelech Kirschenbaum. He was later shot by the Russians. Once, when he came near my brother Samuel and raised his truncheon, I jumped close to him with the axe in my hand and said to him: “Elimelech—if you touch my brother your end will be right here”. My anger affected him. He let go of my brother but he threatened that he would settle with me when we returned to the camp.

Even children were enlisted as tormentors of fellow Jewish prisoners:

I learned that this place was Huta Komorowska, a hard-labor work camp from which few were known to come out alive. … It was not long after I was let out of the truck that two Jewish policemen took me away and searched me from top to bottom. …

The foreman of our group, Cheskel Rybner, was a Jew and a sadist. He called us criminals, accused us of not wanting to work and beat us with a wooden stick. …

Three of the trucks from Huta Komorowska, including the one I was on, had traveled to Mielec. … It was about ten o’clock at night when we arrived in Mielec. We were unloaded from the trucks by Jewish police. …

Brutal punishments were a way of life in Mielec.

One of the members of the Jewish police, David Rosenwasser, had a habit of repeating, “Do you know who I am? I am David Rosenwasser, O.D. (Officer in Charge). He would then look at everyone meanly.

David Rosenwasser got a devilish pleasure out of tormenting people. One day he walked quietly into my barracks and started yelling, “Get up, Get up.”

Then he closed the door and left. Five minutes later, he was back in the barracks swinging a rubber truncheon and shouting. Anyone who was still in bed—whether ill or injured—was beaten until he was unconscious. Rosenwasser had a habit of walking by the barracks at night to listen to

anything we were saying. Unlucky was the person who said anything, for he was pulled out of bed and beaten unmercifully. …

At the camp in Wielicka [Wieliczka near Kraków] was a small nine-year-old Jewish boy. The Germans had dressed him in an SS uniform and instructed him in the beating of Jews. Each day he appeared in the yard and hit every Jew who came his way with a stick. When someone told him that he himself was a Jew, he would say there was nothing he could do about it. 892

A Jewish female inmate of the labour camp in Gliwice-Steigern recalled the brutality of Sonia Baumgarten, a block elder from Będzin, her equally brutal assistant, Mala Winer from Sosnowiec, and Bela Gryłak, a denouncer from Łódź. 893 One of the most shocking testimonies concerns a camp in Skalat near Tarnopol, in southeastern Poland.

The Skalat [Skalat] Camp was opened on 11 November 1942. Within a month it held over three hundred inmates, including about fifty lonely women, most of whom were from outside Skalat …

Several workshops were set up, all laboring exclusively for the Germans. The Obersturmbannführer [Obersturmbannführer] had assigned a certain Jew, Heniek Zukerman, formerly the Kommandant of the Kamionka Camp, to organize the Skalat installation. …

The actual work during the twelve-hour day was not as awful and unbearable as the “camp discipline” and the attitudes of the officials. … Although the camp was directed by Jews themselves, all went in a similar fashion as in other concentration camps: conducted with the precision and savagery prevalent in concentration camps.

One specific case at a typical roll-call will serve to show the cruelty with which the camp leaders treated their own brothers. One day the camp leader, Zukerman, chose some of the stronger inmates for the heavy labor at the quarry. Among them was Saul Friedman, the shoemaker, a man of about 56. He asked to be excused because of his age and weakness, begging to be assigned, instead, to the ‘Shit Brigade.’ “What audacity!” Zukerman shouted in Polish, the official language of the camp, and began to hit the man mercilessly until he fell to the ground in a pool of blood. After the beating, Shol-the-cobbler was truly incapable of heavy labor and was detailed, as a cripple, to peeling potatoes in the kitchen.

Zukerman soon chose as his assistant Bumek Rus, a former law student, and previously a member of the Grzimalow [Grzymałow] Judenrat, whose behavior filled with terror all the Jews who came into contact with him. A month after Zukerman had successfully established the camp, he was ordered by the central camp authorities in Kamionka to organize a similar labor camp in Podwołoczyska [Podwołoczyska], and Rus took over command of the Skalat Camp. Obersturmbannführer Rebel, or his aide, Sharfuhrer Maler, would come by every few days to make sure that all was in order. … The Germans would shout insults and curse wildly, while issuing commands which the Jewish Kommandants would accept servilely, intoning the obedient compliance: “Befehl Herr Obersturmbannführer!”

892 Breitowicz, Through Hell To Life, 61–62, 70, 73, 76.
893 Testimony of Hela Honigman, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), record group 301, number 454.
Camp visits by Germans were usually the occasion for a lavish reception where pastries and beverages were served and where eggnog and wine flowed like water. The Skalat Schupo rarely ever missed these celebrations. Often they would go on until late at night, ending with female entertainment provided by the camp management. The Germans would leave, carrying expensive gifts, cheered in spirit and with favorable opinions of their loyal servants. …

Life in the Skalat Camp was moving towards extermination. As in all concentration camps, after several weeks people were hardly recognizable: spiritually broken and physically exhausted, with no will or reason to live. The fetid camp atmosphere eroded one’s humanity and people’s behavior at times was wild, almost beastly. … To avoid a beating was to experience a miracle. …

In the camps, the population was separated into two groups: the oppressors and the oppressed. The first included the camp leaders, the brigade leaders and other oppressors. In other camps, membership in that ‘upper stratum’ was the privilege of the Gentiles: either of the SS-men or of Gentile inmates. In the case of the Skalat Camp, the conditions were different. All of the authorities here were Jewish. The SS-men, as indicated, only came to check up every few days. That was sufficient, however, to last until the next visit.

The authorities of the Skalat Camp earned their infamy by the brutality toward their own brothers. Here, most of the people in the upper stratum came from the corrupt Judenrat, which the German machine had converted into an institution of demoralization and betrayal. Within the framework of a locked labor camp, they had a fruitful ground for their vile and beastly acts. They became appropriate tools in the hands of the Germans for the execution of their plans and wishes. Robbery, extortion and womanizing made up their days. Usually drunk, or exhausted by their carousing, as well as tense, unruly and violent, they brandished whips over the heads and backs of fellow Jews, while berating and cursing them. The clothing of the camp official gave him the appearance of an underworld dandy or pimp: grey-green riding breeches, shiny black new-looking boots, a brown leather jacket with a stiff collar, like that of a boulevardier, smelling of eau de cologne, with a cigarette between his lips. The camp people trembled in fear before such ‘big shots.’ In their after-hours, they ate and drank the best available. They would stay up to all hours, often until dawn, playing cards and drinking. Money had lost all value to them. They used bank notes to light their cigarettes and the amounts they wagered were staggering. They obtained sexual favors from the women and girls in the camp, who were terrorized into acceding to the slightest whim of these rulers. All the authorities lived in the camp building, together with the inmates, and it was under the same roof that the orgies and festivities took place.

The administrators and oppressors of the camp were a specific type of person. If everything was lost, then one should savor that which life yet had to offer. Trapped in a diabolic snare, one could live befitting the devil; beyond the corpses, beyond the abyss of sin and crime, beyond filth and self-loathing. They eked out the last bit of life, even at the cost of other lives. “A few Jews will have the right to remain alive under Hitler and I intend to be one of them,” Kommandant Rus would say – and he did survive.

After the “Sobbing Graves” ‘action,’ the entire Judenrat fell apart. The main leaders, Nirler, Zimmer, Lempert and Schoenberg, had managed to escape along with their families. All of them were now in the camp, from which they continued to direct the lives of the last remnants of the hopeless Jews who still wandered among the ruins of the ghetto. This handful of Jews knew quite
well that the end was near and inevitable. It seemed to them that now the danger of death would be less in the camp, therefore everyone strived to get into the camp. This privilege came at a high price. The camp management explained that the money was needed to bribe the Gestapo. Actually, most of the money disappeared into the deep pockets of the camp officials. The corrupt life of the camp gentry grew ever more expensive. Those Jews who had no money were not accepted into the camp. It was ironic that while previously people had to pay to be saved from the camp, now they had to pay to be admitted.

In this way, the camp population grew by a few dozen, including women and children. These dealings for places in the ‘Life Saving Skalat Camp’ went on until the final liquidation of the ghetto. With the liquidation of the ghetto, there was no longer a Judenrat.

Nirler, having lost his kingdom now became the ‘prime minister’ to the camp-leader, Rus. Now it was Nirler who, every morning at 5:00, would call the roll of the inmates. He too, like his superior, was dressed in pajamas and carried a riding crop. In so brief a time, he managed to create around himself an aura of fear and ‘respect.’ All who entered the camp office had to stand and take off their caps. If some newcomer failed to follow this custom, even if out of ignorance, he was brutally beaten and confined for several days. Other former leaders of the ghetto (Zimmer, Lempert, Schoenberg, Dr. Brif, etc.) gained infamy by their evil acts. They took charge of the work details and, following the German example, lorded over everyone. Decency and justice simply did not exist for them, even with reference to former friends and acquaintances. The Jewish ghetto police, which had been transferred to the service of the camp authorities, also wrote a bloody page in the painful history of the Skalat Camp. 

An inmate of a camp for Jewish prisoners of war located at 7 Lipowa Street in Lublin recalls:

Here was the camp of Polish army prisoners—all Jews. At the time there were 7,000 of them, headed by a man named Fisher. (Today he resides with his wife Tsesh in Tel-Aviv). The prisoners hated the Jews of Lublin …

The 7,000 inmates of the prison camp worked as a detail of the sanitation unit. They cleaned the houses vacated by the Jewish deportees, street by street. The pounded on the walls, tore up floor tiles, looking for—and finding—treasures which the luckless Jews his before leaving, in the hope of returning. These prisoners garnered millions. They dressed like princes. Their stores, shops and markets carried every kind of delicacy: ham and bacon, honey cookies, pastries, fine sausages, whiskey, beer, oranges. The penniless prisoners hung about the wealthy ones, hoping to find bones in the garbage. The wealthy ones ate better than the Poles.

Jewish inmates from the Lipowa Street camp were utilized for a raid on the Lublin ghetto ordered by Odilo Globocnik the night of December 11–12, 1941: 320 Jews were rounded up, and 150 were sent to the

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895 Goldberg, The Undefeated, 123–24.
Majdanek concentration camp. The inmates also seized clothes from the homes of Jews in the ghetto.\textsuperscript{896} Two German Jews who acted as kapos in Majdanek were particularly known for their cruelty.\textsuperscript{897}

Jewish OD (order police) men and kapos in Płaszów were known for treating the inmates with cruelty, extorting valuables, dutifully enforcing harsh measures, and betraying planned escapes.\textsuperscript{898} Memoirs recorded shortly after the war were, it seems, more open about such incidents. Donald Niewyk’s anthology, \textit{Fresh Wounds},\textsuperscript{899} contains frequent references to betrayals by fellow Jews and mistreatment, sometimes quite savage, at the hands of Jewish kapos (capos) and block seniors in Nazi camps. Indeed, as one Jewish scholar points out, “the cruelty of many Jewish \textit{kapos} in the concentration camps is well attested by countless survivors.”\textsuperscript{900} Many additional examples are mentioned later. One can also find examples of Christian Poles suffering mistreatment and betrayal at the hands of Jewish kapos and inmates in Nazi camps.\textsuperscript{901}

As among other nationalities, Jewish collaborators ran the entire gamut and included men and women who maintained friendly, sometimes intimate, relations with the SS and Gestapo, with whom they even partied. Partying was not uncommon in the ghettos among those well-placed. In the town of Skalbmierz, in the home of Lejzor Kac,

The entire \textit{Judenrat}, along with the \textit{Ordnungsdienst} [Jewish police], were eating, drinking, carrying on, men and women together, like a wedding celebration.\textsuperscript{902}

Some Jewish women worked as prostitutes and strippers for the Germans,\textsuperscript{903} and a number of them became lovers or mistresses to German officers and soldiers.\textsuperscript{904} A number of Jewish woman were simply selected to

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\textsuperscript{897} Gruber, \textit{I Chose Life}, 26.

\textsuperscript{898} Maria Hochberg-Marińska and Noe Grüss, eds., \textit{The Children Accuse} (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1996), 101; Frister, \textit{The Cap, or the Price of a Life}, 254, 260; testimony of Giza Landau, \textit{Yalkut Moreshet: Holocaust Documentation and Research} [Tel Aviv], vol. 2 (Winter 2004): 182–83; David M. Crowe, \textit{Oskar Schindler: The Untold Account of His Life, Wartime Activities and the Story Behind the List} (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Westview Press, 2004), 320–22, 337–48. The names most often mentioned are: Wilek or Wilhelm Chilowicz, the head Jewish administrator, and his wife Maria, Chilowicz’s assistant Mietek Finkelstein, Marcel Goldberg, Maier Kerner, Wilhelm or Wilek Schnitzer, Romek Faeb, and Schoenfeld. Giza Beller Landau recalled: “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. 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. … And there were two Jewish policemen—Kerner and Marcel Goldberg—the worst ones in the camp. … 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.” See Grabowski, \textit{Hunt for the Jews}, 225–26.


\textsuperscript{901} Szereszewska, \textit{Memoirs from Occupied Warsaw}, 1940–1945, 460 (Auschwitz); Richard C. Lukas, comp. and ed., \textit{Forgotten Survivors: Polish Christians Remember the Nazi Occupation} (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 26 (Neuengamme), 181 (Auschwitz).

\textsuperscript{902} Busgang, \textit{Działoszyce Memorial Book}, 256.

\textsuperscript{903} See, for example: Hersch Gotthelf, “A Few Words,” in \textit{Memorial Book of Sochaczew}, translation of A. Sh. Stein
serve as prostitutes or “volunteered” to do so under extreme circumstances.905 (This phenomenon was by no means unique to Jews. Such behaviour was far more widespread among the French, Norwegians, and others.906) Jewish community leaders in Brześć on the River Bug “decided to send some expensive ‘gifts’ to Major Rade. Four beautiful girls who had some idea of the importance of their mission delivered these gifts. They spent the whole night with the Germans and when they appeared on the streets the next day, every Jew looked upon them as Biblical heroines, who sacrificed themselves for the greater good of the community of Israel.”907 Sometimes Jews succeeded in joining the local German “high life,” as was the case in Zlöczów:

The liaison between the Judenrat in Zlöczów [Zloczów] and [Hauptsturmführer] Warzok was an individual named Zwerdling. … Every few days he presented the Judenrat with new demands, allegedly from Warzok. Nobody in the Judenrat dared to question these demands. Aside from the devastating draft of new workers, he insisted on and received expensive gifts which were supposed to lower the quota of humans. A lavishly furnished apartment was set up for Herr Hauptsturmführer where he entertained his women drawn mostly from the secretarial pool in the Kreishauptmannschaft and also partly supplied by the Judenrat. The finest wines and liquors, as

and G. Weissman, eds., Pinkas Sochaczew (Jerusalem: Former Residents of Sochaczew in Israel, 1962); Howard Roiter, comp. and ed., Voices from the Holocaust, vol. 1 (New York: William-Frederick Press, 1975), 108 (Warsaw); Schupack, The Dead Years, 44–45 (Radzyń Podlaski); Peter Silverman, David Smuschkowitz, and Peter Smuszkwicz, From Victims to Victors (Concord, Ontario: The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, 1992), 246 (Glębokie); Joanna Wiszniewicz, A jednak czasem miewam sny (Warsaw: Tu, 1996), 77–78 (Warsaw), translated as And I Still Have My Dreams: A Story of Certain Loneliness (Evanson, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2004); Stanisławczyk, Czterdzieści twardych, 106, 195–96 (Warsaw); Ernest, O wojnie wielkich Niemiec z Żydami Warszawy, 1939–1943, 82 (Warsaw); Friedmann, Reluctant Soldier, 23 (a number of attractive girls in Chelm). It appears that the ban on sexual relations with Jews, an issue that raised considerable concern with state security when German gendarmes came across more than a dozen high ranking German officers spending the night with Jewish women in Warsaw’s Bristol Hotel in October 1939, continued to be transgressed rather frequently. The Bristol Hotel incident was mentioned in the 2004 documentary film Frauen als Beute: Wehrmacht und Prostitution by Thomas Gaevern and Martin Hilbert.


905 An inmate of Treblinka recalled: “Only once did Jews leave the camp alive. The Front had demanded women. So one hundred and ten of the most beautiful Jewish girls, accompanied by a Jewish doctor, were sent off.” See Mark S. Smith, Treblinka Survivor: The Life and Death of Hershl Sperling (Stroud, United Kingdom: The History Press, 2010), 249.

906 On France see, for example, Patrick Buisson, 1940–1945: Années érotiques: Vichy ou les infortunes de la vertu (Paris: Albin Michel, 2008).

well as the best food, was provided, as the price for leaving us alone. Diamonds and precious jewelry were delivered, much of it remaining in Zwerdling’s pockets. He soon started to behave like a German. His wife and daughters strutted around in new outfits and high boots, aping the style of the German women. Zwerdling became the most feared Jew in Zloczow, feared almost as much as Warzok himself.908

Cooperation sometimes simply entailed performing tasks for the German overlords with model diligence and reporting back to them in a servile manner. According to Emanuel Ringelblum, Jewish prisoners-of-war earned the respect of the Germans precisely for their servility.909 Another controversial passtime was the holding of gala concerts in the ghettos, attended by large audiences dressed in their best attire including tuxedos and ball dresses.910 Moreover, in spite of the apparent incongruity, in the early years of the German occupation Jews often had better contacts and interaction with local German authorities than the Poles did. Fraternization was not unusual, especially in the early years of the occupation, when the opportunity arose. As Jews from Krosno recall:

My brother had connections with the German infantry, and for a sum of money he arranged with a sergeant to bring a covered truck to Lwow [Lwów]. In this manner, the rabbi [Cwerski] and his family returned to Krosno.911

I remember occasions when we even socialized with a German police officer. At the time there were Jewish refugees from Łódź who had been resettled to Krosno. … There was one family that consisted of a father, mother, and two beautiful daughters. A German officer liked these girls and protected them. We used to go to their home and have parties when this German officer, who allowed us to have a good time, was present. We would sing, tell jokes and stories, and read books together. There was also another very pretty girl from Łódź who had a number of German admirers. She spent many nights in the homes of German officers, who lavished her with gifts, even though it was a capital offense for Jews and Germans to have sexual relations with each other. Yet the Germans disobeyed their own laws. It always amazed me how they could be fond of some of our Jewish girls and yet want to abuse or kill the rest of us.912

In Radom, the Jewish Council maintained extensive connections with the Gestapo and there was no shortage of confidants among the Jewish police.913 At the request of the Gestapo, members of the Jewish Council prepared lists of Poles to be arrested or transported to the Reich as forced labour. The members of

908 Tennenbaum, Zloczow Memoir, 198.
909 Ringelblum, Kronika getta warszawskiego, 116.
910 Urbański, Zagłada Żydów w Dystrykcie Radomskim 111 (Kielce, Radomsko).
911 Breitowicz, Through Hell to Life, 23.
the Jewish Council, the Jewish police, and their families had a reputation for corruption, as they were known to enjoy a better standard of living than most other Jews. While poor Jews were ragged and hungry, rich Jews had no problem securing lodging and food, and turned away orphaned children knocking on their doors. Despite the increasing poverty in the ghetto, the Judenrat and Jewish police partied, drank and kept a harem of prostitutes. As one resident recalls, the ghetto policemen were generally well respected in the community, or at least they had been before the war began. They were men in their prime, able-bodied and agile, and most of them had achieved their matura [i.e., secondary school] diploma at least. The Germans used them to carry out their policies in the ghetto and the factory. The policemen would designate people for forced-work details, guard the perimeter of the ghetto, and oversee the distribution of our meager food rations. Though they didn’t carry guns, they were given certain privileges for their services to the Germans. They could go into and out of the ghetto, for example, without explicit permission, and in the factory, some had separate rooms of their own—they didn’t live as the rest of us did, in crowded barracks. Not all of them, certainly, but most of the Jewish police felt that they had special protection as well as privileges with the Germans, and given the circumstances, the police tended to look upon themselves as better than everyone else.

Nojich Tannenbaum, for example, was this way. He was an informer as well as a policeman, and he would boast to us that his family—his wife, their young twin girls, their Jewish maid, all of them—would survive on an island of safety while everything else around them burned. He patrolled the factory grounds, supervising—spying, really—looking for anything he could report to the Germans. Maybe someone was hiding extra food; maybe someone was not where he or she was supposed to be. No one ever wanted to see Tannenbaum or be seen by him; certainly no one trusted him. He was a Jew, but he was working for the Germans, seemingly with the wholeness of his heart. …

Tannenbaum didn’t know it then—when we were in the factory, none of us did—but the Germans would save no special treatment for their informers and police. … Tannenbaum was killed by Jews at Auschwitz, exacting their own kind of justice against someone who had caused so much death.

There was Chiel Friedman, too … [Before the war, he was a member of a socialist Zionist youth organization—M.P.] During the war, though, Friedman became a member of the Jewish police, and he became proud, arrogant, cruel. … “Chiel,” he said, “I need your help.” My uncle was calling on a man who had been a friend … Friedman came over to my uncle, looked him in the eye, and slapped him hard across the face. “I am not Chiel Friedman anymore,” he said. “I am Comrade Friedman. That is what you must call me.” And he turned on his boot and walked away. …

915 Testimony of Maria Widawska (assumed name), Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), record group 301, number 1698.
916 Urbański, Zagłada Żydów w Dystrykcie Radomskim, 73.
… Another Jewish policeman, Duvid Norembursky, was one of those who escaped; he was responsible for my Heniek’s death.

It was Chiel Friedman, the Jewish policeman in charge of the KL [Konzentrationslager, or concentration camp in Radom]. … He had come to the barracks knowing I must be there …

“Come out from your hiding! You know I will find you!” …

He was marching now, up and down the aisles of the barracks. He started to scream, furious that he hadn’t found me. “You whore! I know you are in this barracks! I’m going to find you, Heniek’s little whore!” …

Friedman looked for me everywhere, but somehow he didn’t think to look where I was. Somehow he didn’t look under the floorboards, where a young girl lay trembling in fear and fury under a coat of rats.

… It seemed not to matter to the Germans that I had escaped the oblava [round-up]. After that one day, they didn’t send anyone to come looking for me.

But it mattered to Chiel Friedman. He resented it, resented that I had managed to elude him. I think he wanted to show the Germans how good he was at his policing job, to show them that he could ferret out the young girl who tried to avoid capture.917

The Jewish police played a crucial role in the deportations of Jews to the death camps:

On the evening of August 17, 1942, the Germans commenced the liquidation of the large ghetto in Radom, in which about 25,000 Jews were then residing. … The ghetto liquidation Aktion was carried out as on the first occasion: exactly at midnight, after the floodlights were switched on, the German police, Ukrainian collaborators, and members of the Jewish Police began to chase the Jews out of their houses. The Jews were gathered at preselected locations. The roundup lasted until early the next morning, and approximately 10,000 people were herded to a train waiting on a siding. During the Aktion, many Jews were killed …

On August 18, 1942, the ghetto was quiet. Its remaining residents were waiting for the second phase of the Aktion. In the afternoon, the Jewish Police announced the second phase would start at midnight. … It was known that the Jewish Police ordered their family members to go to the collection point voluntarily, to increase their chances or remaining in Radom. As a result of these efforts, most of the Jews gathered at the Stare Miasto Square by 11:00 p.m.918

917 Werber and Keller, Two Rings, 41–42, 76, 120–22. Later, when he was sent to Dachau, Chiel Friedman “would force the men to stand longer than necessary in their twice-daily appels, or roll calls. … Chiel Friedman made them stand for a half hour, sometimes an hour longer than the Germans required. Friedman seemed to want to prove himself; he wanted to show the Germans, and maybe the Jews, too, that he knew how to be cruel and indiscriminate in his cruelty. Friedman settled in Toronto, spurned by the survivors from Radom. Ibid., 43–44. Duvid Norembursky, who was responsible for a number of Jewish deaths, and his wife managed to escape, survived the war in hiding, and immigrated to the United States under changed names. Ibid., 105–6.

Jewish black-marketeers and “entrepreneurs who entered into all kinds of shady deals to earn money” thrived and formed a very visible *nouveau riche* class.919 A resident of Radom, who was taken to a labour camp near Cieszanów, recalled:

Some of our fellow prisoners were enterprising, too. They succeeded in digging tunnels out of the camp and, under cover of night, proceeded to the closest village, where they bought provisions. They would then return to camp and sell the food—at very fancy prices—to other inmates.920

In Belchatów, local trade remained entrenched in the hands of the Jews, among them smugglers of foreign currency, gold and jewels, who worked closely with the German police, and even partied with them, and denounced Poles.921 (Polish accounts are thus consistent with Jewish accounts cited earlier.) Elsewhere,

A commandant came to Kielce who began drawing the Jews to him and giving them economic positions. Thus he gave Jechezkel Lemberg the export of eggs. He and his assistants were given the task of buying eggs in the Kielce region and turning them over to the economic committee for export to Germany. Jakob Kohen of Checiny [Chęciny] was given such a role for the export of leather, and others were given similar positions with regard to grain, feathers etc. For a while these Jews were busy with their tasks, and they didn’t just profit themselves, but found jobs for other Jews. The word went out that the Jews of Kielce had found relief and reached even the Jews who had fled eastwards and many of those began to return to their place of origin.922

In Chrzanów, where there were no Polish police during the war,

Contacts between the Judenrat and the local German officials were carried out on more than the official level. The Judenrat had close relations with some of the German officials, thanks to various gifts and bribes. However, the Judenrat’s closest contacts were with the police, headed by Oberleuitenant [Oberleutnant] Schindler. …

The liaison between the police and the Judenrat during the entire [early] period was Fasek Weber. After Weber was sent to Auschwitz, the job was taken over by Zelig Grajower. Fasek Weber exploited his situation in base and brutal ways, growing rich on Jewish trouble and pain.

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919 Friedman, *Nazi Hunter*, 27, 37.
920 Ibid., 35.
921 See the Home Army report in Maria Tyszkowa, “Eksterminacja Żydów w latach 1941–1943 (Dokumenty Biura Informacji i Propagandy Komendy Głównej Armii Krajowej ze zbiorów oddziału rękopisów Biblioteki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego),” *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, nos. 162–163 (1992): 45. For accounts from Belchatów, see ibid., 41–42; and Roman Peska, *Skazani na zagładę: Żydzi w Pabianicach 1794–1998* (Pabianice: Pamięć, 1999), 66–68. Similar charges were also made in relation to Jews in Pabianice, where Jews were still able to purchase luxury goods in the ghetto towards the end of 1941. Ibid., 69–72.
922 Cytron (Zitron), *Sefer Kielce*, 238; translated as *Book of Kielce: History of the Community of Kielce. From Its Founding Until Its Destruction*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/kielce/kielce.html#TOC>. When that particular commandant was transferred out, his replacement reportedly took revenge on the Jews who enjoyed his predecessor’s protection by arresting those involved in exporting goods to Germany and charging them with...
It is not surprising, therefore, that local Jews reputedly played a sinister role in the arrest of 41 Poles in Chrzanów in the early morning hours of April 23, 1940, in the so-called Aktion AB directed at the Polish intelligentsia. When family members converged on the headquarters of the German police that morning to inquire into the fate of their loved ones, they found the premises full of Jewish policemen dressed in black uniforms. One of the Jewish policemen, a man in his early twenties, came out and ordered the Poles to disperse. It is believed that the Jewish authorities helped the Germans draw up the list of Poles who were arrested for deportation to concentration camps.923 Tellingly, according to Szapse (Shepsl) Rotholc, a member of the ghetto police in Warsaw, “Quite a few [German] gendarmes said that the battle with the Jews is only politics but they hate the Poles from the heart.”924

Jewish Gestapo agents and informers, whose activities have been mentioned in passing, were a significant source of danger. Israeli historian Yehuda Bauer has acknowledged that they caused “tremendous damage.”925 What he does not mention is that these Jewish collaborators were active throughout German-occupied Poland, both inside and outside the ghettos, and endangered Poles as well as Jews. Emanuel Ringelblum noted the case of Josek Erlich (code name “Josele Kapota”), a Jewish Gestapo agent who betrayed a Pole by the name of Witold Benedyktovicz, a tireless benefactor of the Jews, who endured nine months in the Pawiak prison.926 Another Jewish Gestapo informer in Warsaw who actively denounced members of the Communist and Polish underground was Józef or Josek Mitzenmacher (Mützenmacher). Formerly a Communist who turned government informer, he went by many names and was already on the German payroll before the war. After the Polish underground passed a death sentence against Mitzenmacher in Warsaw, he resurfaced in Białystok where he became the editor a Nazi gutter newspaper and wrote anti-Soviet and anti-Semitic articles. After the war he was able to resume his Communist allegiance under an assumed identity.927 Fritz Seifter, a Jewish journalist from Bielsko, started his collaboration with the Nazi authorities in the 1930s and continued them during the occupation of Poland.928

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923 Leszek A. Lechowicz, “Ironia losu,” Dziennik Związkowy (Chicago), September 5–7, 2003, based on the testimony of Roman Wawrzonek. Roman Wawrzonek’s father, Tadeusz Wawrzonek, was one of the Poles arrested that day. He was imprisoned in Dachau and later transferred to Mauthausen-Gusen where he perished in August 1941.
924 Paulsson, Secret City, 65. This phenomenon is confirmed by the testimony of a young German woman, a member of the Hitler Youth who volunteered to work in Nazi-occupied Poland (that part incorporated into the Reich): “We had political lectures every night, but they were never anti-Jewish, just anti-Polish. We were not allowed to associate with the Poles—that was made quite clear. They were ‘inferior’—that was also made quite clear.” See Pearl M. Oliner, Saving the Forsaken: Religious Culture and the Rescue of Jews in Nazi Europe (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 110.
925 Bauer, Rethinking the Holocaust, 148.
Zygmunt Messing-Neumann was a longstanding collaborator of the German secret services. One of the best Gestapo agents in the Łódź ghetto, he organized his own network of agents who mostly counteracted smuggling (Messing became wealthy by uncovering property hidden by Jews as well as Poles), but who were also quite successful at carrying out surveillance of the resistance movement (Messing also gathered information about the Polish underground for the German authorities). After the war he fled to West Germany where, despite interventions by the Polish authorities, he was successfully able to avoid prosecution with the protection of some Jews.  

929 Józef Staszauer, a Jewish Gestapo agent, managed to infiltrate an important office in the Chief Command of the Home Army and betrayed many of its members until his execution in Warsaw in October 1943.  

930 Another Jewish Gestapo agent who penetrated Home Army intelligence operations, where he caused considerable damage, was Józef Hammer-Baczewski. He too was executed by the Home Army in November 1942.  

931 The Polish underground eliminated other Gestapo agents of Jewish origin in Warsaw such as Haman and Wanda Kronenberg, the scion of a prominent assimilated family.  

932 A Jew by the name of Mazur living in the Mokotów district who betrayed many Jews to the Gestapo escaped execution by the Home Army because the Warsaw Uprising broke out.  

933 Diana Topiel, who was sheltered in Warsaw by a Polish family whose son she married during the war, was not betrayed by any of the many Polish acquaintances she had but by Jewish Gestapo confidant from Łódź. After her arrest she was sent to several prisons, here she was tortured, and then to Majdanek concentration camp.  

934 Zila Rennert identified a Jewish Gestapo agent by the name of Ludwik, who was active in Warsaw, but did not describe his misdeeds.  

On February 19, 1944, a Home Army cell consisting of more than a dozen people was discovered by the Gestapo on Bracka Street in Warsaw after being betrayed by two Jewish women who had infiltrated the unit posing as escapees from the Warsaw ghetto. In actual fact, the women were Gestapo agents working with a 40-member group of Jewish agents headed by Leon (or Lolek) Skosowski of the notorious “Thirteen” (about which there is more later on). Some of the Poles who were apprehended, among them Zdzislaw Chrzanowski from the All-Poland Youth (Młodzież Wszechpolska) organization, were executed in the Pawiak prison. These two Jewish agents were tracked down and liquidated by Polish


931 Wilamowski, Srebrniki Judasza, 37–38.

932 Janusz Marszalec, Ochrona porządku i bezpieczeństwa publicznego w Powstaniu Warszawskim (Warsaw: Rytm, 1999), 369.


935 Testimony of Diana Topiel, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 1482.


counterintelligence.\textsuperscript{938} Reports prepared by the Polish Government Delegate’s office and the Communist underground mention the following Jewish agents operating in Warsaw: Stekier (pseudonym “Wilson”), who was active in the Żoliborz district; Stanisława Lepianka, a 19-year-old woman who believed to have contacts with the Communist underground; Władysław Fijalkowski, a fictitious name, employed in Gestapo headquarters, room no. 386; Rajchman, originally from Łódź, who was transferred from the Gestapo headquarters to become a streetcar controller, where he used the name Romanowski.\textsuperscript{939} Józef Garliński, a prominent member of the underground (he was head of the security department of the Home Army headquarters in Warsaw), was arrested by Gestapo agents after being betrayed by his former schoolmate, a Jew in their service.\textsuperscript{940}

A Jewish confidant of the German gendarmes established himself in Skierniewice before the ghetto was built.\textsuperscript{941} Szaje Fastak, a Jewish Gestapo agent in Chmielnik, became notorious for betraying Poles who helped Jews as well as Jews in hiding. He shot a Polish woman named Domagała. Fastak was eventually executed by the Polish underground.\textsuperscript{942} Another Jewish confidant lurking in the vicinity of Chmielnik who met a similar fate was Dawid Dolz.\textsuperscript{943} Jerzy Ripper, who served as chief of the Sicherheitsdienst intelligence service in Lida, was responsible for the arrest of many members of the Home Army.\textsuperscript{944} A Jew from Łódź by the name of Jan Rogacki, a Gestapo agent who posed as a doctor, organized an underground group in Jarosław composed primarily of Polish students; they were soon apprehended by the Gestapo and shipped to Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{945} In Gorlice, a Jewish Gestapo agent by the name of Keller, who was also the commander of the Jewish police, was employed to spy on the Polish underground and created a cell composed of Jews for this purpose. This led to the arrest of Paweł Bielakiewicz (\textit{name de guerre} “Ernest”), the leader of the Home Army outpost in Łużna, who was deported to Auschwitz.\textsuperscript{946} Jan Woźniak, a military man who joined the Polish underground, was shot by a Jewish Gestapo agent in Przysucha near Radom in

\textsuperscript{938} [Wiesław Chrzansowski], \textit{Pół wieku polityki, czyli rzecz o obronie czynnej: Z Wiesławem Chrzanski rozmawiali Piotr Mierecki i Bogusław Kiercky} (Warsaw: ad Astra, 1997), 140.
\textsuperscript{941} Grynberg and Kotowska, \textit{Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945}, 254.
\textsuperscript{942} Zajączykowski, \textit{Martyrs of Charity}, 136 (entry 98); Maciągowski and Krawczyk, \textit{The Story of Jewish Chmielnik}, 168–70, 182–83.
\textsuperscript{943} Maciągowski and Krawczyk, \textit{The Story of Jewish Chmielnik}, 171.
\textsuperscript{946} Władysław Boczoń, \textit{Żydzi gorliccy} (Gorlice: n.p., 1998), 145.
A Jewish doctor named Spiegel, a Gestapo confidant in Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, was responsible for nearly all the arrests of Poles for more than a year prior to his detection and execution by the Home Army in the spring of 1941. A Jewish woman from Czechoslovakia, a Gestapo agent, was sent to infiltrate an autonomous “partisan” group composed of Poles, Jews and Ukrainians under the command of Stanisław Babij operating near Dolina in Stanisławów voivodship (southeastern Poland); her treachery resulted in the execution of 48 local Poles and Ukrainians who assisted the group and the murder of more than 20 Jewish partisans. In July 1943, the Gestapo and German gendarmes in Kraśnik released a group of Jews to gather information about the Polish underground organizations operating in the area. Another Jew sheltered by Poles in the nearby village of Borów was also suspected of spying for the Germans. Stanisław Strzalkowski, a member of the Home Army who was imprisoned in Auschwitz, recalls that a Jew he met in the main camp (this Jew had served under his command in the prewar Polish army) warned him, shortly after his arrival there in September 1943, about a Jewish inmate who was a spy for the Gestapo.

There are other such cases on record.

Poles were also at risk from Jewish Gestapo agents operating outside Poland. A Polish underground organization in Bulgaria was infiltrated by Jan Złotkowski, representative of the Polish airlines LOT in Sofia. Złotkowski, of Jewish origin, turned out to be a Gestapo agent who received sums of money for every Pole he betrayed. Most of the members of the organization were arrested and many of them were sent to Auschwitz where they perished. The Bulgarians tried and convicted Złotkowski after the war, but when he was released shortly after his return to Poland in 1948.

But far more often, it was Jews who felt the detrimental activities of fellow Jews who had ties with the Gestapo and other German agencies. Sometimes connections backfired or were designed to lure unsuspecting Jews into traps, as was the case in Krosno:

Simon Fres was a Jew who had connections with the Krosno Gestapo. He had made arrangements with the Gestapo to get trucks to transport some of the wealthiest Jews of the town to safety. He was well paid by them in advance when these trucks were loaded and driven away. The people in them were taken to a woods nearby the town of Dukla, where a huge trench had been dug. They were lined up beside it and machinegunned, realizing only at the last moment that the arrangement had been a trap.

Another Jew from Krosno, Shlomo Berger, recalled a misadventure that nearly cost him his life:

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947 Marek Garbacz, “Po prostu major Hubal, Nasz Dziennik, April 30–May 1, 2005.
948 Witold Sagajllo [Sągajłło], Man In the Middle: A Story of the Polish Resistance, 1940–45 (London: Leo Cooper in Association with Secker & Warburg, 1984), 10, 12, 38–39; Urbański, Zagłada Żydów w Dystrykcie Radomskim, 101.
950 Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, Narodowe Siły Zbrojne: “Ząb” przeciw dwu wrogom, Revised and expanded edition (Warsaw: Fronda, 1999), 113–15. The Polish underground had to take steps to eliminate these spies.
952 Bednarczyk, Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta, 232–34, 238.
953 Bednarczyk, Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta.
954 Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, Narodowe Siły Zbrojne: “Ząb” przeciw dwu wrogom, Revised and expanded edition (Warsaw: Fronda, 1999), 113–15. The Polish underground had to take steps to eliminate these spies.
956 Bednarczyk, Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta, 232–34, 238.
I went to the city of Tarnów to buy American dollars from a dollar dealer. There on the street I met a friend whom I knew from an Irgun training camp. He asked me what I was doing in Tarnów, and I told him I was buying dollars. He asked when I was leaving to go home and said he would like to see me off at the railway station. I told him that I was going back on the afternoon train. When I arrived at the station, he was there to greet me. After we said good-bye to each other, he left, and a plainclothes Gestapo officer walked over and arrested me. I suspected that this so-called friend was an informer and that he had pointed me out to the Gestapo, for there was no other reason for them to stop me.

I was searched for American dollars, but I had been careful not to carry any with me. The dealer had sent his twelve-year-old daughter with me, and she was carrying the money.955

Jewish informers and Gestapo agents were particularly effective in eliminating fledgling Jewish underground organizations inside the ghettos. Often this was spearheaded by the Jewish Council. Contrary to what is often claimed in Holocaust literature, there is no evidence that a planned revolt failed to materialize in any ghetto because of a lack of Polish aid. In fact, many ghettos that did acquire arms nonetheless did not stage a revolt. Chava Kwinta describes the situation in Sosnowiec:

Under the leadership of Zvi Dunsky, Lippa Mintz, Heller Schnitzer, and Joseph Kosak, the Sosnowiec [underground] group aimed at a genuine resistance, maintaining communications with Warsaw. They printed circulars … and posted on walls, manifestos against the regime and the Judenrat. They even plotted to kill [its president] Moshe Merin. Merin was busy too. He set up a network of spies, who infiltrated the organization and reported back to him. As soon as he had enough names, he made his move. He rounded up all the resistance people and had them transferred to camps in Germany. Thus our first attempt to organize an uprising locally was shattered in its inception. Now the Jews were too numb to care.956

According to another Jewish source,

At the end of 1942 a sharp dispute broke out between the “Judenrat” and 10 underground activists of “Hashomer Hatzair” and their 21 year old leader Cwi Dunski. People in the underground were subject to shadowing by the Jewish police and one of them, Romek Szlezinger, even passed on information to the police about the underground organization. … In January 1943 the Jewish police arrested Dunski and Lipek Minc, who was also from “Hashomer Hatzair”. They were released after an interrogation of several weeks.

Meryn [Moshe Merin], who saw the existence of the underground as a danger to all the Jews, wanted to return and arrests its members, but they hid out and hence he placed pressure on family members so that they would turn themselves in. … Members of “Hashomer Hatzair” decided to

954 Breitowitz, Through Hell To Life, 26–27.
955 Berger, Constructing a Collective Memory of the Holocaust, 43–44.
smuggle Dunski out of the city and hide him in a nearby village, but a night before he was to leave the Jewish police arrested all the members of “Hashomer Hatzair” including Lipec Minc, Ina Gelbard and Fela Katz. Chaim Meryn [Moshe’s brother] and Police Commander Goldmunc himself, interrogated Chana Wirnik but she did not reveal the hideout. However, the police managed to track down Dunski and brought him to the police headquarters dripping blood and chained up as a criminal. Dunski and Minc were interned in the detention center in the orphanage in Bedzin [Będzin]. Later they were turned over to the Germans, interned in a jail in Myslowice [Mysłowice] and in the spring of 1943 they were sent to Auschwitz and murdered there by hanging. Meryn turned in a further underground group to the Germans that was suspected of communist activities, and 8 of its members were executed in April 1943.\(^957\)

As Jewish accounts show, the various phases of the liquidation of the large ghetto in Sosnowiec, which held up to 40,000 Jews, were carried out by the Jewish council and the Jewish police, without any Polish participation. There was no Polish police force in this area (Zagłębie Dąbrowskie), which was incorporated directly into the Reich. According to Konrad Charmatz,

The Nazis could not have succeeded without the cooperation of some Jews, and some Jews did indeed allow themselves to get drawn into the net. The Nazis established the Judenrat and a Jewish militia, both of which would help them carry out their plans for the liquidation.

First, they demanded that contingents of young people be turned over to them for the slave labor camps. … Later the Nazis ordered the older people to give themselves up, and to bring with them the children and the sick. … Still later, the Nazis liquidated everyone else. Throughout all this, they were aided by the Judenrat and the Jewish militia. …

For the Judenrat Merin [Moishe Merin was the head of the Judenrat in the Zagłębie district in Polish Silesia] chose people who were ready to do whatever he directed. He preferred intelligent people with a good reputation in the community. He also enlisted a number of informers who knew the city well—that is, who knew which people had hidden away money and other valuables. Other informers had connections with various streets and provided him with intelligence about underground movements and various other events. A young man from Bedzin [Będzin], a handsome and popular fellow, had found a good position with Merin: “officer of the women.” For the “king of the Jews” he recruited the most beautiful women. … If a husband was in the way, he could be quickly dispatched with the next group to forced labor.

Strange as it sounds, there was a Jewish café in the Sosnowiec ghetto, on Mandzever [Modrzejskowska] Street. It belonged to two partners, Yechei Landau and the wife of the kommandant of the Jewish police, Kleiner, who were good friends of Merin. People outside were starving for a crust of bread, yet in the café one could get coffee, tea, and freshly baked bread. This was the meeting place for the ghetto’s informers, for its smugglers, for the high functionaries of the Judenrat, for anyone with influence. All kinds of shady deals took place there. Valuables were

bought and sold, foreign currencies were exchanged, work cards were traded. The German police rarely appeared there, nor did the SS troops. It was a thieves’ den, and anyone who habituated it had to be up to no good. Simply to be sitting there during work hours eating unrationed food was *treif* (nonkosher). Obviously the Judenrat was protecting this café, and this had to with the Gestapo’s permission. The system required a meeting place where illegal transactions could be carried out.

By doing everything they demanded, Merin had forged links with the Gestapo, with the leaders of the slave labor camps, and with SS men … From time to time he saved a few Jews by delaying their deportation. For allowing this the SS received large bribes in the form of money and valuables. … The Germans had made a good deal with Merin. Why should they have to do all the work when there were Jews willing to do it for them?

… With the help of the Judenrat and the Jewish militia, the Nazis stole from us everything we possessed. Had the Germans themselves done the thieving, they would not have gotten even half, because Jews would have burnt, buried, or destroyed what they owned to avoid handing it over to the bloody enemy. Merin persuaded the Jews that if they handed over their possessions voluntarily they would not be harmed but would be allowed to live in peace. …

The Judenrat had as many as fifteen hundred people on its payroll. This included a great many guards, as well as spies whose job it was to ensure that no underground revolt broke out. There were also women on the payroll who were simply concubines of Judenrat officials.

… The Judenrat was constantly perfecting its apparatus, always giving the Germans exact information about the Jewish population. In return for this, it received a food ration from the German authorities. … The Jewish militia was well organized and was fully backed by the KRIPO (Kriminal Polizei Amt) and the Gestapo as it carried out their orders conscientiously, so the Judenrat could do with the Jews whatever it wanted. …

There were actually Jewish boys and girls working in the *Dienststelle* [placement office for the selection for forced labour camps]; the Judenrat had supplied them! When the *Dienststelle* gave an order to the Judenrat to supply a few thousand slave laborers, it immediately prepared a list of names and ordered those listed to join the slave labor force. Those who did not present themselves, the Jewish militia sought out and forcefully brought to the transport. No resistance was allowed to take root, no underground organizations were ever allowed to stir people to revolt. The Judenrat left little for the Germans to do. …

The Hebrew high school at Skladowa [Składowa] Street 5 was used as the Dulag (transport assembly point). … For a huge bribe, some were able to rescue themselves. … Here at the high school were also kept all those suspected of underground activities. From there they were sent away with the next transport. …

In March 1942, exactly at Purim, Jews were forced to witness the hanging of Marek Lieberman and Mangel in a garden on Mandzever 32. They had been accused of falsifying documents. On the same spot a few days later, another four Jews were hanged for illegal trading: Nachum Lon and his son, Yehudah Vorman and Feffer. The Judenrat prepared the gallows. …

This same night [May 10, 1942] the Gestapo, aided by the Jewish militia and the Judenrat, led by Merin himself, invaded the heavily populated buildings at Mandzever 32, Dekerta 14, and Targowa 2 and 11, from which they took away all the Jewish residents, men, women, and children. … While
I was at work around eleven the next morning, I saw the Jewish militia, accompanied by the Gestapo and police dogs, running through the street. They surrounded the same houses again and dragged out all the people they found … All were packed into wagons and taken to the transport. Approximately 1500 people were sent to Auschwitz that day with the transport. …

In the second half of June 1942, the second large transfer of the Jews from Sosnowiec took place. At night the Gestapo, with the help of the militia, encircled Panska [Pańska] and Ostroguska Streets and dragged out nearly all the inhabitants. In this district there lived mainly poor, hard-working folk who had struggled all their lives. …

That same night, the Jewish hospital was encircled and all the sick were taken away. The sick who could walk tried to flee over the fences. They were caught like mice by the SS and their Jewish helpers. … The sick were thrown onto the platform like sacks, the next atop the last. Those who could not move were tossed onto the train cars like garbage. To our great disgrace, even this work was done by Merin’s militia. …

In Landau’s café the “prominent” Jews were still sipping their coffee and eating their pastries. … The Judenrat officials and the privileged Jews began behaving as if the end was in sight. They sold everything they had, bought themselves liquor and lost their inhibitions. Morality vanished. They gathered in private homes and staged orgies. The women shed all their shame and began cavorting like prostitutes, surrendering to every man before every other man’s eyes. …

The 12th of August 1942 will go down as the most diabolic of all the days in the destruction of the Jews of Zaglebie. … Merin had decided to hand over all Jews to the Nazi devil for the sake of saving his own life and the lives of all his relatives, and everyone knew it, so no one believed him any more. … So he decided that the Judenrat would organize clarification meetings. … One of the rebbes who was present spoke in support of this, declaring that Merin was “our savior, our leader.” … In Sosnowiec alone around twenty-six thousand Jews assembled voluntarily. Only a very few stayed away. People came in their holiday clothes, as if to a festival. …

Only in the afternoon did SS officers appear, along with leaders of the Arbeiteinsatz [forced labor unit], accompanied by leaders of the Judenrat. Tables were set up and document inspection began. The commission that examined the documents divided the Jews into four categories. … All of this lasted until August 18, when approximately eight thousand Jews were loaded onto train cars and carried to the Auschwitz gas chambers. …

In January 1943 the Nazis decreed that all remaining Jews in the ghetto of Sosnowiec must leave the city for a smaller ghetto in the suburb of Szradula [Środula] … The Judenrat and the Jewish militia were also installed in Szradula. The crowding was horrible. … Merin’s last act was to collect all the remaining gold and silver from those who still had any. …

Merin and his servants had done all that had been demanded of them. But once they had nothing more to offer, they were useless to the Germans, and potentially disruptive, so they were liquidated. … Then [they] immediately appointed a replacement. …

On August 1, 1943, the last phase of the liquidation of the Zaglebie Jews took place. In the middle of the night the ghettos [sic] of Sosnowiec and Bedzin were encircled. SS and Gestapo storm troops entered, and they and Ukrainian bands of murderers started shooting left and right. Many Jews had hidden in underground shelters … The Gestapo called forward the new “kings” of the Jews and warned them that any Jews found hiding in bunkers would be shot on the spot. The
rest would be transferred, with their belongings, to Birkenau, where they would be able to work unhindered. … 958

Abraham K.’s provides information about Merin, and the Jewish ghetto police, that contradicts the notion that these collaborators were merely powerless individuals desperately trying to save their own lives. It also contradicts the notion that Jewish collaborators were not really collaborators in that they obtained no favours from the Germans. Thus, Abraham K. writes,

I don’t know how he [Merin] worked himself up so high. He had influence with the Gestapo and everywhere had his say. He had his own automobile, he had a chauffeur, and he led the life which he certainly could not have afforded before the war. He have good jobs to his best friends. They had pull, and they fared well. …

It was the same thing with the Jewish militia. … The Jewish militia did not feel that they were merely functionaries to execute what was demanded of them. They also felt that they were better, more important people. 959

All this had practical consequences. A Jew about to be arrested by a German policeman, who usually did not know him, could often hide. But if a Jew was about to be arrested by a Jewish policeman, who usually knew the Jew, then any attempt to hide was much more difficult. 960

Another Jew from Sosnowiec describes the participation of Jewish policemen in pursuing Jews who tried to escape:

SS-men, Gestapo, and the few remaining Jewish orderlies combed the Gentile neighborhoods to hunt down Jewish runaways. I was eventually arrested. … A Jewish militiaman from Sosnowiec recognized me, grabbed me by my hair and pulled it, and cursed at me in Polish and German. I insisted that I was not Jewish. The chief of the militia, Mr. Langer, a big and fat man, had me taken to the Jewish police station inside of what was left of the Środula ghetto. I kept protesting, ‘You made a mistake! I am not Jewish!’ But Mr. Langer … was unimpressed. He and his companions forced me on a table, held my arms and legs, and pulled down my pants. They laughed and spit on my privacy, hollering: ‘Hey, you are not Jewish? Who chopped off your wee-wee?’ They saw that I was circumcised and ridiculed me in foul language. Then Mr. Langer became serious and slapped my face with his large, powerful hands. ‘Either you agree to go on a transport to a labor camp,’ he shouted, ‘or I will turn you over to the Gestapo.’ I continued to claim that I was not Jewish. … He walked over to me and looked at me without uttering a word, when suddenly I felt a punch in my stomach that knocked me down. The few men from the Jewish militia were ordered to do some of

958 Charmatz, Nightmares, 18, 22, 26–32, 35–36, 38–39, 41–44, 46, 50–53. According to Konrad Charmatz, Moishe (Manyek) Merin even tried to become the leader of all the Jewish councils in the German Reich and the conquered territories. The Gestapo allowed him to travel to Berlin, Prague, Warsaw, Łódź, Kraków, and other cities, and at each of these cities he urged the Jewish communities to unite under a central committee, under his leadership. Ibid., 20–21. Merin’s sexual exploitation of Jewish women and girls is referred to again at p. 76.
959 Niewyk, Fresh Wounds, 29.
960 Niewyk, Fresh Wounds, 29.
the dirty work for the Gestapo. The ghetto was already liquidated, but they were still flushing out Jews hidden in bunkers. … they also found Jews in other hiding places.\textsuperscript{961}

The situation was much the same in other towns. In Częstochowa,

Shortly before the resettlement of the ghetto, the [Jewish] police numbered 250. … The police … received a monthly salary and consisted of unscrupulous people. Many of the received favored treatment from the German authorities. This favored treatment by the German authorities was reserved for “suppliers of information,” that is, informers and denouncers and they, above all, pursued material interests.

The police were a plague for the Jewish population. It is clear that there were no willing volunteers to go for unpaid forced labor. There were also no volunteers who would allow themselves to be sent away to the camps to be overworked, tortured, beaten, and to bear various afflictions or willing volunteers to pay various bribes. There were also no volunteers for donating their merchandise to the Nazis. This the police carried out with coercion, through house searches, both by day and night, arresting, beating with rubber sticks, and through other irksome actions.

The attitude toward the police was bitter, full of hatred and rage. …

The forced laborers belonged to the poor strata of Częstochowa Jews. The well-to-do Jews ransomed themselves with money, and the poor, not having with what to live, suffering from hunger and want, had, in addition, to toil at forced labor, be vexed, terrorized, tormented and beaten by masters, foremen, and kapos [short for kameradenpolizei, Jewish prisoners who served as overseers].\textsuperscript{962}

The Workers’ Council afterwards became an elected administrative body selected by the over five thousand slave laborers. …

The Workers’ Council led a constant battle against the Judenrat for bettering the economic conditions of the slave laborers. The battle consisted of hunger strikes and mass demonstrations in the offices of the Judenrat.

Many times were the leaders of the Workers’ Council arrested and put into the ghetto prison (9 Avenue) by the Jewish police on the orders of the members of the Judenrat.\textsuperscript{963}

At the same time, when there was need and want in the ghetto, a restaurant was organized in the first house near the ghetto border by several tradesmen and gastronomic workers where one could obtain fine, delicious foods, almost as in pre-war times. It was not understood how the owners were


able to make such good foods from products that could not be obtained anywhere. The prices were higher and the premises were visited by those Jews who were able to indulge in paying out a large amount of money. Poles, who wished to meet their Jewish acquaintances in order to carry out various business, also began to come in. The Jewish police would enjoy themselves in the nearby little rooms of the premises, but always after eight o’clock in the evening when all of the Jews had to be at home and only they alone had permission to be in the street. There were also other Jews who had night passes—members of the Judenrat, several higher officials of the Judenrat and other Jewish young people with privileges that no one knew how they had been acquired. All of these people would pay large sums in the new restaurant and the owners had a good business.

In time the premises also became known on the “Aryan” side; one received such meals at the ghetto restaurant that were not even available on the “Aryan” side. Polish guests, therefore, also began to come. They sneaked in at night through a back door and ate there and got drunk as in former times.

A new coffee house quickly opened opposite the restaurant where one could receive the best baked goods and the best cakes with good coffee. These premises were very well visited and in time developed regular guests. The gendarmes would come into these Jewish premises from time to time and carried out to their autos roasted geese and hens, other foods and alcohol and wine. The owners were cursed and beaten. The Germans could not understand where the Jews were getting all of the good things. They arrested one of the owners and put him in jail. His partner and good friend succeeded in arranging for his freedom after a few weeks. The restaurant continued to exist after the arrest. The police would also seize Jews for work in these premises. However, this did not scare people and immediately after the people were taken away to work, other guests would arrive at the premises. …

The ghetto oozed a scum of Jewish swindlers and “fixers” who for money would agree to take care of various matters with the regime. They would promise to extract those arrested by the Gestapo and meanwhile drew large sums, ostensibly needed to be used in order to carry out the release. After receiving the money, the “fixer” found a means to extricate himself and he kept the money.

A strange young man named Besser appeared among us. He and his wife opened a small restaurant where this sinister business was carried out.

This is how it would be done:

When a Jew who still had some possessions was arrested, a person would appear who would contact the family or wife of the arrestee and in a conversation would “accidentally” mention that there is an honest man named Besser who had already extricated people from the Gestapo and only he could help. Those closest to the arrestee knew that if he were not freed immediately on the first day after the arrest, he would be sent away to Auschwitz, from which there was no return. The unfortunate, therefore, grasped at every hope and thus fell into the hands of the swindler.

Another swindler was active here—one named Szeftel—incidentally, a Czenstochower resident. He was an informer even during the First World War. It was said that he legitimized himself with the Hitlerists with those papers, but this time his activities took on a wider scope. Now he made denunciations in order to then be able to “make things good.” In this way, he had twice as good a business with each “transaction.”
Jews were not permitted to possess gold, foreign currency and various goods. The main foreign currency office in Krakow organized a control brigade that made lightning visits to the cities where they expected to find something and it controlled the local foreign currency offices at the same time. Szefetl, the informer, had his German acquaintances on this commission and he told them where to storm in for a search.

The searches made on Szefetl’s instructions were so thorough that the searchers did not leave the invaded residence until they had found something. The residence was simply turned over; floors were ripped up, the ovens were taken apart, every corner was ransacked dozens of times until something was found. If Szefetl had indicated something – it must be found! The owner of the residence was arrested and tortured for so long that he revealed the names of his partners, who were also arrested. Such a bit of work was recognized as Szefetl’s and, therefore, only he could “make it good.”

The wives and relatives of the arrestees would then run to Szefetl, who was immediately ready to do a favor for the unfortunate people. He would assure them that if he himself could not take care of the matter, he would send his son and if his son also could not help, he would send his daughter. Szefetl’s “making it good” would usually end in this way: several people would be freed for the substantial sum that he extracted from the unfortunate ones and the others were deported. Szefetl explained that this could not be otherwise because if the commission members carried out a search, they then had to show that they had found guilty ones.

There was a series of other swindlers who operated as criminals among us in the bitter, dark days. This lasted until one day the Gestapo attacked the swindlers, took a great deal of money, gold and things of value from them. Then they were arrested and sent to Auschwitz. It later became known that the Germans eliminated them because they knew too many secrets and became inconvenient for the Gestapo.\(^{964}\)

Two police precincts were opened. One on the First Avenue under the leadership of Commandant Galster, himself, and the second on Kasze Street under the leadership of Itshe Landau. The police stood at all exits of the ghetto boundaries during the hours when Jews had the right to be on the ghetto streets, and controlled whether the passes were in order. They also paid attention so that, God forbid, Jews did not carry on any trade in the street. They took their office very seriously and chased after the poor traders, even beating them with their rubber sticks. Only a small number of the policemen behaved fairly and with compassion toward the harassed people.

The Jewish labor office often sent lists with the names of those who had not appeared for forced labor. The Jewish police would attack the people at night, taking them out of their beds and placing them in the cellar of their precinct. In the morning, these people were taken to the worst labor.

The German firm Wasserwirtschaft [Water Industry] ordered the labor office to recruit Jewish workers for it in the shtetl “Nidel,” Radomsko district. The firm needed many workers, but no one wanted to go because the conditions were unbearable; it was necessary to stand and work in water. The food was bad and there was no place to sleep. Anyone who could brought all means to bear not
to go there. The labor office demanded that many young men submit for the work and when the
time for leaving came, it was seen that many had not appeared. Therefore, when it was decided to
send a group, the Jewish police would catch young people in the street a few days earlier and arrest
them. The rich would make a payment to the Judenrat, which always needed money, and only the
poor were sent away to work.

The labor office would often receive a command from the German firms or from the regime to
provide workers. Then the Jewish police would go out on a hunt, closing off streets, closing gates
and they would gather the required number of people, using their rubber sticks, and deliver them to
the German work places.

The Judenrat would use the Jewish police to collect taxes from those who did not pay promptly,
or against those who could not afford to pay the Judenrat but who the Judenrat did not want to
count as poor and thus free from taxes. And the Jewish police would attack these people at night,
take them out of their beds and bring them to the police cellars. There they would sit until their
families brought the demanded sums to the Judenrat. If there were “obstinate” people who still did
not take care of the tax accounts, they would be “made softer” through blows. If this also did not
help, our Judenrat was not ashamed of placing these people in the hands of the German police, who
coped with the “obstinate.”

The Gestapo also used the Jewish police to find people whom they wished to have in their hands.
They would turn to the Jewish police with an ultimatum that they deliver the persons sought and
the Jewish police used every means to carry out the Gestapo order.965

Other Jewish policemen in the ghetto also came to the craftsmen’s house and bought food products
and then sold them in the ghetto for a higher price. ...

The chief also had several people in the Jewish police to whom he gave the same task. The
policemen visited the Jewish houses in the ghetto, even the poorest and took what they had from
each one. They gave receipts for the things taken with assurances that the people would be taken to
the shop. The chief would drive up with his automobile to the ghetto houses and take the gathered
gold and objects.

The Gestapo, hearing that Jews were giving money and things of value, also began carrying out
the same pursuit. They also found someone in the Jewish police who carried on the “business.”
Later, more Jewish policemen took to the same “business” and joined with the gendarmes, with
whom they carried out the pursuit in partnership. The Jewish policemen carried out transactions
with the Jews and the gendarmes brought the people into the shop. ...

The relatives of these hidden people, who were in farther ghetto streets from which the Jews had
not yet been driven out, were afraid that the people in the holes would die of hunger because they
already knew that the aktsia would last a long time. Therefore, they told the Jewish policemen
about the secret places and who was there. For large sums of money the policemen helped move the
Jews from the bunkers to a house where Jews were located who had not yet been affected by the
aktsia. The policemen left for the bunkers with their gendarme acquaintances and called into the

holes: “Jews, we have come to save you!” They alluded to their relatives, who had sent them here and the hopeless people emerged one by one from their pits and holes. They shook from fear, looking terrible, unwashed, unshaven, hungry; they could barely stand on their feet. They were led to the farther ghetto street by the gendarmes. …

Chief Degenhardt learned that Jews were hiding in bunkers, in attics and cellars and he declared an “amnesty” for all who would come out of their hiding places by themselves by a certain deadline and they would be able to return to their houses.

Jewish policemen accompanied by gendarmes and Ukrainians went into all of the courtyards and shouted: “Jews, We have come to save you from death! Come out from your holes and nothing will happen!”

Many emerged from their hiding places. They were in terrible condition. Starving, faint and neglected. They had surrendered everything that they had of value. Then they were allowed into their houses, which had not yet gone through the aktsias.

However, there were also others who had good bunkers and food that would suffice for several weeks. These did not listen to the beautiful words of the Jewish policemen and remained in the hiding places.

When the period of the “amnesty” passed, the gendarmes began to energetically search for those hiding. The Jewish policemen, who had their gendarme acquaintances with whom they would carry out various businesses in partnership, went through the courtyards with the gendarmes and searched for the bunkers of Jews. They shouted in Yiddish that if those hidden would emerge by themselves, they would still be saved. They shouted into cellars and up to attics, until they reached people who were already tired of lying in the hiding places and they came out. When the people were outside, they were first asked to surrender everything they possessed. The Jewish policemen were apparently comforting. They would try to persuade the gendarmes to spare their lives, if they surrendered everything. When they had everything of the victims, the gendarmes shot them on the spot. The Jewish policemen would receive a certain percent of the stolen items.966

As elsewhere, the Germans had a retinue of Jewish helpers in Częstochowa who searched for bunkers where Jews hid and misappropriated Jewish property. When members of the underground began to gather arms, they were betrayed by a Jewish policeman; he furnished the Germans with a list of plotters and the location of their bunkers. In June 1943, Dr. Adam Wolberg, the leader of the resistance group “Fighting Group 66” (based on 66 Nadrzeczna Street) was denounced to the Gestapo and killed. A young Jew caught with underground documents outside the ghetto also betrayed members of the underground.967 During the liquidation of the ghetto, a Jewish informer fingered 35 people in a line-up, who were taken away and


967 Account of Herta Lustiger in Gryenberg and Kotowska, Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945, 181, 185, 187; Aktion Reinhard Camps, Czestochowa Ghetto, Internet: <http://www.deathcamps.org/czestochowa%20ghetto.html>. According to Henryk Szaniawski, a Jewish policeman who betrayed the hideout of the underground command was pushed in front of the Germans when they surrounded the bunker and was killed by shots fired by the Jewish fighters. See Diatłowicki and Roszkowski, Żydzi w walce 1939–1945, vol. 2, 257.
promptly shot. The Częstochowa ghetto had a thriving underworld and there was no shortage of luxuries for the well-to-do. These ghetto leeches led their high life at the expense of fellow Jews. The ghetto was plagued by crime: theft, burglary, seizure of other people’s property, brawls, assaults. Jewish “informers and secret agents all waited for opportunities … either for bribery or seizing the [illegally traded] goods.”

Jews were employed by Germans to stand in the railroad station and spot Jews who wanted to escape from Częstochowa so the Germans could arrest them.

The Jewish underground in Kraków established contact with the Polish underground and was thus able to procure weapons, yet there too the possibility of revolt was thwarted. Shlomo Schein explains the obstacle they faced:

Our boys were falling into the hands of the Gestapo one by one … The Jewish policemen sniffed after us, fearing that they would be blamed for aiding the fighters … and also in order to buy themselves time before they themselves would be annihilated. One day, one of our boys was arrested. The Gestapo arrested his father as well, and by threats and promises to free his father got his cooperation. Several friends were arrested following his revelation, myself among them.

When a group of five members of an underground organization that included two Poles attempted to get out of the city to the forest, they were apprehended and killed except for Mietek Bierger, who was taken by the Gestapo. Under torture, he revealed secrets of the organization including the hiding place of Hershek Bauminger. Following these disclosures, the weapon caches on Bonarka Street (in Podgórze) and Slowacki Avenue were found and captured, and the underground printing press was seized.

According to historian Eliyahu Yones, one of the critical reasons for the “scanty” Jewish underground organization Lwów was that

The Jewish “order police” in Lvov [Lwów] collaborated with the Germans, thwarting any possibility of illegal organization and uprising in the ghetto. “Any action would have required total secrecy. The ghetto swarmed with informers and Gestapo agents who believed they could save their lives by denouncing their brethren,” an eyewitness wrote. Furthermore, one of the Jewish police units (the Sonderdienst) was specifically tasked with dealing with “political” problems, including manhunts for members of leftist circles and Soviet sympathizers. Any attempt to organize resistance actions or flight to the forest was, as stated, perceived as an expression of pro-Soviet sympathies, and the policemen conscientiously reported suspects to the Gestapo.

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972 Yones, Smoke in the Sand, 216.
Before any uprising could take place in the ghetto the most important task for the Jewish underground was to eliminate particularly corrupt policemen and Jews who acted as agents and informers for the Gestapo. This was accomplished effectively in the case of Białystok,\(^{973}\) where there was a group of Gestapo agents headed by Gryszka Zelikowicz. Among the collaborators eliminated were the Judkowski brothers, Ćwiklicz, Zbar, Fenigstein, and many others.\(^{974}\)

The negative perception of the Jewish police was due not only to its behavior [in rounding up 5,000 unskilled, poor and sick Jews in the Białystok ghetto in September 1941] during the Prużany [Pružana] deportation but also to corruption. Policemen in the Gestapo’s pay instilled fear in the hearts of the ghetto residents and Judenrat as well. Only after the purging of the police force on June 16 and 17, 1942, during which time more than twenty corrupt policemen were sent to labor camps, did [Judenrat acting Chairman Ephraim] Barash [who oversaw the deportations to Pružana] confess at the Judenrat session of June 20, 1942, that criminal gangs operating under police protection had almost undermined the Judenrat and jeopardized its existence.

In the same session, Barash reported on the activities of Grisha Zelikowicz, [police force chief superintendent Yitzhak] Marcus’s right-hand man and the most notorious Gestapo agent, who had a network of men working for him and supporters inside the Judenrat itself. … Barash said of Zelikowicz and his men that they “sent some policemen to the house of a Jew. The policemen stayed there for three days and three nights, until they extorted from him the sum of 10,000 Marks. … Zelikowicz’s gang also stripped Dr. Szacki and his wife of all their valuables and silver, claiming they were ordered to do so by the authorities, but taking everything for themselves.”

In her book, Haïka Grosman revealed facts about Zelikowicz that were not public knowledge:

When a Jew dealt in smuggling cattle Zelikovich [sic] would inform on him, and then ransom him for money which he shared with his German confederates. He occupied himself with extortion and his house was filed with valuable objects. … He worked against Barash, spied on him and frustrated many of his plans. When Barash bribed a German of one of the institutions Zelikovich would inform another institution about it. He stirred up trouble and served everybody in turn. … When “illegal refugees” who, according to German plans, had been supposed to die like their brothers in Vilna [Wilno] or Slonim [Słonim] or Volkovysk [Wołkowysk] arrived, Zelikovich considered it his duty to betray them to the authorities.

Klementinowsky related how everyone in the ghetto—particularly smugglers and black-marketeers—were petrified of Zelikowicz and his gang: “When he [Zelikowicz] discovered that someone was doing business in the ghetto, he or one of his accessories came and demanded protection money. If

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anyone refused his demand, he had no compunction about denouncing him to the Gestapo. He also extorted money and jewels, by threatening to inform the authorities that his victims were Communist activists.” …

The Zelikowicz affair was not the first of its kind: Pfenigstein, a police superintendent, was discovered to be extorting money from the ghetto Jews and collaborating with the Gestapo. In the end, his German bosses discovered that Pfenigstein was deceiving them, too, and he was arrested and executed in one of the Gestapo’s cellars. …

Barash felt it was safest to hand over Zelikowicz to the authorities, and let them deal with him, to avoid complications. Zelikowicz was duly arrested with the help of Yitzhak Engelman, Barash’s assistant. A thorough search of Zelikowicz’s house revealed large sums of foreign currency, gold, diamonds, twenty women’s fur coats, suits, expensive fabrics, hides, and many other valuables. The loot was loaded on a large truck and handed over to the Germans. Zelikowicz himself was marched with his hands raised through the streets of the ghetto to Gestapo headquarters, where he was tortured. In the end, he died in the local prison. … Zelikowicz’s wife, too, was arrested, after forged papers were discovered indicating that Zelikowicz had intended to escape with his family to Switzerland. On the same day—June 21, 1942—after the assembly, Barash called a meeting of the Jewish police in the Linat Hazedek hall, to discuss the purge.975

For the most part, planned revolts did not materialize in the ghettos because of internal rather than external factors. A revolt in the Złoczów ghetto was stifled from within, even though arms had been procured with the assistance of Poles: “In spite of the secrecy and precaution, there had been somebody spying on the planners who betrayed the five leaders on the eve of the enterprise. The informer was a boy from Lwow [Lwów] … The five leaders were arrested.”976 A similar situation transpired in Mir where a planned escape of Jews to the forest was foiled by a Jew from the Mir zamek [castle] ghetto named Stanislawski. … If [Oswald] Rufeisen had not been betrayed [by him] … Our ambush would have been a unique event … Perhaps the life of the Mir ghetto itself could have been prolonged by wiping out the gendarmerie stationed in the town. But instead, the traitor Stanislawski brought ruin upon himself and the entire ghetto.977

A Jew named Stanislavski [Stanislawski] worked with horses at the gendarmerie. The chief promised to let him live and give him special privileges if he informed him from where the Jews had gotten the guns, and who told them about the planned roundup. Stanislavski, believing he could save himself through this betrayal, agreed to the Kommandant’s conditions. He told him he heard say “Oswald” [Rufeisen] had given the guns to the Jews and had planned their dispersal with them.978

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975 Bender, The Jews of Bialystok During World War II and the Holocaust, 134–36.
976 I. M. Lask, ed., The City of Zloczow (Tel Aviv: Zloczower Relief Verband of America, 1967), column 133.
978 Account of B.A. in Trunk, Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution, 295; and the account of Szloma Charchas
The Germans became aware of the existence of an underground in the ghetto in Baranowicze and “were employing Jewish spies to acquire information about it.” The planned revolt in the ghetto was foiled even though a huge amount of weapons was amassed.\textsuperscript{979} In many cases, as in Krasne near Molodeczno, it was the Jewish Council who dispatched the Jewish police to investigate and break up an underground organization that smuggled men and arms to the forest.\textsuperscript{980} In Kurzeniec, the Judenrat warned the parents of underground members who were collecting weapons of the threat these activities posed to all of the town’s Jews. “When we heard about it,” one Jew recalled, “we stormed into the meeting with two drawn guns. We threatened to kill whoever threaten [sic] our families.”\textsuperscript{981} A similar situation existed in Iwje (Iwje) where the Judenrat warned the brother of an underground member who started to procure arms that this “activity was liable to bring about the handing over [of] my family to the gendarme.”\textsuperscript{982} Boris Rubizhewski used to steal into the ghetto in Dworze and urge the youth to escape and join his fighting group: “The last time he was apprehended by the Jewish Ghetto Police and beaten for going back and forth; they thought this would bring the ghetto’s downfall if the Germans found out. These Jewish police even threatened to hang him in a cellar…”\textsuperscript{983} When a Jewish partisan, Abraham Zaretski, sneaked into the ghetto in Stolpce with the aim of leading out a group of Jews to join a partisan detachment in the forest, he was betrayed to the Germans by the head of the Jewish council and killed by them, as the chairman feared the consequences of such an escape for those Jews who remained.\textsuperscript{984}

In Głębokie, after some Jews managed to procure weapons from Poles outside the ghetto,

In the Jewish police it was decided to quietly confiscate the weapons and to, somehow, get rid of us … Once, while my brother was sleeping, two Jewish policemen came, took him to the Judenrat cellar, beat him and demanded he give the weapons. … I was called to present myself. I let it be known that I would not come and that if, indeed, they tried to arrest me, I have in my possession a hand grenade … The Judenrat men were scared the Germans would find out about the weapons and backed off. So, except for the Germans, the Judenrat and the Jewish police also became our enemies. They interfered and threatened at any attempt to revolt or escape from the ghetto.\textsuperscript{985}

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\textsuperscript{983} Sulia Wolozhinski Rubin, \textit{Against the Tide: The Story of an Unknown Partisan} (Jerusalem: Posner & Sons, 1980), 124.


\textsuperscript{985} Dov Katzovitch, “With the Partisans and in the Red Army,” in David Shtokfish, ed., \textit{Book in Memory of Dokshitz-
Of the Jews who had escaped to the forests from the ghetto in Głębokie we learn: “When the deceitful call came from the Judenrat, that the remnant of survivors come to the Gluboke Ghetto, most of the Jews obeyed."

In Grodno, when a small group of refugees from a nearby town (where the ghetto had already been liquidated) detected signs of an eventual massacre of the ghetto population, they were accused of spreading rumours to create panic and of being Communists, who deserved to be punished by the Germans. They were ordered by the Judenrat to be silent or face being turned over to the Germans. Jewish partisans conducted a trial of a Jewish informer, a certain Motl Sh. from Mishnitz, who used to inform the Gestapo about everything that was going on in the ghettos in Łomża and Zambrów. Motl was sentenced to death by the partisan tribunal and executed. In Köpyczynice, near Tarnopol, a Jew informed the authorities about the contacts Mrs. Katz, the wife of a local lawyer, had with an underground organization. The entire Katz family was tortured and murdered by the Gestapo. Jewish agents and informers of the Gestapo also presented a danger in Radzyń Podlaski, and virtually every other ghetto.

Warsaw was infested with Jews in the service of the Gestapo and German Criminal Police. Some of their exploits are detailed by Jonas Turkow (Turkov), who refers to this as one of the most “shameful” episodes of the history of the Warsaw ghetto. Collaborators of various ilk were plentiful both inside and outside the ghetto, though their precise number is difficult, if not impossible, to specify. Emanuel Ringelblum, in his chronicle entry for May 18, 1942, speaks of an estimated 400 Gestapo informers in the Warsaw ghetto alone. Some estimates run as high as 800. One source places the number of Jewish Gestapo agents at more than one thousand. At one point, the Delegatura, the Delegate’s Office of the Polish government-in-exile, compiled an incomplete list of 1,378 Jewish Gestapo collaborators. An archival source indicates that the Sonderkommando AS, which worked closely with the German Abwehr (intelligence service), employed some 820 Jewish agents in the Generalgouvernement. The honorary counsel of Chile in Warsaw, Samson Mikiciński, turned out to be working secretly for German intelligence, informing them of...
the activities of the Polish underground and its contacts abroad. (He was eventually lured to Palestine, interrogated and executed by the Polish underground in January 1941.) The szmalcownik Jefim Pironer was also believed to have ties to German intelligence. Jewish Gestapo agents even organized a birthday celebration in honour of Hitler at a restaurant on Leszno Street in February 1941. The chief of the German police was reportedly invited to this festivity, but declined to attend. A survivor from the Warsaw ghetto recorded the following occurrences, including the so-called “night courts” in the spring of 1942, when the Gestapo targeted those suspected of smuggling and being underground activists, based on lists prepared with the assistance of Jewish informers.

Two SS men entered the building and broke into the apartment of our neighbors, the Orensteins… It seemed that a Jewish collaborator had reported to the Gestapo that her husband still had in his apartment some leather from his store. … one of the SS men shot Mr. Orenstein and [his 8-year-old] child from the balcony. …

That night, for the first time, the German ‘death car’ had made the rounds of the ghetto streets. The ‘death car’ was a shiny black limousine with a skull and crossbones painted on the door. … The Gestapo had compiled a list of names and addresses of Jews in the Warsaw ghetto [obviously with the help of Jewish informers] who had been wealthy or socially prominent before the war. Between four and five o’clock each morning, the ‘death car’ would pull up at addresses chosen at random from this Gestapo list. The heads of the wanted families would be pulled from their beds and, still in their night clothes, would be dragged out into the street. There in front of their apartment buildings, they would be shot in the back of the head at such close range that they were mutilated beyond recognition.

…a Jewish informer who was known in the ghetto as Yossele Kapote [Erlich]. … Yossele was a big shot, proudly sporting an official-looking cap adorned with four stars. …everyone knew that Yossele Kapote had become very popular with the Gestapo. … Yossele lived on our street with a Jewish prostitute whom he had taken as his mistress. He had made a good living as a Gestapo stool pigeon, but at the same time, rumor had it, he could be persuaded to use his privileged status to help get Jews out of trouble—provided it brought him enough cash.

… Yossele was not in, but his girl friend was there, lunching on such delicacies as scrambled eggs, sardines, chocolate milk and cake. While decent, innocent people round about her were starving to death, this scum, this traitor to her own people, was living off the fat of the land.

There are numerous accounts of Jews acting as agents and informers for the Gestapo and German police outside the ghetto. They relentlessly tracked down and betrayed countless Jews in hiding. They also lured

1995), 94–95.
998 Hera, Polacy ratujący Żydów, 82–83.
999 Ernest, O wojnie wielkich Niemiec z Żydami Warszawy, 1939–1943, 93, 138–41.
Jews out of their hiding places on false promises of escape. In July 1942, wealthy Jews in Warsaw were promised safety in Lublin, where an Aktion had just taken place. A Jew who claimed to have connections with the Gestapo, charged exhorbitant sums of money (60,000 złoty from one group) to take some 50 Jews to Lublin. Upon arriving in Lublin, the Jews were stripped of the valuables and belongings and sent to camps.\textsuperscript{1001} In the so-called Hotel Polski affair the following year, some 2,500 to 3,000 well-to-do Jews on the “Aryan” side in Warsaw were lured out of hiding by Jewish Gestapo agents, among them Adam Żurawin, on false promises of passage out of Nazi Europe on foreign passports.\textsuperscript{1002} Jewish Gestapo agents were also involved in other schemes to extract money from fellow Jews and spread false hopes, as the following report (from November 1943) of the Bund’s Central Committee in Warsaw describes:

> Unfortunately, the power of illusion has continued to hold sway over the Jews even after the mass tragedies of the Jews themselves. A glaring example is the question of the camps for foreign Jews in Vitelle, or in Hannover. Many of the letters sent by the Paraguayan consulate in Switzerland to Jews living in the ghettos in Poland under German occupation, letters containing the promise of granting them Paraguayan citizenship, did not reach the addresses because they had been executed during the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto. These letters have thus entered the black market, the matter being in the hands of those wicked people among the Jews who work for the Gestapo, who demand and obtain vast sums for the letters. In certain incorrigible Jewish circles these letters were treated as a way to liberation, as a means of rescue from mortal danger, and as a writ of safe conduct. … The psychosis spreading among the despairing and doomed Jews was deliberately fostered by the Jewish informers of the Gestapo.\textsuperscript{1003}

Moreover, ghettos had to contend with common criminals and criminal gangs that also undermined Jewish survival and resistance. There are numerous memoirs that attest to the widespread practice of corruption, extortion and common thievery inside the Warsaw ghetto, often by Jews who exercised positions of influence.\textsuperscript{1004} The manufacture and sale of bread was a thoroughly corrupt enterprise, with rampant ingredient substitutions.\textsuperscript{1005} A group that became notorious in the ghetto was the so-called Pinkert group, gravediggers employed by the Pinkert funeral service other such establishments in the ghetto. \hfill \textsuperscript{1003}

\textsuperscript{1001} Testimony of Fruma Bregman, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 1984, pages 1–2, noted in Czajka, et al., Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz/Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue, vol. 2, 370.


\textsuperscript{1003} Bartoszewski and Lewin, Righteous Among Nations, 751.


had amassed considerable wealth and, allegedly, some of them had collaborated with the Germans. Working hand in glove with the Jewish ghetto police, they were essentially graveyard hyenas. They would dig up bodies recently buried in the Jewish cemetery and extract gold crowns and fillings and steal jewels and burial shrouds.

1006 Yitzhak Zuckerman states that they “also made money by roaming around the streets and abandoned buildings … even during the first days of the Uprising.”

1007 After their escape from the ghetto, the Pinkert group became notorious for robbing and terrorizing the local population in the vicinity of Wyszków. According to Communist documents, the gravediggers so aroused the enmity of their fellow Jews that the latter wanted “to get rid of them at any price and to liquidate them.” Likely, they were eliminated by a joint action of the Communist People’s Guard and Jewish partisans in their rank from the Warsaw ghetto’s Jewish Fighting Organization.

1008 However, the Pinkerts were not the only grave robbers in the ghetto. Groups of teenagers, among others, also engaged in that lucrative activity. A memoir of a participant recalled how these youngsters descended on Warsaw’s burial grounds and used ploers and knives to extract gold teeth, crowns and bridges from the mouths of corpses.

1009 There are also many descriptions of extortion from recalcitrant, wealthy Jews of “contributions” for arms acquisitions by the Jewish underground, described by one historian as follows:

Compulsory levies—called “Exxes” (“Expropriations”)—were sometimes collected in combat-like operations, whereby a group of fighters would take over a building and demand that the tax be paid on the spot. The Ż.O.B. [Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa (Jewish Fighting Organization)] even maintained improvised prisons where the relatives of those who refused to pay could be held until the account had been settled.

However, that practice opened an opportunity for deceit and embezzlement also flourish. Armed gangsters still operate in the Ghetto. They, too, visit apartments ostensibly to collect money for the resistance, but the money they steal goes into their own pockets. They burgle at night and take all the clothes first—knowing that the Ghetto Jews usually sew money and valuables into their clothes to conceal them from the Nazis.


1007 Zuckerman, A Surplus of Memory, 397–402.

1008 Piotrowski, Poland’s Holocaust, 102–3.


1010 See, for example, the account of Pnina Grynszpan-Frymer in Anka Grupińska, Po kole: Rozmowy z żydowskimi żołnierzami (Warsaw: Alfa, 1991), 92. An expanded version of this book was published under the title Ciało po kule: Rozmowy z żołnierzami getta warsawskiego (Warsaw: Twój Styl, 2000), where the reference is found on page 96. This collection of interviews with survivors from the Warsaw ghetto is also available in German translation as Im Kreis: Gespräche mit jüdischen Kämpfern (Frankfurt am Main: Neue Kritik, 1993).


According to another source:

At first it was necessary to make [well-to-do] people pay up the point of a gun and even keep them locked up in one of the organization’s secret detention cells in the ghetto or in the factory area. … There were even times when the Z.Z.W. [Żydowski Związek Walki (Jewish Military Union)] had more money than it could immediately use to buy arms. …

Once the underground organizations’ fund-raising activities became common knowledge in the ghetto, various gangs of tricksters began resorting to similar methods of obtaining money under false pretences …

Members of the Jewish underground also posed as Christians when carrying out expropriations in the ghetto, and thus Poles are often blamed for these deeds in Jewish memoirs. Simha “Kazik” Rotem (Ratajzer) recalls:

At Hanoch’s order, we went on “exes” (short for expropriations) to “raise” money from rich Jews. We kept watch at the home of one man, collected information, and set a date for the operation. The apartment was on the second floor. One of us knocked on the door and when it opened we burst in, identified the man of the house, stood facing him in a “persuasive” movement, and announced, “We’ve come to get your contribution for the ZOB.” The Jew refused. I put the barrel of my revolver near him; he froze and didn’t utter a sound. Then Hanoch ordered, “Kazik, kill him!” When he called me “Kazik,” I was to understand that I had to appear as Kazik, that is, as a Pole. I assumed a strange expression, rolled my eyes, puffed up my chest, grabbed the Jew by the collar, and dragged him into a corner of the room. “Listen, with me you don’t play games!” I told him. When he heard the name “Kazik,” he understood he was dealing with a Gentile, and you didn’t get smart with a Gentile, especially not in those days. He broke down, asked for a brief delay, we went to a hiding place, pulled out some money, and reluctantly gave us his “contribution.” …

The “sniffers”—our intelligence people—identified a very rich Jew in the Brushmakers’ Area. We considered how to get money out of him after he refused to contribute willingly. At headquarters it was decided to take his beautiful daughter hostage. … We took the girl to a locked room in an attic in the Brushmakers’ Area. … This girl was to write a letter to her father, which we dictated to her and delivered to her house by messenger. … Once again I played a Christian, a representative of the Polish Underground, supposedly cooperating with the ZOB in the Ghetto. Soon after, the father was brought to the jailhouse. … after the man was brought into the locked room, the three of us had to try to squeeze out of him a sum of money which, according to our information, he was capable of paying. He was a real character. Despite our threats of execution, he claimed he couldn’t give us such a large sum. In fact, at first he demanded that we release him and his daughter for nothing. This went on for two or three days. …

As a last resort, my commanders decided to include me in an attempt to “convince” him, so he would know he wasn’t dealing with “compassionate Jews” but with real Gentiles, for whom killing
a man, not to mention a Jew, was not a problem to hesitate about. … we had agreed from the start that, at a certain stage, we’d begin to play the role of “murderer,” that is, we’d put him up against the wall, cock our weapons, count to three, according to all the rules of executions, hoping the man would finally break. Hence, when I didn’t succeed in convincing him with the carrot, I was forced to use the stick of execution. I cocked the weapon in my hand. My finger was on the trigger. I said, “I’ll shoot you if you don’t respond.” The man broke down and for the first time started negotiating the amount. … The man believed a Gentile was standing in front of him, a pure Aryan.  

The Germans sponsored an organization of collaborators known cryptically as Żagiew (“Die Fackel”—“The Torch”), the so-called Jewish Freedom Guard or Żydowska Gwardia Wolności, whose task it was to infiltrate all aspects of life in the Warsaw ghetto. Not only did they spy on, track down and hand fellow Jews over to the Germans, but they also carefully monitored the sources of outside assistance for the ghetto in order to expose Polish conspiratorial organizations. (The counterintelligence of the Home Army Chief Command eventually cracked this organization.) Less visible, but quite harmful, were censors at the post office building at 5 Leszno Street, such as the rabbis Blumenfeld and Glincensztajn, who collaborated with the Germans.  

The Warsaw ghetto was plagued by the existence of a large number of informers. The most notorious concentration of Jewish collaborators in Warsaw was “The Thirteen” (Trzynastka—or “number thirteen”), a name derived from their premises on 13 Leszno Street. This was the Office for Combatting Usury and Profiteering (Preisüberwachungsstelle), was established by the Kripo (Criminal Police) shortly after the creation of the ghetto in November 1940, ostensibly to combat profiteering and speculation, that is, the black market. Its staff comprised about 300–400 persons (perhaps even as many as 500, according to Raul Hilberg). “The Thirteen” furnished information to the Security Police (Sipo) while also providing a range of welfare services. In this way, it aimed to supplant both the Jewish police and even the Judenrat itself. It provided to the Germans detailed reports about the internal life of the ghetto, especially the underground and illegal activities. The tentacles of that organization reached every aspect of ghetto life and it even achieved a certain degree of popularity because of its promotion of Jewish culture and other aspects of Jewish life. “The Thirteen” created an atmosphere that encouraged informant activity, which became the scourge of the ghetto. Some historians even called them “The Jewish Gestapo.”  

“The Thirteen” was headed by Abraham Gancwajch (Ganzweich), a former teacher and Zionist journalist who became a gangster-like figure with close contacts with the Germans. He oversaw the operation of various shady institutions in the ghetto. He entertained rabbis, artists and the culturally prominent at lavish feasts, while at the same time engaging in a wide array of extortion inside the ghetto. “The Thirteen” began

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1013 Litai, Muranowska 7, 162–64.  
1017 A comprehensive account of the activities of “The Thirteen” and other collaborators is found in Engelking and Leociak, Getto warszawskie, Second edition, 223–47.
extorting more and more money. Its agents blackmailed and denounced ghetto inhabitants, including bullying people in paying fines and extorting payments from people involved in smuggling and illegal trade. In December 1941, Ringelblum noted that they had begun taking a 25 percent cut of the goods stored in underground warehouses, plus 25 percent for soup kitchens, leaving the owners with the remaining 50 percent. A few days later, Ringelblum wrote that in confiscating Jewish property, on the Aryan side of Warsaw, “The Thirteen” took one-third for itself, handed one-third to the Germans, and left only one-third with the owners. By March 1941, their corruption was entirely out in the open, sending people out to bakeries to forcibly take bread for themselves and standing at the ghetto’s exit points and taking bribes. Gancwajch was also an ideological ally of the Nazis who called on Jews to cooperate, as the Germans were going to win the war. Gancwajch collected hefty sums in exchange for promising to lobby for releasing Jews from prison (although his success rate was moderate), obtaining permits and other favours. He lived a privileged life; the ghetto buzzed with talk about his son’s lavish bar mitzvah in May 1941, held during Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks) when other Jewish children lay starving in the streets. On the other hand, he handed out free bread to the poor and supported cultural and literary activities. “The Thirteen” formed their own 300 to 400 member strong police, headed by Dawid Sternfeld, formerly of the Łódź underworld, whose activities were separate from those of the Ordnungsdienst. Sternfeld’s closest associate was Gojcherman. Those policemen, says Jonas Turkow, “Were fat fellows, debauched, mostly from the lowest low of the underworld.” In return for a sizable amount of money, policemen cast a blind eye toward smugglers, and at times even cooperated with them. If other smugglers were arrested, these policemen would charge a fee—often thousands of złoty—for not handing them over to the Germans. They extorted hush money from various ghetto craftsmen. They arrested Jews and released them in return for thousands of złoty in ransom money. The upper echelons of “The Thirteen” and its police force were patrons of expensive restaurants and coffee-houses of the ghetto. Ringelblum related:

At the “Britania” hotel at 18 Nowolipie Street they’ve opened a club in the basement that is little more than a whorehouse. It’s open until 7:00 in the morning, and the owners are Leszno 13 folks. They make merry there without limits. On Sunday, they took in 10,000 złoty, on Monday—2,000. A kilo of grapes costs 25 złotys. They write out bills for 500 złoty and more.

“The Thirteen” would often appear with Germans and Jewish policemen, who were partners in their transactions. One Jewish policeman, who was on friendly terms with both “The Thirteen” and SS, frequented their parties in the ghetto:

I remember walking with Jędruś in the street once, when a fellow waved at him and said: “Hello, Jędruś!” “Hello, Jaś,” Jędruś replied. “Who was it?” I asked because I was intrigued that they greeted each other like friends. “Oh, it’s an SS man I know, but in plain clothes.” …
It’s interesting that at those parties of theirs—so I was told by Jędruś—occasionally SS men appeared as acquaintances of the young people. They socialized with the Jewish youths.¹⁰¹⁸

In addition, Gancwajch also set up a smaller but equally suspect “Ambulance Service” (First Aid Station). Headed by Cantor Gershon Sirot and his doctor son, it too became a tool for “The Thirteen’s” corrupt employees, who used the ambulances (called “Marys” after Gancwajch’s wife) for smuggling goods. In mid-1941, there was a split in “The Thirteen’s” leadership. Gancwajch’s partners, Morris (Moryc) Kohn and Zelig (Zelik) Heller, broke with him in a battle for control and financial competition and established another agency at 14 Leszno Street. Kohn and Heller, both traders from Łódź who had come to Warsaw along with Gancwajch, were considered by all to be German agents. They soon exceeded their “teacher” Gancwajch in terms of ostentatious wastefulness. The two owned most of the carriages that carried both people and property within the ghetto. By July 1941, the Germans had tired of “The Thirteen” and closed down its office. Half of its police force was incorporated into the Ordnungsdienst, while Gancwajch and his comrades co-opted the Ambulance Service, which from then on was little more than a front for their smuggling activities. “The Thirteen” was later reopened, only to be shut down permanently in April 1942, when the Gestapo systematically eliminated its heads and employees, and even Jewish Gestapo agents. Gancwajch and Sternfeld (the commander of “The Thirteen’s” police force), who apparently received an early warning, managed to escape and live on the Aryan side under false identities. Rumor has it that during the mass deportation of August 1942, Gancwajch suddenly surfaced as an informer. After that, he tried rebuilding his power base in the ghetto. What became of him and what was his end is unknown.¹⁰¹⁹

Gancwajch’s closest collaborators were the aforementioned Moryc Kohn and Zelik Heller from Łódź; Zachariasz and B. Szymonowicz, from Radomsko; the lawyer Herbert Stahrer from Gdańsk (Danzig), who acted as Grancwajch’s legal advisor and secretary general; and the writer Jehuda Warszawiak, his press secretary. Other collaborators of “The Thirteen,” which included many Jews from Łódź and some from Germany, included: Gonsiorowicz, from Radomsko; Stanisław Boraks, a lawyer from Warsaw; Lewin, a lawyer from Wilno; Lewin, a lawyer from Warsaw; Mandel, an engineer; Margules, a sock manufacturer from Łódź; Gurwicz (Górowicz), from Wilno; Koenigl (Kenigl), from Lwów; Reichman (Rajchman), from Łódź; the Prużański (Próżański) brothers, from Warsaw; Leon Skosowski, from Łódź; Hendel; Kaner; the Erlich brothers; Wolf Szymanowicz, from Radomsko; Stroter, a lawyer; M. Lejzerowicz; Dr. Feldszuh;

¹⁰¹⁸ Wiszniewicz, And Yet I Still Have Dreams, 66.
Kleinweksler, a lawyer; Bramson, a lawyer; Reszal, a lawyer; Dr. Sirotka; Katz; Bialer. According to historian Adam Rutkowski, there were “many, many others.”

As mentioned, many of these people maintained close contacts with the Gestapo, and were in fact its agents. The agents Kohn and Heller, for instance, did not hesitate to draw up lists of people to be eliminated by the Gestapo. Both Gancwajch and Dawid Szternfeld are believed to have blackmailed and betrayed Jews hiding on the “Aryan” side. As Jonas Turkow points out, “The Thirteen” targeted both Jews and Poles:

Leon Skosowski and Kenigl were very officially collaborators of the SD [Sicherheitsdienst, i.e., the security service unit of the SS] and were more often on the ‘Aryan’ side than in the ghetto. Their task consisted in denouncing Jews who found themselves on the ‘Aryan’ side and denouncing Poles who engaged in political [underground] activities.

Skosowski was one of fourteen Gestapo agents liquidated by the Home Army in November 1943. (An earlier attempt undertaken jointly with the Jewish Military Union had failed.) Interestingly, he as well as other Jewish Gestapo agents reportedly maintained links with the Communist underground, perhaps as a safeguard in the event of a change in the political situation. The Communist People’s Guard (Gwardia Ludowa) also prided itself on eliminating Jewish Gestapo agents, among them a ghetto resident named Neuman and three Jews who lived on Chmielna Street in the Aryan part of Warsaw.

The Germans cultivated other spies in the ghetto. Bernard Goldstein, a Bund leader and political activist in the ghetto, described the constant fear of Jewish collaborators that ordinary ghetto dwellers, but particularly political activists, faced in their day-to-day lives. Things came to a head on April 17, 1942, when the Germans staged a large-scale raid on the Warsaw ghetto, accompanied by Jewish police who led them to their targeted destinations.

Soon after the organization of the Jewish police, a new figure appeared in the ghetto, a man named Ganzweich, a journalist and one-time Zionist, originally from Lodz [Łódź]. …

After the Germans announced the formation of the ghetto, Ganzweich set up a bureau for distributing favors and concessions like jobs as house janitors or rent collectors. He seemed to have great influence with the authorities. People stood in line at his office, bribe in hand, hoping to enlist Ganzweich’s aid to free an arrested member of the family, to get a better apartment, to procure a vital legal document. His carefully constructed network of connections and acquaintances kept his finger on every pulse of ghetto life, supplying him with information invaluable to the occupation authorities. …

1021 Engelking and Leociak, Getto warszawskie, First edition, 229.
1022 Turkov, C’était ainsi, 140.
1023 Trunk, Judenrat, 552–53.
Everyone knew that this creature was working for the Germans; that it was for them he was organizing this supposed campaign against exorbitant prices and smuggling. Nevertheless people joined his group for the same reason that others had joined the Jewish police. His “anti-profiteering” police numbered several hundred. Because their headquarters were at 13 Leshno [Leszno] Street, they soon became known as the “Thirteeners.” They wore the same uniform as the other Jewish police.

The Thirteeners spread fear throughout the ghetto. They conducted raids, descending on entire blocks of houses, supposedly hunting for smuggled goods, speculators, and black marketeers. Actually they were on the scent of political material, illegal literature, and active workers in the underground. They fulfilled the function of the Gestapo in the ghetto. In time, Ganzweich and his Thirteeners became the authority on Jewish matters for the Gestapo and had its complete confidence. Before the rupture of the Stalin-Hitler pact, Ganzweich even enlisted Jews from the Warsaw ghetto to filter into the Russian zone to bring back information for the German authorities.

At first the Judenrat carried on a quiet fight against Ganzweich. … But all efforts to eliminate Ganzweich as competition for police control in the ghetto failed. His connections with the Gestapo were too strong. His Thirteeners continued to function as a police unit, parallel to the Judenrat police but more closely identified with the specific features of Gestapo policy toward the Jews.

Aside from Ganzweich’s Thirteeners, the Gestapo included some Jews in its own apparatus. One of them, Kokosoffsly, had been before the war a leader of the Maccabee, a Jewish sport organization, in Pabyanitza [Pabianice]. Another agent, Andes by name, had previously been a boxer in the Zionist Maccabee. He now specialized in searching out illegal flour mills. Later he was sent by the Germans to the Oswiecim [Oświęcim—Auschwitz] camp. Rumor had it that the millers paid substantial bribes to engineer this coup. At least one Jewish woman was on the Gestapo payroll—Madame Machno, a former Warsaw actress and dancer.

Through the hands of these creatures flowed tremendous sums as bribes for the Gestapo. They used to “arrange” passes for the ghetto gates, business licenses, exemptions from forced labor, and other privileges. A travel permit between Warsaw and Lodz cost thousands of zlotys; exemption from forced labor, tens of thousands. The scale of prices varied with the importance of the service.

These leeches attached themselves firmly and sucked, for themselves and the Gestapo, the last drop of blood from the Jewish population, spreading what they bred upon—complete demoralization and licentiousness without limit.

The Jewish police found their strongest and most capable opponent in Morizi Orzech.

Orzech’s hatred of the Jewish police once led him into serious difficulty. Encountering a police captain attempting to arrest an old Jewish woman for illegally selling vegetables in the street, he intervened. In the course of the argument, he struck the officer. Orzech was arrested to be handed over to the Germans. It took a lot of work and money to save him …

One morning the janitor of 12 Novolipya [Nowolipie] burst in to tell me that he had just been visited by two Gestapo agents, apparently Jews, who had gone through his registry book. They had paid particular attention to the G’s. He was sure that they were after me. …

Ten minutes later a Gestapo car pulled up in front of 12 Novolipya, and agents swarmed into the building. They ransacked my apartment, questioned my family and neighbors. They left a written order that I must report the following morning at the headquarters of the Gestapo at Allee Shucha [Szucha].

The following day they returned to find out why I had not appeared. My brother was not at home, so they took young Jacob as a hostage. …

Jacob was a Bundist and, living in my apartment, had seem comrades come and go on underground business. The Gestapo tortured him in an attempt to get information, but they were finally defeated when death brought an end to his agonies.¹⁰²⁶

Dark as usual was the spring night of April 17, 1942. … During that night, the Gestapo had visited scores of houses in various parts of the ghetto, had dragged people out and shot them on the spot. The bodies were left where they fell. Jewish police had accompanied the SS and Gestapo men, carrying a list of names and addresses, and leading he murderers directly to their victims.

In the morning, under order from the police, the bodies were cleaned off the streets by wagons of the Chesed Shel Emmeth Burial Society and by other undertakers. The police drove the neighbors of the murdered men into the streets and forced them to wash away the blood.

That night we lost, among others, the following comrades: …

Especially tragic was the death of our comrade, Moishe Sklar, a typesetter. He had been a member of the executive committee of the Printers’ Union, and continued his Bund activity in the ghetto. He was arrested that night but not shot immediately as were the others. For two weeks he was held in Pawiak [Pawiak] prison and horribly tortured. He was asked for the names of those active in printing illegal literature. He knew them all, but he endured the terrible pain and said nothing. At five o’clock in the morning, two weeks after his arrest, he was taken to the corner of Djelna [Dzieln]a and Motcha [Smocza], where he was shot.

Neighbors heard the shots and ran out. They saw a man lying in a pool of blood and a Jewish policeman leaning over the corpse, removing its shoes. … Later we identified the Jewish policeman who had done the ghoulish looting. He was dealt with appropriately.¹⁰²⁷

Now the terror in the ghetto entered a new and bloodier phase. Almost every night the Nazis would break into a tenement, drag scores of people into the street, and shoot them. People were brought into the ghetto from the Aryan side at night and shot. We did not know who they were or why they were murdered.¹⁰²⁸

The feeling of expectancy, of nervous waiting for an unknown but certain catastrophe, grew when the Germans began a new campaign of terror. From time to time in the past they had seized people

¹⁰²⁶ Ibid., 94–95.
¹⁰²⁷ Ibid., 100–102.
on the streets and shipped them away into forced labor. After April 17, [1942], such abductions took place much more often and with much greater ferocity. The Jewish police, led by SS men and [German] gendarmes, would descend on a ghetto area like a band of wild animals, grabbing every adult man and throwing him into a circle of armed guards in the center of the street. Ringed by the police, numbed by fear and bewilderment, the condemned would huddle there, waiting to be escorted to the nearest police commissariat and then to the freight cars for forced labor. …

From the window of my hiding place at 13 Gensha [Gęsia] I once witnessed a horrifying scene. A Jewish policeman held a thin young man, with matted black hair, who fought with insane fury to break loose from his captor’s grasp. There was a mad look in the victim’s eyes as he punched and kicked and pulled. With a rubber truncheon the policeman beat his hands, his legs, his entire body and then half pushed, half dragged him toward the square where the armed ring was waiting.  

On the night of Friday, April 17 [1942], trucks crammed with German soldiers and SS officers stormed the Warsaw Ghetto. They poured through several gates simultaneously, fanning out through the locked-down district, which was dark and silent, no lights or movement being permitted after curfew. Within minutes the deserted cobblestone streets echoes with the clatter of jackboots, while portable searchlights scanned buildings and doors were hammered down with rifle butts. Shots rang out, along the occasional staccato of machine gun fire.

One of the tenements targeted during the raids was Isaac Zuckerman’s Valiant [Dzielna] Street headquarters. His startled janitor-lookout barely had time to pull the makeshift alarm before Gestapo agents were pounding up the stairs. On the third floor, in the Young Pioneer clubhouse, panic erupted and there was a mad dash for the attic, where an emergency exit had been cut through the wall into an adjacent building. In the ensuing scramble one of Isaac’s most trusted deputies, Tuvia Borzykowski, was shot in the leg, but he still managed to escape. Two other Pioneers were not so fortunate. They were dragged to the ground-floor courtyard, and, with all the residents looking on in horror, each was shot in the head.

Before executing them, the Gestapo posed only one question to the victims: Where were Isaac Zuckerman and Lonka Kozibrodska? That the SS knew about Isaac was not surprising. His involvement with the Socialist Zionist youth movement was not a secret. But Lonka was a different story. Very few outsiders were aware of the clandestine role the beautiful blonde played in linking the Young Pioneers to the outside world.

This could only mean that the Nazis had Jewish informants, a suspicion that was borne out when the homes of almost all the Bund’s central committee members were also raided that evening. Sonya Nowogrodska, the only woman in the Bund underground leadership, narrowly cheated death, as did Bernard Goldstein by switching hiding places at the last minute. … the Bund lost nearly a dozen operatives that night. All were shot on the spot, their bodies left to bleed out where they fell. In total, fifty-two people were killed on April 17, which became known variously as Bloody Friday, Night of Blood, or the Sabbath Massacre.
Blood Friday revealed a shift in Nazi tactics. Until then, the Gestapo had focused its brutal counterinsurgency measures almost exclusively on Gentiles. (Indeed, earlier that very day, the Nazis had conducted a series of separate raids in the Christian quarters of Warsaw, deporting 461 suspected Resistance members to Auschwitz.) Prior to Bloody Friday, no evidence existed to suggest that the occupation authorities either knew or cared that Jews were forming conspiratorial cells. [Perhaps this was because these cells did not engage in any armed activities either then or for some time afterwards. \textit{M.P.}] Occasionally, the Gestapo inquired about the likes of Bernard Goldstein, since he was a well-known agitator from before the war. But there had never been mass arrests or Gestapo dragnet in the Jewish Quarter on the scale that routinely decimated the Polish Resistance. The question was: Why now? What prompted the raids? Had the Germans, through their network of spies, gotten wind of the unification talks between Zionists and Bundists? Had they heard of the intensified efforts to acquire weapons? Did they know about the newly formed youth militias and their growing chorus of calls for self-defense?

\textit{The sad fact remained that the Band, to date, had not managed to procure a single gun.} The vaunted militias, in Boruch Spiegel’s opinion, “were not very serious.” Spiegel, after he recuperated, had demanded to join the defense unit, and he quickly became disillusioned by its lack of structure, discipline, adequate training, and, most of all, arms.\footnote{Brzezinski, \textit{Isaac’s Army}, 154–56. Based on Gutman, \textit{The Jews of Warsaw, 1939–1943}, 176; Władysław Bartoszewski, \textit{1859 dni Warszawy} (Kraków: Znak, 2009), 330.}

This atmosphere of gloom, demoralization and terror is reinforced by the memoirs of apolitical residents of the ghetto who just tried to get by. One common thread in these memoirs is that Poles did not play a role in the day-to-day oppression of the half million Jewish residents of the Warsaw ghetto.

Unfortunately, there were many traitors amongst the Jews who formed a secret police working with the Gestapo. None of them was from Warsaw, I’m happy to say. They were all from Lodz [Łódź], which the Germans called Litzmannstadt. They were all intelligentsia—doctors, engineers, police—none of them uneducated or from the lower classes. They were all professionals—and disgustingly mean. We were afraid of them like fire. Their headquarters were on the same street as Café Sztuka, but on the other side. The building was Number Thirteen Leszno Street. Because of that, they were called Number Thirteens.

This was the Jewish Gestapo against the Jews. They had green bands on their caps. The regular Jewish police had blue bands. The Jewish Gestapo would come into the café, but we did not like to serve them. They did a lot of dirty work. Let’s say some Jews had hidden in their apartments dollars or money or gold that they could sell to buy food. The Jewish Gestapo would give away all these secrets to the Germans. And the Germans would come shooting and killing. There was not mass killing yet. It was just bad treatment, very awful treatment, but not mass exterminations. …

Some German Jews were given jobs outside the walls of the Warsaw Ghetto. … One day these German Jews were marching off to work past the SS men on guard. These German Jews were all raising their hands, hollering, “\textit{Heil Hitler!”} and the SS men did not even answer them, did not
look at them, did not even spit at them. In Warsaw, we just laughed when these German Jews screamed, “Heil Hitler!”—as if Hitler would help them—this was the funniest part…

Jews were starving, even though food was being smuggled in. We did not have food, but we could get smuggled-in strawberries on the street. I remember one day I bought myself all kinds of goodies. I was walking on the street and a man came and he grabbed all the food and ran away. …

The conditions in the ghetto were so terrible … People hated each other. You understand, they were starving. They could kill each other for food. We had a family from Lodz in our apartment. My mother cooked. The wife of this man came and ate up my mother’s soup, so my mother complained to me. The man did not like my mother complaining, so he pushed her around and beat her up. When I came home from work that day I hit him on the head with an iron pot. I got even for my mother. He got no pity from me. He never touched her anymore.

I did not see any resistance leaflets or newspapers in the ghetto. If I ever saw any resistance, any writing on the walls, it was in the Aryan section. There they would write on the walls things like “Only pigs go to the movies,” because going to the movies helped the Germans by making people forget about the war, forget about resisting. But in the ghetto we were only worried about food, the cold, the sickness and the lice. We were completely demoralized.

We were so demoralized that people became disrespectful of each other.1031

I did not ask anybody what to do. I was all on my own. Whenever I did something, I never asked anybody. … Besides you couldn’t talk to anybody. You did not know who was a traitor. I was too afraid.1032

The Jewish underground occasionally liquidated Jewish informers and Gestapo agents inside the ghetto. Jacob Celemenski, for example, relates how he was tracked down in his hiding place in the Warsaw ghetto by a young Jewish informer sent by Jewish Gestapo agents. The Jewish underground assigned a clandestine cell of five comrades to execute him, but were outdone by the informer’s own bosses, who shot him themselves.1033 Among those reportedly executed by the ŻZW [Żydowski Związek Walki—Jewish Military Union] were: two Gestapo agents shot dead near the entrance to Schultz’s restaurant on Karmelicka St. (spring 1942); Adolf Borensztein (known as the “13th man”), shot dead in Elektoralna St. (March 1942); a police lieutenant of the Leszno St. police station, shot near one of the ŻZW tunnel entrances (summer 1942); a nest of eleven Gestapo spies (eight men and three women), executed in the cellar of Kosieradzki’s house on Karmelicka St. after a “trial” (June 1942); two female Gestapo agents, one of them Haya Blumberg; Jacob Leikin, the deputy commander of the Jewish police, shot in Gęśia St. (October 29, 1942); Israel Firszt or Izrael First, the head of the Judenrat’s Economic Department (November 29, 1942); Leon (Lolek) Skosowski (who, seriously wounded, escaped to the Aryan side where he was later executed by the Polish Home Army), Pawle Bludarski, Arik Waintraub (had in his possession a detailed list of bunkers for the Gestapo), H. Mangiel, Lydia (Anya) Radziszewska, all shot in the brush-factory compound at 38

1031 Goldberg, Running Through Fire, 23–25.
1032 Ibid., 39.
1033 Celemenski, Elegy For My People, 106.
Świętojerska St. (February 21, 1943); Jerzy Firstenberg, a high-ranking officer in the Jewish ghetto police (February 1943); Moniek Prozanski and his son Anders, shot as they were about to escape to the Aryan side; Zinger, shot in a restaurant on Nowolipie St.; two porters called Pinya and Elia (“Małpa”) on Nowolipki St.; Nosek, shot dead in the brush-factory area (he too was in possession of a detailed list of bunkers). According to Józef Grynblatt, a member of the Jewish Military Organization (ŻZW), after the failed ghetto revolt a large group of ŻZW fighters hid out in premises on Grzybowska Street. The hideout were betrayed to the Gestapo by Dawid Guzik, a Jewish agent who was involved in the Hotel Polski affair, and not by the radical Polish underground group “Miecz i Pług,” as claimed by Bernard Mark and Marek Edelman. The ŻZW fighters were all killed by the Gestapo in a firefight.

When the Great Deportation of Jews from the Warsaw ghetto began in the summer of 1942, the families of Jewish Gestapo agents were ushered to safety on the “Aryan” side. Jonas Turkow mentions a large number of Jews who worked as Gestapo agents on the “Aryan” side, such as the dancer Franciszka Mann (née Manheimer, later Rozenberg), the lyricist Józef Lipski, the lyricist Andrzej Wlast (Gustaw Baumritter), a German Jew named Sachsenhaus, who threw Adam Czerniaków, the head of the Judenrat, down the stairs, the Weintraub brothers, the boxer Anders, Manheimer, the brother of Franciszka Manówna, a German Jew named Fostel, Josef Włodawski, the boxer Fred Bobi, Milek the “redhead,” Edek Ast, Szeps, the inspector Erlich (Josl Kapote), “and others.” Franciszka Mann, who was exposed by double agents working for the Polish underground, frequented nightclubs in the company of German Gestapo officers. Turkow also mentions a Jew from Lublin by the name of Greier (Szama Grajer), who had assisted in the liquidation of the Jews in Lublin. Ignacy Lubowiecki and Dawid Gertler were other well-known Jewish Gestapo agents in Warsaw. Baumritter is mentioned in Jewish sources as a Gestapo agent. Polish underground sources record additional Jewish Gestapo agents such as Tadeusz and Waleria Rębowski (assumed identities) from Anin, Matia Goldman (the wife of Włodawski), Hermanowski and his wife Wanda Mostowicz (the wife of Jerzy Weisberg), Weintraub, Eryk Lipiński, Zuzanna Ginczanka (Sara Ginzburg), and many others. A 1942 Polish underground report mentions Stefania Zauderer, the actor Adam Danielewicz, and Zdzisław Mirtenbaum-Koss.

Samuel Kenigswajn left a particularly poignant account of the fate of Jewish collaborators in the Warsaw ghetto:

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1034 Reuben Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe* (London: Paul Elek, 1974), 615–17, 904 n.14. Ainsztein states that Revisionist historians wrongly ascribe the execution of First to the ŻZW. According to historian Dariusz Libionka, First was executed by Dawid Szulman, a member of ŻOB.


1039 Engelking and Grabowski, “Żydów łamiących prawo należy karać śmiercią!”, 61.
The Jewish Fighting Organization countered the urgings [of the shop owners to report willingly for transfer to the Poniatowa labor camp] and took up arms against the betrayers and renegades … They carried out a death sentence on one of the directors of the Schultz shop by the name of Hirszl, a German Jew, who together with another renegade director by the name of Wajsberg urged workers to transfer and denounced the fighters. …

Seeing that the agitation of the directors was not working, the Hitlerites brought eight Jewish masters from Lublin together with the famed Gestapo agent, Szama Grajer, at their head. These lackeys of the enemy started to agitate on the streets of the ghetto in favour of transferring to the Poniatowa “paradise.” This was already in March 1943. The Fighting Organization reacted immediately by breaking the bones of the betrayers. They quickly absconded back to Lublin …

The operation of liquidating traitors continued throughout all of March. The fighters were particularly keen on [liquidating] a group of dangerous denouncers which included Bergazyn, the second director of the Hallman factory, his wife, her brothers by the name of Becher, and her brother-in-law, Kac. Kac had betrayed a hideout at 71 Nowolipki Street to the Germans. Many innocent victims were lost at that time.

The united fighters from the PPR [Polish Workers’ Party] and Hashomer Hatzair issued a death sentence against that group. They didn’t succeed in killing everyone. They burned out the eyes of the wretch Kac. … The Jewish Fighting Organization passed a death sentence on the betrayer Singer, a security guard at the Schultz factory. He was a Jew from Praga, a former boxer. Singer was eliminated. Another boxer by the name of Andres met the same fate. He was a denouncer and spy. Learning of the Organization’s sentence he tried to escape to the “Aryan” side but a fighter’s bullet hit him in time. There were other such armed operations in February and March 1943, but I so not remember them all.1040

Some Jews worked, at various times, for the Communists as well as the Gestapo, for example, Mieczysław Walczak and Jerzy Sawicki (Izydor Reisler).1041 Izydor Reisler, who under the assumed name of Jerzy Sawicki was an influential figure on the Lawyers’ Council in Soviet Lwów and persecuted its Polish members, turned agent for the Gestapo in the Lwów ghetto. This did not prevent him from rising to the position of prosecutor of the Supreme National Tribunal and Supreme Court in Stalinist Poland, where he was charged with prosecuting war criminals. Another example of a Jew who served many masters was described by Stanisław Taubenschlag, a scion of a prominent Jewish family from Kraków (his father was Professor Rafał Taubenschlag, dean of the Jagiellonian University). Stanisław Taubenschlag was pursued by Danek (Danko) Redlich, the son of a Jewish official from Kraków, who denounced him to the Gestapo while on a mission for the Polish underground in Warsaw. Taubenschlag managed to extricate himself and survived this trap, but his pursuer was now a wanted man.

1040 Testimony of Samuel Kenigswajn, dated July 1947, Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw), record group 301, number 5008.
The news of my tribulations in Warsaw quickly spread in the circles of young people. The hunt was now on for Danek Redlich who, it transpired, had been in the employ of the Bolsheviks in Lvov [Lwów] and had betrayed several people there. When Lvov was occupied by the Germans, this professional agent, entered the service of the Gestapo. After the war he worked in the security service (UB [Urząd Bezpieki]). In the 1950s he went to Venezuela where he met his death in a car accident in Caracas.\footnote{1042}

Another Jewish collaborator who changed sides was Teresa Bryk, the wife of a Polish airman who was killed in the Battle of Britain. During the German occupation she maintained liaisons with the Gestapo in Wyszków and Ostrów Mazowiecka. After the arrival of the Soviet army she began to work for the NKVD. She then made a career in the Communist political structures in the Pułtusk district.\footnote{1043}

On May 9, 1942, leaders of the leftist underground in the Warsaw ghetto were arrested after a denunciation, thereby paralyzing the so-called Anti-Fascist Bloc.\footnote{1044} The use of Jewish confidants by the Gestapo was officially discontinued in September 1943.\footnote{1045} However, well after the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto, according to one report, the Gestapo continued to employ some 300 Jewish agents, remnants of the Żagiew organization and others, to ferret out Jews who were hiding among Christians in Warsaw. It was likely because of those agents that so many Jews passing as Poles and in hiding were captured. A Jew named Hening directed a 70-member team at the Gestapo premises on Szucha Avenue charged with the task of gathering information about Polish underground organizations, performing physical examinations on suspected Jews, and interrogating them about their knowledge of the Catholic faith. These agents not only combed Warsaw looking for Jews, but also were sent into the countryside where they were known to infiltrate partisan units and seek assistance from Polish villagers posing as Jews on the run.\footnote{1046} After being stopped by German gendarmes in a routine check, Lidia Kott was taken to the Gestapo headquarters on Szucha Street. Luckily, she succeeded in concealing her Jewish identity.

Lidia was interrogated by two officers, tall blonds beautiful as archangels in their black uniforms. They told her to say her prayers, asked her to tell them the shape of the host, and tried to get her to say that it was square. Next day they sent her to the “anthropologist,” whom they addressed as “Herr Doktor.” He had the rank of a major. He examined her from all angles and came to the conclusion that the build of her body was Nordic and her type Euro-Asiatic. The investigations began all over again, now with the assistance of three experts: a Jew, a Ukrainian, and a Pole. … Lidia was taken out into the corridor and told to wait. Police informers were running around the

\footnote{1042} Taubenschlag (Townsend), To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland, 49–57, here at 57. See also Andrzej Chwalba, Dzieje Krakowa, vol. 5: Kraków w latach 1939–1945 (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002), 287.
\footnote{1044} Engelking and Leocia, Getto warszawskie, First edition, 648.
\footnote{1045} Wilamowski, Srebrniki Judasza, 26.
\footnote{1046} Bednarczyk, Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta, 233, 234, 235, 241 n.11; Bednarczyk, Obowiązek silniejszy od śmierci, 156–57. In the latter book, Bednarczyk details many other cases of collaboration at 26, 28, 32, 35–36, 43, 75, 78, 94, 103, 121.
corridors constantly, several times bringing in Jews. … After an hour or two, she was ordered to go home … When they had let Lidia go, she had said to the Jewish informer, with her usual sangfroid, “Au revoir.” “Don’t say ‘Au revoir’ and never come back here. It’s a horrible place.”

After the failed uprising of August–October 1944, Jews refugees in the transit camp at Pruszków continued to be ferreted out by the “Heaven Brigade,” composed of Gestapo agents whose ethnic composition is not known, though likely there were Jews among them. The high figures for Jewish Gestapo agents operating in Warsaw do not appear to be exaggerated given that, as mentionned earlier, the Germans employed at least twenty Jewish Greifers, or “catchers,” to hunt down Jews in Berlin where far fewer Jews were hiding.

A similar situation prevailed in Lublin where the Germans were well-informed about the internal affairs of the ghetto thanks to their network of Jewish agents and informers, among them their ringleader Szama (Szaja) Grajer, Lejb (“Maska”), Abram Gemare, Sz. Mandelbojm, Szulim (“Babe”), and Matys Kurnik. When a second ghetto was established in Majdan Tatarski, Grajer enlisted another group of collaborators who carried out searches of Jewish homes and denounced those with forbidden property to the Gestapo. That group included Josl Szajner, Dinament, Szulim “Babe,” Lejbl “Maske,” “Para-Niepara,” Monkiel Ganew, Jankiel Szczygiel, and two brothers from Piaski. In December 1941, several months before the mass deportations to the death camps, the Germans set up an agency, known as the Office of Disinfection and Delousing, which was headed by Bolesław Tenenbaum, an experienced operative brought in from Warsaw where he had worked under the notorious Gancwajch. Tenenbaum and his colleagues Sztokfish, who was in charge of the sanitary section, and Dawid Kuperminc, who was in charge of the disinfection section, organized a team of 190 people in a military-like structure. These two groups (Grajer and Tenenbaum’s), together with the Judenrat, later played an important role in preparing for and executing the deportation of Lublin’s Jews and various other liquidation actions as part of Operation “Reinhard.” As elsewhere, the search for Jewish hiding places was carried out by the Jewish police and Jewish agents, who often took bribes from Jews before betraying them to the SS.

As Israeli Historian David Silberklang shows, at times, Jews who collaborated with the Nazis not only enriched themselves at the expense of other Jews, but actually formed close friendships with leading Nazi

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1047 Kott, Still Live, 77–79.
1050 Dean, Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945, vol. II, Part A, 675–78. The entry notes the existence of the Jewish police and states that on November 7, 1942, the German demanded that the Jewish police participate in the
officials. The case of Szama (Shamai, Szaja) Grajer, of Lublin, is instructive. A barber and petty criminal before the war, Grajer was imprisoned by the Germans for hitting a Volksdeutsche who had been mistreating Jews. Silberklang continues,

While in prison he befriended many influential SS men and emerged from his incarceration as a proprietor of a café at 15 Lubartowska Street, which was frequented by some of the SS men. Grajer very quickly became a wealthy and influential figure, mistrusted and feared. He was able to acquire special privileges for those who paid him well, and he was correctly perceived by the ghetto community as a Gestapo informer. Nearly all survivors from Lublin remember him vividly.\textsuperscript{1051}

Szama Grajer rose to great heights before his sudden, tragic end, as described by Silberklang,

Shamai Grajer decided that he wanted to marry his pregnant mistress, the seventeen-year-old, blond, blue-eyed Stettin refugee, Mira Fishman. Grajer forced the well-known Rabbi Zvi Elimelech Talmud to grant him a divorce from his wife Bella (against her will) and to perform the wedding. Grajer threw a big wedding party at his café and invited his SS friends, including Worthoff and Sturm, to attend. Sturm even sent a large bouquet of white roses. A day or two later the “illegals” were shot in the Krepiec [Krępiec] woods, and on November 9, Sturm shot Grajer, his wife, and his baby.\textsuperscript{1052}

Jews from Lublin were enlisted in large numbers by the Germans to carry out confiscations in the countryside:

Unlike the typhus epidemic, confiscation of various materials was a German-initiated idea designed to benefit the Germans and weaken the Jews all at the same time. In mid-1941, the civilian labor office created a large team of more than 500 Jewish “sammner” (gatherers) all across the district. Their job was to comb the Jewish communities and other areas in search of metals, glass, paper, cloth, and other materials for industrial use. These people continued to work as sammner until the spring of 1942. For those chosen for this job, it was a boon; it gave them relative freedom of movement and widespread contacts with other Jews and with Poles. In some cases it also could serve as a basis for underground activity. However, for the Jews forced to relinquish materials, this was yet another blow to their wellbeing.\textsuperscript{1053}

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\textsuperscript{1051} David Silberklang, \textit{Gates of Tears: The Holocaust in the Lublin District} (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2013), 265. Szama (Szaja, Shamai) Grajer was an underworld figure who made a fortune from Jews by promising them preferential treatment in the ghetto. See Marek Urban, \textit{Polska... Polska...} (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny IN-B, 1998), 96.

\textsuperscript{1052} Silberklang, \textit{Gates of Tears}, 334–35.

\textsuperscript{1053} Silberklang, \textit{Gates of Tears}, 266.
Jewish prisoners of war from the Lipowa Street camp in Lublin were employed in the liquidation of the ghetto in Lubartów. When the need arose, Jewish Gestapo agents from Lublin were brought to Warsaw to help out with the Great Deportation of the summer of 1942:

Later, in August [1942], when the truth [about the destination of the deportees, namely Treblinka] became widely known, there was the psychological difficulty of accepting it. ... Moreover, the Nazis saw to it that their victims should still be able to reject the truth by providing them with false hope. Hoefle [SS Major Hermann Höfle] had brought with him from Lublin a gang of Jewish Gestapo agents who were ready to do anything to stay alive a little longer. They were installed in number 101, Żelazna Street, next to number 103 where Hoefle had his own headquarters, and there, assisted by Jewish Gestapo agents from the Warsaw ghetto, they fabricated letters, which were supposedly written by the ‘resettled’ from labour camps in Russia and elsewhere.

Jewish Gestapo agents and informers operating outside the ghetto were a significant peril for Jews who passed as Poles or who tried to hide. Indeed, Aleksander Biberstein, the eminent chronicler of the Kraków ghetto, whose testimony is cited later, considered them to have been a greater source of danger for Jews than Polish denouncers. This was a factor of their familiarity with the Jewish community and the “professional” pressures stemming from their duties: if they did not turn in fellow Jews in considerable numbers, their usefulness to the Germans was spent and their very existence in jeopardy. Most Jewish historians, however, are reluctant to admit to the existence of the numerous Jewish collaborators agents operating on the “Aryan” side, preferring instead to leave the impression that the enemy the Jews feared were not so much the Germans as the Poles, whose favourite pastime was allegedly to hunt down Jews.

Antoni Marianowicz, who hid in and near Warsaw, concurs with that assessment: “Danger lurked not only from the Germans and Polish scoundrels—there were also Jewish scoundrels. I feared them no less, and maybe even more than the former. The conditions encouraged human baseness, regardless of race.”

In his published memoirs, in addition to a Jew by the name of Włodek S. working with a ring of szmalcowniks, a phenomenon that will be discussed in more detail, Marianowicz mentions a Jewish woman by the name of Zarembska, who denounced him to the director of the foundry in Wołomin where he worked, and another Jewish co-worker, who fled to Israel after the war in order to escape punishment for his role in helping the Germans plunder Polish property.

In her memoirs, Sandra Brand mentions a Jew who was captured during a German raid on the apartment of an extortionist in Warsaw and a young Jewish woman who betrayed the hideout of several Jews after

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1054 Testimony of Maria Plech, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 1884.
1056 The latter charge was shamelessly levelled by Jewish American historian Lucy Dawidowicz, who wrote about “the widespread Polish sport of bounty hunting.” See Dawidowicz, The Holocaust and the Historians, 106.
1058 Marianowicz, Życie surowo wzbronione, 115, 163–65.
being captured by the police. Barbara Abramow-Newerly did not abide by the order to relocate to the ghetto but continued to reside in her housing estate in the Warsaw suburb of Żoliborz, even though her Jewish background was widely known. The only szmalcownik she encountered was a Jew by the name of Saul, whom she knew. Saul worked for the Gestapo ferreting out Jews in hiding on the “Aryan” side. He was also engaged in extorting money and visited Barbara weekly until she was penniless. Facing denunciation, she turned to the Home Army for assistance. Witold Pilecki, the famed escapee from Auschwitz, extricated her by providing money to pay off the szmalcownik and told her not to worry. The Jewish szmalcownik did not return.

Zofia Bandurska-Herman, a Polish woman who was married to a Jew, took in a Jewish family by the name of Przeworski, who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto. She hid Marek Przeworski in the cellar of the tenement building in which she lived and found hiding places for the others with her friends. A group of Jews came to her home to extort money. When Marek Przeworski recognized one of them, that Jewish blackmailer shot him. Bandurska-Herman buried Przeworski with the help of the janitor. The Jewish blackmailers continued to visit her with demands. Bandurska-Herman found out the address of one of them and reported him to the police. However, Bandurska-Herman herself was later summoned to the police station and killed.

Simha Rotem, who himself “dressed like a Gestapo agent” on his missions into the countryside, acknowledged that “Germans weren’t the only ones who served in the Gestapo, whose ranks included members of other nationalities, including Jews.” Another Jewish underground leader, Yitzhak Zuckerman (“Antek”), also documents the activities of numerous Jewish collaborators in Warsaw. He points out that Abraham Gancwajch, the head of the notorious “Thirteen,” worked for some time on the “Aryan” side against the Polish underground and that Adam Żurawin, one of the many Jewish Gestapo agents he mentions, moved to the United States where he became a millionaire and summoned a rabbinical court to acquit him. Zuckerman openly acknowledges that he was accosted by as many Jewish blackmailers as Polish ones, and that it was a Jewish blackmailer who almost cost him his life:

And if I consider the treason carried out against me by individuals, there were just as many Jews among them as Poles. For example, when I was condemned to be executed on April 18, 1942, it was because of a Jewish denunciation.

Encounters with Jewish Gestapo agents were almost invariably fatal. Although a relatively small group, German archival documents confirm that agents were the Gestapo’s chief source of reliable information,

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1059 Brand, I Dared To Live, 110, 113.
1060 Jarosław Abramow-Newerly, Lwy mojego podwórka (Warsaw: Twój Styl, 2000), 143–52. When Witold Pilecki faced trumped up charges of working for “foreign imperialism” after the war which resulted in his execution in 1948, Barbara Abramow-Newerly came forward unsuccessfully in his defence.
1061 Testimony of Paulina Hirsch, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 453.
1063 Zuckerman, A Surplus of Memory, 63, 441–45, 493.
accounting for about a third of all successful “hits”. Only a small number of accounts, albeit important ones, speak to direct experience with this source of danger; most memoirists don’t care to recall such episodes which they undoubtedly witnessed or heard about. The magnitude of the phenomenon is thus underreported. Jerzy Warm (later Mikołajczyk) reported that, after her escape from the Warsaw ghetto, his 19-year-old daughter was denounced by a Jew who worked for the Gestapo. She perished in the Pawiak prison. Eliszewa Totengreber, who was sheltered by a Pole after escaping from the Warsaw ghetto with her mother, recalled that her mother was denounced by a Jew, probably working for the Gestapo, and perished.

Zbigniew Ryszard Grabowski (then Ryszard Abrahamer), whose family passed as Christians in Warsaw, states that his father was fingered in a streetcar by a Jewish Gestapo agent. “Jews in the service of the Gestapo,” he writes, “were best at recognizing other Jews.” Aviva Unger was just 12 years old when she and her mother, a widow, were confined in the Warsaw ghetto. After the Germans shot her mother, Aviva escaped from the ghetto in 1942 by crawling through the sewers. She was taken to a Catholic convent where she lived with nuns and attended the convent school. She “was recognized on a tram by a Jew who was a police spy, and betrayed to the Gestapo.” She was beaten viciously to extract information, but she said nothing. Risking his life, a priest from the convent was able to save Aviva by vouching for her longstanding Catholic background.

Ruth Altbeker Cyprys describes a familiar scene she witnessed after the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto in May 1943. She personally observed Jewish Gestapo agents shouting Jewish slogans or singing Jewish songs in order to provoke a telltale reaction in fugitive Jews among the pedestrians in the streets of Warsaw.

The Jewish Gestapo men who remained alive were very dangerous. Their eyes were penetrating and Jews pointed out by them were lost without hope. A little car often seen passing slowly along Marszalkowska [Marszałkowska] Street, always keeping close to the pavement, became notorious. Once I was walking along this street when suddenly I heard the shout ‘Szma Israel’ [Shema Yisrael – Hear, O Israel, the words of a section of the Torah that is the centrepiece of morning and evening prayers], followed by the sight of a man dragged struggling into the car. It transpired that the cry had come from the slowly driven vehicle, causing an elderly gentleman passing by to stop and look back instinctively. It was final proof for the manhunters. They must have been observing their prey for some time and, having reckoned that only a Jew would react to these words, had successfully used their subterfuge. A friend told me that the most unexpected shouts could be heard from this car.

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1064 Borodziej, Terror i polityka, 84–85.
1065 Testimony of Jerzy Mikołaczyk (Jerzy Warm), Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 6148.
1066 Testimony of Eliszewa Totengreber, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 4577.
1068 Gill, The Journey Back From Hell, 277–78.
Another time, while walking in the street, I heard behind me a low humming of the Hatyka,[Hatikva—"The Hope," a Zionist anthem]. For a moment I wanted to look back but I overcame this desire. The singing individual overtook me. He was a young fellow in a little round hat with a feather. This hat meant the same as a Gestapo uniform as we learned at the end of the war. Unfortunately under this hat was the cheeky, carefree face of one of my university colleagues—a Jew. The degradation of some people had plumbed such depths.1069

Similar tactics were used in other occupied countries. For example, in Belgium, a Jewish informer for the security police by the name of Icck Glogowski toured around in an unmarked police vehicle identifying Jews. He was credited with having been responsible for fifty percent of the Gestapo arrests of Jews on the streets of Brussels.1070

In his memoir, Alexander Bronowski recounts his arrest in Warsaw by the Sicherheitspolizei (security police) after one of their informers, a Jew from his native Lublin, recognized him.1071 Ironically, the Polish “Blue” police, to whom Bronowski was handed over by the Sipo for temporary safekeeping, proved to be his saviours. Staff sergeant Waclaw Nowiński not only rescued Bronowski, but Nowiński and his family also selflessly assisted and sheltered other Jews. Yet Mordecai Paldiel, a historian at the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem, repeatedly covers up the fact that it was a Jew who betrayed Alexander Bronowski, even though Paldiel finds time to describe Bronowski’s fate in various publications.1072

There are numerous recorded cases of Polish policemen—members of the “Blue police” in the Generalgouvernement (so known because the navy blue colour of their uniforms), the railroad police, the criminal police, and the local police forces in the so-called Ostland (Poland’s prewar northeastern territories)—who used their positions to help Jews. Several Blue policemen have been recognized as “Righteous Gentiles” by Yad Vashem. This fact is not surprising when one considers that the “Blue” police were heavily infiltrated by the Polish underground, who provided extensive assistance to Jews.1073

1070 Moore, Survivors, 346.
1071 Alexander Bronowski, They Were Few (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 30–33. See also his account in Bartoszewski and Lewin, Righteous Among Nations, 142–44.
1073 Polish “Blue policemen” recognized as Righteous Gentiles by Yad Vashem include: Franciszek Banaś of Kraków; Leon Bukowiński of Warsaw; Władysław Cieśla of Jarocin near Tarnobrzeg, who enlisted the Home Army to liberate some imprisoned Jews; Piotr Czechorński of Tomaszów Lubelski; Grzegorz Czyżyk of Chełm; Jan Fakler of Warsaw; Paweł Gołąbek of Warsaw, who, with his brother-in-law Jan Bartczak, helped smuggle Jews out of the ghetto and hid Jews in their home; Telesfor Hadrysiak of Warsaw; Jan Kubicki of Międzylesie near Warsaw; Bronisław Marchlewicz, the commander of the Otwock police commissariat, a Home Army member who released Jews caught in round-ups, foiled denunciations, warned persons hiding Jews of dangers, and extended his protection to the convent of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth which sheltered a number of Jewish children; Stefan Matacz, a policeman in Warsaw whose extended family rescued Ewa Wasserman-Feldstejn and her son; Waclaw Nowiński of Warsaw, whose story is set out later; Stanisław Śliżewski of Kraków, who almost perished in the Montelupich prison for aiding Jews; and Władysław Szalek of Kraków. See Israel Gutman and Sara Bender, eds., The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust, volumes 4 and 5: Poland (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), Part 1, 69 (Franciszek Banaś), 71 (Rzeszów), 88 (near Siedlce), 121 (Leon Bukowiński—see Joanna Michlic, “Stories of Rescue Activities in the
(Kraków); Starkopf, *There Is Always Time to Die*, 84–86 (Warsaw); Lewin, *A Cap of Tears*, 38, 143 (Warsaw); Norman Salsitz and Amalie Petranzer Salsitz, *Against All Odds: A Tale of Two Survivors* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1990), 253 (the head of the Polish police in Kolbuszowa gave a warning of the impending liquidation of the ghetto and many Jews escaped); Oscar Pinkus, *The House of Ashes*, Revised Edition (Schenectady, New York: Union College Press, 1990), 89–91, 139, 142 (police in Losice helped some Jews escape from the ghetto and a policeman sheltered a Jewish girl); Salszki, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland*, 295 (two Polish policemen in Kolbuszowa allowed two Jews to flee); Andrzej Wróblewski, *Być Żydem...* Rozmowa z Dagiem Halsvornem o Żydach i antysemityzmie Polaków (Warsaw: Niewstałna Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1992), 126 (Warsaw); Ewa Kurek, Żydzi, Polacy, czy po prostu ludzie... (Lublin: Takt, 1992), 51–52 (Otrock); Gryenberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 345 (a Polish policeman in Warsaw arranged for the release of a Jewish woman and the arrest report), 458 (a Polish policeman warned a rescuer in Warsaw that her house was under surveillance); Nechama Tec, *Defiance: The Bielski Partisans* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 192 (Kolodyszewo); Kott, *Still Live*, 138 (Lasko, the commander of the Blue police in Stróże near Nowy Sącz, who worked closely with the local Home Army headquarters, got many local Jews across into Hungary during the first years of the war); Calel Perechodnik, *Am I a Murderer?: Testimony of a Jewish Ghetto Policeman* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press/HarperCollins, 1996), 118 (Legionowo near Warsaw); Blanca Rosenberg, *To Tell at Last: Survival under False Identity*, 1941–45 (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 118, 172 (Warsaw); testimony of Golda Shwartz, July 25, 1993, Yad Vashem Archives, 03/0922, Internet: <http:www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Lida-District/lyy-shwartz.htm> (Szczytnica); Marian Turski, *Losy żydowskie: Świadectwo żywych*, vol. 1 (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Żydów Kombatantów i Poszkodowanych w II Wojnie Światowej, 1996), 207, 209, 216 (Warsaw); Doba-Necha Cukierman, *A Guardian Angel: Memories of Lublin* (East Bentleigh, Victoria: Ester Csaky, 1997), 105, 148, 153, 170 (a policeman named Lutek Melski stationed in Firlej near Lublin); Wiktoria Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 8 (a policeman named Pitera sheltered the Aleksandrowicz family in Kraków), 12 (Waclaw Nowiński, a Polish policeman, used to visit the Berlowicz family in the Warsaw ghetto and brought food to them), 94 (a policeman named Stokowski in Warsaw would not arrest Maria Leszczyńska Eizen’s mother at the time of her husband’s capture by the Germans; instead he took her to his home and helped her by giving her clothing and money), 125 (a policeman received a report about Saba Aleksander and her daughter, who were passing as Poles in Warsaw, but took no further action after speaking with the mother), 145 (Sabina Wylot was rescued by a policeman who convinced the German military police who apprehended her and other Jewish children smugglers in Warsaw that she was not Jewish); Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Zegota*, 111–12, 160 (Warsaw), and the revised edition *Zegota*, 105, 148 (Warsaw); Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, *The Children Accuse*, 111, 114, 166, 183 (various policemen in Kraków); Benjamin Bender, *Glimpses Through Holocaust and Liberation* (Berkeley, California: North Atlantic Books, 1995), 87–88 (Częstochowa); Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, 147 (Kraków), 151 (Bochnia), 152 (Tarnów), 153 (Tarnopol), 161 (Łabunie near Zamość), 220 (Otrock); Doba-Necha Cukierman, *A Guardian Angel: Memories of Lublin* (East Bentleigh, Victoria, Australia: E. Csaky, 1997), 148; Cyprys, *A Jump For Life*, 10, 155 (a Polish railway guard found a letter from a child addressed to his mother in the Warsaw ghetto which he entrusted to a Polish policeman to deliver to the mother); Donald L. Niewyk, ed., *Fresh Wounds: Early Narratives of Holocaust Survival* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 94, 96 (near Łuków); Shalom Cholakowsky, *The Jews of Bielsk during World War II* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998), 136 (Kurzeniec); Stanislaw Taubenschlag (Stanley Townsend), *To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland: Cracow, Auschwitz, Buchenwald* (Oświęcim: Frap Books, 1998), 33 (the author enlisted the help of two Polish friends, who continued to work in the police force after the German invasion, to attempt to track down a denouncer); Allan Levine, *Fugitives of the Forest* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1998), 105 (Zoludek); Yaffa Eliach, *There Once Was a World: A Nine-Hundred-Year Chronicle of the Shetl of Eishyshok* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1998), 598, 601, 606 (Radun); Isakiewicz, *Words To Outlive Us*; 219 (a policeman in Warsaw freed a teenage boy picked up for smuggling); Gryenberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 248–49 (assistance to Siedlce ghetto residents by Home Army members who infiltrated the criminal police); Paulsson, *Secret City*, 89 (a policeman named Eliaz Pietrusza arranged Irena Morgenstern’s escape from the Warsaw ghetto and found her shelter), 147 and 264 n.31 (several examples in Warsaw); Chodorska, *Główny synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part One, 123 (a Polish policeman warned a Jewish family of the impending deportation in Skala, thus giving them a chance to escape from the ghetto), 141 (Franciszek Banaś, a member of the Home Army who has been awarded by Yad Vashem, was directed to work as a policeman in the Kraków ghetto from which he smuggled out Jews), 183–84 (a policeman in Piotrowice near Lublin warned a Polish family to get rid of their Jewish charges); Michał Czajka, Marta Jancewska, and Apolonius Umińska-Keff, eds., *Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz: Archiwum ZIH IN-B*, zeszyt 301: Nr. 2001–3000/Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue: Jewish Historical Institute Archives, Record Group 301: No. 2001–3000 (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny Instytut Naukowo-Badawczy, 2002), vol. 3, 102 (Jan Kubicki, a policeman in Warsaw, assisted Kira Heinsdorf), 218 (a police officer in Kurzeniecz helped Helena Baranowicz and her child to escape from an execution column); Michał Gryenberg, ed., *Words To Outlive Us: Voices From the Warsaw Ghetto* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2002), 323, (Warsaw), 330–32 (a Warsaw policeman named Rysiek); Andrzej Chwalba, *Dzieje Krakowa*, vol. 5: *Kraków w latach 1939–1945* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2002), 33 (Major Franciszek Erhardt, a police commander in Kraków, was executed by the Germans for collaborating with the Home Army); Henryk Gryenberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories: True
“Get out of here, change your address, and if you survive, remember from time to time that there were decent people here, even among those who worked for the police”;} Sylwia Szymańska, *Ludność żydowska w Otwocku podczas Drugiej wojny światowej* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2002), 86 (Otwock), 90 (Karczew); Jerzy Jacek Bojarski, ed., *Szczięki pamięci: Żydowskie miasto w Lublinie—józys, miejsca, historia* (Lublin and Rishon LeZion: Norbertinum, Ośrodek “Brama Grodzka–Teatr NN.” Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko– Izraelskiej w Lublinie, Stowarzyszenie Sourkouwowieuropejskie “Dziedzictwo i Współczesność,” 2002), 31 (a policeman sheltered a Jewish woman in Lublin); Liokadia [Leokadia] Jeromirska, “Bogushia,” *Yalkut Moreshet: Holocaust Documentation and Research* [Tel Aviv], vol. 1 (Winter 2003): 98 (Białołęk); Norman Davies, *Rising ‘44: The Battle for Warsaw* (London: Macmillan, 2003), 110 (a “Blue” policeman in Warsaw tipped off a family living outside the ghetto that an anonymous informer had given their address to the Gestapo and a raid could be expected); Laskey, *Night Voices*, 69–70 (after her arrest, a Jewish woman was assisted by a Polish policeman, who fed her, counselled her what to say and do at the Gestapo office, and even attempted to vouch for her), 129 (a Jewish woman who escaped from the Łódź ghetto enlisted the help of a Polish policeman, who had joined the police force as a cover for his resistance activities, to escort her in safety to Warsaw); Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets*, 174 (the Polish policeman Zdzisław Flaszecki saved Nuchim Rozenel of Kraśnik from deportation to the Belżec death camp); Martin Dean, “Microcosm: Collaboration and Resistance during the Holocaust in the Mir Rayon of Belarus, 1941–1944,” in David Gaunt, Paul A. Levine, and Laura Palosuo, eds., *Collaboration and Resistance During the Holocaust: Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), 226 n.12 (Krawczenko, the Polish head of police Mir, saved the life of a Jew); Zylberklang, *Z Żółkiewki do Erec Izraela*, 171 (the commander of the Polish police in Żółkiewka deliberately neglected to investigate credible reports that a Jewish child was sheltered by Poles in the village of Różki); Wisniewicz, *And Yet I Still Have Dreams*, 61–62 (a Polish policeman in Warsaw took in a young Jewish child for payment); Jakub Gutenbaum and Agnieszka Łatała, *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak*, vol. 2 (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 10 (a policeman in Warsaw refused to arrest a Jewish child delivered to him by blackmailers), 109 (Polish policemen released a Jewish child brought to a Warsaw police station by blackmailers), 226 (a Polish policeman brought Joanna Sobolewska-Pyz, a child born in 1939, out of the Warsaw ghetto, hiding her under his jacket, and left her with her rescuer), 290 (a Pole by the name of Czapla, who served in the German police in Katowice, sheltered a Jewish rescued a Jewish girl), 348–49 (a policeman at the Gestapo headquarters in Warsaw vouched for a Jewish child he had never seen before and secured her release); Avraham Aviel, *A Village Named Dowgalishok: The Massacre at Radun and Eishishok* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006), 25–26, 127, 183–84, 262–63 (Raduń); Martin Ira Glassner and Robert Krell, eds., *And Life Is Changed Forever: Holocaust Childhoods Remembered* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 167–70, (a Polish policeman in Łosice sheltered a Jewish girl; other policemen took bribes to help Jews escape from the town during a German raid); Sebastian Piątkowski, *Dni życia, dni śmierci: Ludność żydowska w Radomiu w latach 1918–1950* (Warsaw: Nazcelnia Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych, 2006), 246 (Jews came forward after the war in defence of Franciszek Troll, the commander of the First Commissariat of the Polish police in Radom, for helping Jews in the ghetto and rescuing the large Den family during its liquidation); Tomasz Kawski, *Kujawsko-dobrzyńscy Żydzi w latach 1918–1950* (Toruń: Adam Marszałek, 2006), 263 (Polish policemen saved the life of Samek Izrael after his escape from a German camp); Marian Skwara, *Pruszkowscy Żydzi: Sześć dekad zamkniętych zagładą* (Pruszków: Powiatowa i Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna im. Henryka Sienkiewicza w Pruszkowie, 2007), 218 (the policeman Józef Malinowski rescued several Jews with false identity documents passing as Poles; when he was charged with collaboration after the war, one of those he rescued testified on his behalf); Taitz, *Holocaust Survivors*, vol. 2, 509 (a Polish policeman sheltered three Jewish women, among them the sisters Hannah Rydelska Sukniennik and Genia Rydelska Saionz, who escaped from a labour camp in Upper Silesia); Halina Grubowska, *Haneczko, musisz przeżyć* Montreal: Polish–Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, 2007), 23 (a Polish policeman in Warsaw identified a carriage carrying Jews, stopped by a German patrol, as Poles); Barbara Engell King, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 2007), 402 (policemen in Jeziorna near Warsaw and Wolomin); Władysław Świacki, *Pamiątek przechowywany w beczce* (Grajewo: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół 9 PSK, 2007) (Grajewo); Elżbieta Rapczy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945* (Rzeszów: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), 150 (a policeman in Przemysł helped obtain a false identity card), 153 (a policeman commander named Kolarczyk helped a Jewish family to escape from detention in Szerzyny near Jasło), 260–61 (a policeman named Władysław Cieśla from Jarocin near Nisko); Krzysztof Czubaszk, *Żydzi z Łukowa i okolicy* (Warsaw: Dammar, 2008), 192, 203, 251, 254 (several policemen in and near Łuków allowed Jews to escape); Bill Tammeus and Jacques Cukierkorn, *They Were Just People: Stories of Rescue in Poland During the Holocaust* (Columbia, Missouri and London: University of Missouri Press, 2009), 29–30 (a Polish policeman and police chief in the village of Kalebinka near Strzyżów allowed a Jewish teenager to leave the police station after her arrest on suspicion of being Jewish), 34–39, and Interview with Sheila Peretz Elons, April 30, 1990, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (a Polish policeman named Cześćuk assisted the family of Isac Peretz in the ghetto in Chełm, secured the release from jail of Bella Peretz, who was arrested for engaging in illegal trade, and then sheltered Bella Peretz and her young daughter Sarah for two years in his home on the outskirts of the town); Moshe Beirach, *Aus dem Ghetto in die Wälder: Bericht eines jüdischen Partisanen 1939–1945* (Frankfurt am Main: 282
Fischer Taschenbuch, 2009), 85 (a Polish policeman in Lida saved the author and his wife when they were about to be executed after an SS selection); Nahum Bogner, *At the Mercy of Strangers*, 265 (a police office in or near Lublin took in a Jewish girl who wandered in the area as a nanny for his little son); Sebastian Piątkowski, "Za pomocą Żydom osadzeni w więzieniu radomskim," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 3 (2009): 43 (Bolesław Waśniński, a policeman from Grabów, was imprisoned for helping a Jewish woman); Mateusz Wyrwich, "Obcy we własnym mieście," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 3 (2009): 79 (Jan Karpiński was released by the Blue police in Warsaw after he was turned in); Marcin Urynowicz, "Pamięć i zapomnienie," *Tygodnik Powszechny* (Kraków), August 9, 2009 (a Polish policeman named Masalski, Tarsczuk and others smuggled a Jewish family of three out of the ghetto in Wołomin); Namysło, "Kto w takich czasach Żydów przechowuje?...", 19 (Leon Kniknicki, a police commander from Ciepielów, sold a rifle to a Jew, who betrayed him when apprehended by the Germans), 47 (a Polish policeman from Brańsk warned a rescuer that the German gendarmes suspected him of assisting Jews); Sebastian Piątkowski, *Więzienie niemieckie w Radomiu 1939–1945* (Lublin: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2009), 74 (Bolesław Waśniński, a policeman from Grabów nad Wisłą, was imprisoned for helping a Jewish woman); Jerzy Dlatkowski and Janusz Roszkowski, eds., *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945: Opór i walka z faszyzmem w latach 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny i Stowarzyszenie Żydów Kombatantów i Poszkodowanych w II Wojnie Światowej, 2010), vol. II, 156 (Bernard Zwołinski and Janina Mazur, policemen in Kraków); Leociak, *Ratowanie*, 64 (Warsaw); Cesha Glazer, *Cesha’s Story* (Sydney: Sydney Jewish Museum, 2011), 103, 133, 154 (Leon Rybacki, a policeman in Warsaw helped the Gonczanski family and Cesha Glazer); Martin Dean, ed., *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, in association with the United States Memorial Museum, 2012), vol. II, Part A, 278 (Polish policemen in Pionki who guarded the ghetto tried to prevent the way other Jews were seen escaping), 308 (the Polish police chief in Skaryszew, Rocznicki (?), tried to help the Jews in the ghetto and assisted the Jewish Council), 381 (the chief of the Blue police, Weclaw (?), warned a Jewish leader in the Jeziorna ghetto of a deportation order), 392 (Blue police commander Smarzewski in Laskarzew helped the local Jews), 395 (Polish policemen warn of the impending deportation), 403 (assistance from two Polish policemen in Łowicz), 417 (Blue policeman Captain Bronisław Marchlewicz assisted Jews in Otwock), 470 (Polish policeman Władysław Rybak was executed in Zelechów for helping Jews), 881 (helpfulness of Polish policemen in Drohiczyn nad Bugiem), 933–34 (some policemen in Piaski abetted the escape of several Jews and in one instance even sheltered Jews, in anticipation of the ghetto’s liquidation); vol. II, Part B, 1310 (a policeman named Janish in Żołudek helped rescue a Jewish woman); Busgang, *Działoszyce Memorial Book*, 235–36 (policeman Kamerdyński helped Jews hide in a bunker in Działoszyce); Katz, *Gone to Pitchipo*, 191 (the Warsaw policeman Bolesław Piątkowski assisted the author and his sister); Jan Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013), 220 (a policeman in Dąbrowa Tarnowska allowed Jews to escape during the liquidation of the ghetto); Namysło and Berendt, *Rejestr faktów reprezji na obywatełach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej*, 235 (Jan Kozłowski, a policeman, was arrested in Skiernowice for helping Jews and imprisoned in several concentration camps, perishing during the evacuation of a camp in the spring of 1945), 405 (Józef Głowniak, a policeman in Łęczna); Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 131 (Andrzej Adamczyk), 178 (Czapla), 193 (Fabisz), 259 (Konstancin-Jeioarna), 260 (Warsaw), 265 (Korotyński), 293 (Andrzej Ludwikowski), 298 (Władysław Macedoński), 369–71 (various places), 440 (Władysław Świątek), 448 (Franciszek Troll), 466 (Wojtulewicz), 486 (Stanisław Zymkowski); Kalisz and Rączy, *Dzieje społeczności żydowskiej powiatu gorlickiego podczas okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1945*, 88 (Bednarz, the police commander in Moszczenica near Gorlice), 95, 97 (Jan Fereński, the criminal police commander in Gorlice, intervened with a German commander for the release of two Jews, warned the Jews of an impending Aktion, and vouched for the non-Aryan identity a Jewish woman), 98–101 (several Polish policemen in Bobowa near Gorlice, among them Józef Laska, Jan Kandela, and Jan Hebda, assisted Jews, among them Hugo Steinhaus); Testimony of Szlama Jakubowicz, *Jewish Historical Institute* (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 2427 (Blue policemen allowed two Jewish boys to escape from the Warsaw ghetto in July 1941); Testimony of Eda Lichtman, Yad Vashem Archives, file 03/1291, as cited in Wojciech Łukaszun, "Ratunek czy niebezpieczeństwo? Obszary leśne w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie jako miejsce schronienia ludności żydowskiej," in Waldemar Grabowski, ed., *Okupowana Europa: Podobieństwa i różnice* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2014), 126–27, and Eda Lichtman, "From Mielec to Sobibór," Internet: <http://www.thewaylongview.com/WATH/testimonies/lichtman.htm> (a policeman in Żłobek (?); a warning to a police officer took pity on Nina Fogel after she was arrested by the Gestapo in Warsaw and released her with a warning to move elsewhere); Account of Hilda, Virtual Shtetl, Internet: <http://www.sztetl.org.pl/en/article/rymanow/16/accounts-memories/9455,hilda/> (Polish police commander in Rymanów); Maria Sankowska, *The Righteous Database*, Yad Vashem, Internet: <http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemid=5601479> (a Polish police officer took pity on Nina Fogel after she was arrested by the Gestapo in Warsaw and released her with a warning to move elsewhere); Janina Bereska, *The Righteous Database*, Yad Vashem, Internet: <http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemid=8947720> (a Polish policeman named Dziwna (?); who belonged to the resistance movement provided temporary shelter to Berek Ofman after his escape from the ghetto in Radomsko and directed other Jews to a permanent shelter); Testimony of Maria Zadziewicz, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 2225 (Czarski, the police chief of the Żółoborz district of Warsaw and his brother, who was in charge of the identity section); Testimony of Maria Plech, *Jewish Historical
Yitzhak Zuckerman, a member of the Jewish Fighting Organization, reported that the ghetto fighters in Warsaw received accurate intelligence information from the “Blue” police, via the Polish underground, through nightly telephone calls. See Zuckerman, A Surplus of Memory, 370. Another member describes how a Polish policeman named Adamczyk smuggled Jews out of the ghetto (he helped rescue a group of about twenty Jews hidden in the debris of the Warsaw ghetto in August or September 1943), acted as a courier for the Jewish underground, and delivered weapons to the ghetto in Częstochowa. See Rotem, Memoirs of a Warsaw Ghetto Fighter, 63, 68, 71–72. Hena Kuczer, who went by the assumed name of Krystyna Budnicka, describes how she and other members of her family hiding in a bunker in the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto were rescued in September 1939 by some Poles who included “Blue” policemen. See the testimony of Krystyna Budnicka, August 2003, posted online at: <http://www.centropa.org>. Adolf Berman, another survivor of the Warsaw ghetto, was assisted by a Pole he knew from before the war who had become a policeman in Warsaw. See Michal Grynberg, ed., Words To Outlive Us: Voices from the Warsaw Ghetto (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2002), 329–33. A member of the Jewish underground described how a blue policeman worked with the underground group by conveying Jewish children to the Boduen orphanage in Warsaw, where they were accepted as “Aryan” foundlings. See Adina Blady-Szwajger, I więcej nie pamiętam, 2nd expanded edition (Warsaw: Volumen, 1994), 109; translated as I Remember Nothing More: The Warsaw Children’s Hospital and the Jewish Resistance (London: Collins-Havrill, 1990). A Jew from Kraków employed a Polish policeman by the name of Mazurkiewicz to transport his fiancée from a ghetto outside the city to the one in Kraków, which he described as a very risky and complicated venture. See Marcus David Leuchter, “Reflections on the Holocaust,” The Sarmatian Review (Houston, Texas), vol. 20, no. 3 (September 2000). A Jewish girl from Kraków recalled: “I was very familiar with the Polish policeman and his uniform. I had never had reason to be afraid of him. Slipping in and out of the Cracow Ghetto was quite simple; one did not even have to have an official pass—I never did have one. One just had to know the individual policemen. Most of them were decent, kindly men. I already knew them, at least by sight, and if there happened to be a hard-liner on duty—and there were one or two amongst them—at the nearest, most convenient gate, I only had to wait for him to be relieved. His successor was bound to be reasonable and approachable, or make for a more distant gate. I slipped in and out of the Ghetto during its entire two-year existence—except of course during SS conducted aktions when it was hermetically sealed—almost at will.” See Janina Fischler-Martinho, Have You Seen My Little Sister? (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1998), 56. An American Methodist missionary who lived in occupied Warsaw wrote that, in September 1941, “driven by hunger, small Jewish children went begging daily outside the ghetto for anything they could get. One day I was passing the ruins of Graniczna Street, when ahead of me appeared a group of Jewish children, each carrying a small sack of garnered boot. I watched them sneak towards a gap in the incomplete ghetto wall. Before it stood a Polish policeman; behind it, on the inside, a Jewish one. Simultaneously, the two walked away, and in a flash most of the children had disappeared through the gap into the ghetto. The policemen returned. The few little ones who were still outside receded waiting for the next opportunity. A man who had stopped beside me said, ‘This goes on night and day. The policemen do what they can.’” See Hania and Gaither Warfield, Call Us to Witness: A Polish Chronicle (New York and Chicago: Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, 1945), 321. Indeed, on August 25, 1941, the Schupo commander for the Warsaw District, Colonel Alfred Jarke, rebuked the Polish police for remaining “passive and inactive” when the German police resorted to shooting at Jews to maintain order. Jarke threatened the Polish police with punishment “with all the means” at his disposal if they did not initiate action before the German police did. See Engelking and Leociak, Ghetto warszawskie, First edition, 208–209; Paulsson, Secret City, 146. In Warsaw, as well as other localities such as Opole Lubelskie, Komarówka near Radzyń, and Działoszyce, the “Blue” police refused to take part in executions of Jews; some of them were even executed by the Germans because of their insubordination. See Zbigniew Zaniewicz, Pięć groźnych lat (1939–1941) (London: Polska Fundacja Kulturalna, 1982), 110; “Żydzi zwracali się ku kościołowi,” Opoka (London), no. 11 (July 1975): 83 (Opole Lubelskie); Huberband, Kiddush Hashem, 153–54 (the Germans proved unable to get enough volunteers tor form a firing squad from even several Warsaw precincts, so they had to conscript people to do the job); Christopher Browning, Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992), 157 (Komarówka near Radzyń); Grynberg, Words To Outlive Us, 320 (Warsaw); Wolgelenter, The Unfinished Diary, 323 (Działoszyce). Mary Berg records in her diary entry of June 3, 1942, that the Polish police were ordered to shoot 110 Jews in the prison on Gęsia Street in Warsaw, but refused. They were forced to watch the execution. “One of the eyewitnesses told me that several Polish policemen wept,” she noted, and “some of them averted their eyes during the execution.” See Berg, Warsaw Ghetto, 154. During the revolt in the Warsaw ghetto in April 1943, scores of Polish police failed to report for duty to guard the ghetto wall. See Dariusz Libionka, “ZWZ-AK i Delegatura Rządu RP wobec eksterminacji Żydów polskich,” in Zbikowski, Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945, 90–91. In the Tarnów region, “Blue” policemen warned Poles who were suspected of sheltering Jews and allowed Jews to escape. See Wroński and Zwolakowa, Polacy
Provided temporary shelter), 61 (Czarna), 205 (Jodłowa), 282–83 (Cwików), vol. 2, 369 (Czermna). Jewish sources confirm that Blue policemen in Jodłowa warned the Jewish community in August 1942 that the Germans planned to shoot the Jews the following day, and, consequently, more than 100 Jews escapes that night and close to 30 survived the war. See Dean, Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettoes, 1933–1945, vol. II, Part A, 519. In Brańsk, “On instructions from the Home Army, Józef Falkowski (in the underground he used the name Szymborski) and Jan Sukowski joined the Brański Schutzpolizei. They actually saved the lives of many people. In my possession are testimonies of persons whom they helped, among them Jews.” See Romanuik, “Brańsk and Its Environs in the Years 1939–1953: Reminiscences of Events,” in The Story of Two Shtetls, Part One, 83. A Pole by the name of Grabowski, who had been instructed by the Home Army to join the German police, assisted in the escape of Rachela Finkelstojn from the ghetto in Radziłów. See Andrzej Kaczyński, “Nie zabijaj,” Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), July 10, 2000. In Gorlice, the fact that some of the Blue police were members of the Home Army unit greatly facilitated the clandestine provision of food to the ghetto. See Boczoń, Żydzi gorliccy, 144, 147. One Jewish survivor counts Major Mieczysław Tarwid, chief of the “Blue” police in the northern part of Warsaw where the ghetto was located, as his and his wife’s principle benefactors. See Benjamin Mandelkern, with Mark CZarnecki, Escape from the Nazis (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1988), xi, 91ff. (Tarwid had ties to the Polish underground—see Hempel, Pogrobowcy kłęski, 151.) Emanuel Ringelblum describes how large numbers of Jews were successfully smuggled out of the Warsaw ghetto via the sewers that led to Krasinski Square; their guide was assisted by some Polish policemen in carrying out this task. See Emanuel Ringelblum, Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University, 1992), 99. Danuta (Dana) Wajnman, later Dena Axelrod, was rescued by Stanisław Kornacki, a policeman at the police station in Warsaw to which she had been delivered as an abandoned child; he placed her in an orphanage where he continued to visit her and picked her up on days when there were police inspections. See Peter Tarjan, ed., Children Who Survived the Final Solution (New York: iUniverse, 2004), 196–204. Franciszek Górski, chief of police in Hrubieszów, was eventually imprisoned and killed in the Gusen concentration camp for sheltering Jews and helping the Polish underground. See Michael Korbenblit and Kathleen Janger, Until We Meet Again: A True Story of Love and War, Separation and Reunion (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1983), 20ff., 293. A Jew who survived the war in the village of Jabłoń near Parczew said: “The family with whom I lived knew everything about me—in fact, two families knew. After the war it came out that more families knew, and also the chief of the navy-blue police, a Pole, a very decent person. Juliusz Kleiner was hiding in the neighbourhood; in the next village there was a Jewess; in that area many were hiding.” See “Marian Małowist on History and Historians,” in Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, vol. 13 (2000), 328. In Kraśnik, the Polish policeman Zdzisław Flaszecki helped saved Nachim Rozental from deportation to the Będzec death camp in April 1942. See Chodakiewicz, Żydzi i Polacy 1918–1955, 200. That author points out that in the early years of the war, the Polish police arrested criminals who preyed on Jews as well as on Poles; in some cases the Polish criminals were even killed; four specific examples are cited at pp. 196–97. Wawrzyniec Kowalczyk, the commander of the police station in Radezczyna near Zamość and local officials obtained false identity documents for Rubin Wiestuch and dispatched him as a forced labourer to Germany where he survived passing as a Christian. See Stanisław Rozwar, Who Survived the Final Solution (New York: iUniverse, 2004), 196. The Polish police commander in Urszulin, named Grajek, brought Miriam Zonsztajn, a 5-year-old Jewish girl, to Marianna Kozłowska, who sheltered her until liberation; he also obtained a false identity card for the child. See Ewa Kurek, Poza granicą solidarności: Stosunki polsko-żydowskie 1939–1945 (Kielce: Wyższa Szkoła Umiejętności, 2006), 221–22, translated as Polish-Jewish Relations 1939–1945: Beyond the Limits of Solidarity (New York: iUniverse, 2012); Anna Dąbrowska, ed., Światła w ciemności: Sprawiedliwi Wśród Narodów Świata. Relacje (Lublin: Ośrodek “Brama Grodzka–Teatr NN,” 2008), 246; Kozłowska Family, The Righteous Database, Yad Vashem, Internet: <http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemID=5349150>. (That book, at pp. 335–38, also describes the rescue activities of Piotr Czechoski, a policeman from Tomaszów Lubelski, noted above.) Yakov Segalchick states that the Polish mayor of Dolhinów “treated the Jewish people decently” and “the head of police, Anton Krosovsky, was a decent Christian man. For a little bit of alcohol you could gain his favor and he would do anything for you.” See Yakov Segalchick, Eternal Testament: Memoirs of a Partisan, Internet: <www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Myadel/ternal_testament.htm>. In a postwar trial, numerous Jews came forward to testify on behalf of Jan Chwiałkowski, a criminal policeman in Łódź; Chwiałkowski frequently provided help to the Jews in the ghetto, including food, medicine and information without recompense. See Źbikowski, Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945, 717. Several examples of Polish policemen releasing Jewish children are found in Barbara Engelking, Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień…: Losy Żydów szukających ratunku na wsi polskiej 1942–1945 (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum nad Zagładą Żydów, 2011), 197–98 (in two cases Polish policemen instructed the
children how to make the sign of the cross). After an examination disclosed that 10-year-old Estera Borensztajn was Jewish, policemen near Łuków taught her how to make the sign of the cross and some Catholic greetings and sent her on her way. See the testimony of Estera Borensztajn, dated October 12, 1947, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 3950. Fania Szarin (Mina Charin), from Bialystok, was sent to stay with relatives in the Warsaw ghetto; she was able to enter the ghetto with the assistance of a Polish policeman that she was referred to. See the testimony of Fania Szarin, dated August 6, 1948, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 3950. Szaje Altman, a teacher, provides three examples of Polish policemen in the Tarnów area who came to his assistance and the assistance of his family members. When Altman was caught by the Germans illegally teaching Jewish children in the ghetto in Mielec, a Polish policeman intervened to sweep the matter under the rug. When Altman’s mother-in-law and her daughters were arrested by the German police and handed over to the Polish police for an investigation, the local police commander asked them to find witnesses to attest to their being Catholics. They turned to a Polish friend, who was a policeman in Dębica, and he agreed to vouch for them and thus secured their release. See Andrzej Kremeta, Zagłada Żydów mieleckich, Second revised edition (Mielec: Muzeum Regionalne w Miecu, 2013), 177, 184. Riwka Shenker (later Regina Goldfinger) was offered help by a Polish policeman by the name of Stanisław in the Tarnów area; after the war, she learned he had sheltered another Jewish woman. See Grabowski, Hunt for the Jews, 107. A policeman allowed Jews to escape during the liquidation of the ghetto in Dąbrowa Tarnowska. See Grabowski, Hunt for the Jews, 38. Many additional examples of assistance by members of the Polish police are mentioned in Hempel, Pogrobowcy klęski, 262-69, including Ryszard Stółkiewicz, a police lieutenant in Warsaw, who was executed by the Germans after Jews were found in his apartment. Hempel also notes that the German authorities berated the Polish police for their passivity and that professional blackmailers were more likely to work with the Germans than with the Polish police. Leokadia Schmidt and her husband were caught smuggling sugar outside Warsaw in January 1945 by Gestapo agents and detained in a German outpost. They were then delivered to Polish military police with an order to execute them, however, the police released the Schmidts. See Ludwika Schmidt, Cudem przeżyliśmy czas zagłady (Kraków and Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1983). Polish jail guards in Warsaw’s Mokotów prison for criminals are also fondly remembered by a Jewish inmate, as is the medical staff: “The prison was managed by a Polish administration, and overseen by three Germans. … The Polish guards, including the commanders and even the officers, usually treated the prisoners well. Throughout my stay in the prison, I never encountered a single case of cruel treatment extended specifically toward Jews. … Usually, the guards joined forces with the prisoners in various scams, but in many cases they also helped poor prisoners without any hopes of profit, and saved them from transports. … I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the beneficial activities of the prison doctors: Dr. Waczyński, Dr. Mrozek, and the paramedic Szczypiński. They did a great deal on behalf of many prisoners … They did this very often without seeking any profit, especially in the case of the political prisoners—often at personal risk. Thus, for example, they helped with the escape of two Jewish officers by transferring them, as suspected typhus patients, to the hospital outside the prison, from which they of course escaped. The two men would have been sentenced to death—a mandatory sentence for failure to register as officers.” See Cymlich and Strawczynski, Escaping Hell in Treblinka, 17–18, 22. Chai (Estera) Perelman of Parczew attested to the repeated help she and her family received from the policeman Jan Gano. See Mariusz Bechta, Pogrom czy odwet?: Akcja zbrojna Zrzeszenia “Wolność i Niezawisłość” w Parczewie 5 lutego 1946 r. (Poznań: Zysk, 1997). Regina L.’s brother’s friend, who served in the Police police, helped Regina’s mother and sister-in-law to go into hiding after they escaped from the Kraków ghetto. See Regina L. Holocaust Testimony (HVT-1786), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library. Contrary to the claims made by some survivors, that “the people were more afraid of the blue [police] than of the Germans … in general the men in navy-blue were without mercy”—see Miriam Peleg-Mariańska and Mordecai Peleg, Witnesses: Life in Occupied Kraków (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 149, the Polish “Blue” police were notorious for taking bribes and looking the other way, especially in smuggling operations of all nature, and had a far better reputation than the Jewish police. Based on his experience in Warsaw, Edward Reicher strongly disputes the Peleg’s claim, as do many other testimonies: “For a price, you could get anything from the Polish police; it was another bargain. Many additional examples of assistance by members of the Polish police are mentioned in Hempel, Pogrobowcy klęski, 262-69, including Ryszard Stółkiewicz, a police lieutenant in Warsaw, who was executed by the Germans after Jews were found in his apartment. 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Contrary to the claims made by some survivors, that “the people were more afraid of the blue [police] than of the Germans … in general the men in navy-blue were without mercy”—see Miriam Peleg-Mariańska and Mordecai Peleg, Witnesses: Life in Occupied Kraków (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 149, the Polish “Blue” police were notorious for taking bribes and looking the other way, especially in smuggling operations of all nature, and had a far better reputation than the Jewish police. Based on his experience in Warsaw, Edward Reicher strongly disputes the Peleg’s claim, as do many other testimonies: “For a price, you could get anything from the Polish police; it was another story once the victim was handed over to the Germans.” Reicher’s wife was released by the Polish police without a bribe, even though her identity card was confirmed as forged. See Reicher, Country of Ash, 203. Janina Fischler, who smuggled goods into the Kraków ghetto, recalled: “So we lived in the ghetto as a family from December 1941 until June 1942. It was normally surrounded by Polish policemen. There were four pedestrian gates and four large traffic gates. By each traffic gate there was a small pedestrian gate with a Polish policeman on duty. I knew almost every one. They were, on the whole, decent chaps. They even gave credit. One always grease their palms, of course, but one didn’t always have cash, so they gave credit. Except for one or two hard-liners, they were decent, and a small girl like me, so Aryan in appearance, could slip in and out. But during the Aktion the ghetto was surrounded by the SS and the whole ghetto was cordoned off. At the pedestrian gates the Polish policeman would still stand there, but now with two soldiers next to him. During an Aktion, nobody, not a pin, was able to get out. At night carts of food came into the ghetto and the Polish policeman made absolute fortunes, but they were decent and they played ball. People who had means lived very well ... During an Aktion, prices rocketed and it was very hard to buy food. The restaurants and cafés [in the ghetto] stopped functioning.” See Kerry Bluglass, ed., Hidden from the Holocaust: Stories of Resilient Children Who Survived and Thrived (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 2003), 86. When a woman in Warsaw went to
the police that report to Jews were living in their tenement house, “She was not prepared for the answer she received: ‘So what? They’re people, too. Go report them to the Gestapo on Szucha Boulevard.’” See Gross, Who Are You, Mr Grymek?, 219. Even among Jews themselves, as Emanuel Ringelblum concedes, the reputation of the “Blue” police was considerably better than that of the Jewish police, who were generally ruthless in obeying German orders. See Lewin, A Cup of Tears, 19; Hempel, Pogrobowcy klęski, 172–74, 264; Manuel Ferreras-Tascón, “Policia Granatowa,” Encyclopedia “Białych Plam” (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2004), vol. 14, 192–95. For a critical view of the activities of the “Blue” police in the Warsaw ghetto see Levin, Walls Around, 89. For additional examples of Polish police being bought off, giving warnings to Jews of impending danger, releasing Jews from detention and allowing them to escape, see (among many other sources): Bartoszewski and Lewin, Righteous Among Nations, 229 (Warsaw); Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej. 468–69, 612, 615, 750 (Warsaw); Bronowski, They Were Few, 34 (Warsaw); Joseph Goldstein, “Extracts from a Ghetto Diary,” and David Schnipper, “My Town, Plontch” in The Staszów Book, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/staszow/staszow.html>, translated from Elhanan Erlrich, ed., Sefer Staszow (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Staszów in Israel and in the Diaspora, 1962), xxv ff. (Staszów), 633 ff (Polaniec); Zylberberg, A Warsaw Diary, 1939–1945, 89–90, 152, 157 (Warsaw); Hersh Gotthelf, “A Few Words,” in Shtein, ed., Memorial Book of Sochaczew, 478ff. (Warsaw); Horowitz, Of Human Agony, 139; H. Rabin, ed., Lichensk: Sefer zikaron le-kedoshei Lichensk she-nispu be-shoot ha-natsim (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Lezajsk in Israel, 1970), 46ff., translated as Memorial Book of the Martyrs of Lezajsk Who Perished in the Holocaust, Internet: <www2.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Lazajsk/Lezajsk.html> (Tarnogród); Shtokfish, Sefer Drohiczyn, 29ff. (English section) (a policeman from Drohiczyn); Nachum Boneh, ed., Pinkse sefer edut ve-zikaron le-kehilat Pink-Pinstk, 3 volumes (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Pinsk in Poland, 1966–1977), translated as History of the Jews of Pinsk, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/Pinsk/Pinsk.html>, Part One, Chapter 10 (a Polish policeman who by chance found a Jewish woman hiding in the home of a Pole in Pińsk advised her to move to a village); Paul Trepan, Among Men and Beasts (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1978), 96–98; Meed, On Both Sides of the Wall, 96, 100, 109, 115, 124, 130–32, 168–70 (Warsaw); Sarah Blattberg-Cooper, “My Memories from the Bloodiest Era of My People's History,” in Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Mielec: Sipur hashmadat ha-kehilah ha-yehudit (New York: Mielec Yizkor Book Committee, 1979), translated as Remembering Mielec: The Destruction of the Jewish Community, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/mielec/Mielec.html> (Polanica); Trunk, Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution, 183 (Warsaw); Breitowicz, Through Hell To Life, 54, 56 (Rzeszów); Tenenbaum, Zloczow Memoir, 238 (Jelechowice near Złoczów); Chaika Grossman, The Underground Army: Fighters of the Bialystok Ghetto (New York: Holocaust Library, 1987), 105; Kagan, Scyzlowiec Memorial Book, 234 (Warsaw), 328 (near Radom); Najberg, Ostanie powstańcy getta, 161 (Warsaw); Grynbet, Księga sprawiedliwych, 278, 326, 410 (all in Warsaw); Reiss, Z deszczu pod rynęc..., 140–41 (policeman in Skiermiewicze took a bribe to release a Jewish woman); Alina Margolis-Edelman, Ala z elementarza (London: Aneks, 1994), 110–11 (Warsaw); Grupińska, Po kole, 155 (Warsaw); Mark Verstading, I Rest My Case (Melbourne: Saga Press, 1995), 166–67 (Warsaw); Rosenberg, To Tell at Last, 122 (Warsaw); Vladimir Levin and David Melser, Chernaia kniga z krasnymi stranitsami: Tragediia i geroizm evreev Belorussii (Baltimore: Vestnik Information Agency, 1996), 315 (Lida); George Sten, Memoirs of a Survivor (Bondi Junction, New South Wales: n.p., 1996), 15 (Warsaw); Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, The Children Accuse, 113 (Kraków); Szereszewska, Memoirs from Occupied Warsaw, 1940–1945, 226, 259–60, 267–68 (Warsaw); Adam Neuman-Nowicki, Struggle for Life During the Nazi Occupation of Poland (Lewiston, New York; Queenston, Ontario, Canada: Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 117 (Warsaw), 118 (Busko-Zdrój); Alina Margolis-Edelman, Tego, co mówili, nie powtórzę... (Wrocław, 1999), 113–14 (Warsaw); Klajman, Out of the Ghetto, 20 (Warsaw); John Munro, Białystok to Birkenau: The Holocaust Journey of Michel Mielniki (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press and Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, 2000), 122 (Przuzana); Sabina Rachel Kalowska, Uciekać, aby żyć (Lublin: Norbertinum, 2000), 88–92 (Jdrzęzjów); Ungar and Chanoof, Destined to Live, 217 (railroad police); Isakiewicz, Harmonica, 220 (Warsaw), 250 (Kraków); Marcel Reich-Ranicki, The Author of Himself: The Life of Marcel Reich-Ranicki (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), 193 (Warsaw—while Polish police officers kept their word, the author notes at p. 192 that a Jewish police officer cheated him); Siekierski, Żyli w roczec nas..., 108 (“Blue” policemen in Warsaw took bribes to allow Jews to leave the ghetto and avoid apprehension by the Gestapo), as confirmed in Jerzy Krupinski, My Four Lives (St. Kilda, Victoria: Vista, 2001); Joseph Rosenblum, My Name is Józef Nowak: The Life and Times of Joseph Rosenberg (Toronto: Lestories, 2001), 36–37 (Warsaw); Grynbet, Words To Outlive Us, 323 (Warsaw); David Gilbert, as told to Tim Shortridge and Michael D. Frounfelter, No Place to Run: A True Story (London and Portland, Oregon: Valiente, 2002), 156 (police in Warsaw allowed a Jewish woman to move after paying a bribe); Kruk, The Last Days of the Jewish Community in Lithuania, 289 (Woronów); Grynbet, Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories, 21 (Jureczak, a Polish Kripo agent in Drohobycz), 169 (Warsaw); Peter Duffy, The Bielski Brothers: The True Story of Three Men Who Defied the Nazis, Saved 1,200 Jews, and Built a Village in the Forest (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 196 (Lida); account of Perla Liebeskind and Rajzla Działowska in Grynbet and Kotowska, Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945, 219 (Piotrków Trybunalski); Laskey, Night Voices, 59, 68 (Warsaw); Mielchior, Zagłada a tożsamość, 170 (in two cases policemen relented and did not take in Jews whom they had apprehended when confronted by the bluntness or passivity of the victims); Gutman and Bender, Righteous Among the Nations, vol. 4: Poland, Part 1, 173 (a Blue policeman in Warsaw released a Jew after accepting a bribe); Entry for Irena Schultz, Polish Righteous: Those Who Risked
other hand, an act of kindness by a Jewish policeman was rare and almost always came with a hefty price, as the following witness from Lublin testifies:

I went to a Jewish policeman and asked him to accompany me along the streets forbidden to Jews, up to the factory [where a Polish friend was employed]. He wanted a thousand zlotys [złotys] for his services. I asked another policeman; he asked eight hundred zlotys. It was permissible to walk along those streets when escorted by a policeman, but the sidewalks were forbidden. A third policeman asked six hundred …

Arriving at the factory, I rang the bell at the gate. …

The guard went to the telephone. I gave the policeman one hundred zlotys. (I borrowed the money from my sister—one hundred and no more! …) I handed the policeman the hundred zlotys, promising to pay the rest if and when we survived the war. The policeman grabbed my arm and began pulling me back to town, but Pawlowsky [Pawlowski, the friend] wrested me from his grip, saying:
Andrzej Jezierski recalls how he was stopped in Warsaw in the summer of 1943 by a “Blue” policeman, together with his uncle Jan Kreczmar, an actor, and his wife Justyna Kreczmar, after being fingered by a Jewish condidant. The policeman proved to be less rigorous than his informant because he let them go when he discovered that the men were not circumcised. A Jew by the name of Kalinowski, who was sheltered first by the Humięcki family and later the Tembler family in Warsaw, ventured outside his hiding place and was spotted by a Jewish policeman working with the Gestapo who demanded a bribe. Kalinowski ran back to the apartment where he was staying with his child. The Gestapo followed him there, seized his child and threw it out the fourth storey window and shot Kalinowski on the spot. They arrested the Tembler family, consisting of parents and two sons, and deported them to Auschwitz. Only Mrs. Tembler and her son Jan survived. A Jewish woman known as Irka, whose lover was a German policeman, was amassing large sums of money and valuables from turning in Jews. The Communist underground tried without success to eliminate her.

Herman Fleiszer, who passed as a Christian in Warsaw using the name Henryk Repa, was betrayed on the street by a Jewish acquaintance from his student days in Lwów, who apparently was promised the freedom of his wife in exchange for his collaboration with the German police. Maciek Rosenblatt, a young Jewish lawyer who fled from his native Drohobycz after gouging ghetto residents with the help of his uncle Dr. Rosenblatt, head of the Jewish Council, took up residence in Warsaw under an assumed identity only to be tracked down by a Gestapo agent from his home town operating in Warsaw. (This latter source also details other examples of Jewish collaborators in Drohobycz, including one who informed on Jews who had dollars and valuables—something only other Jews would generally be aware of. Betrayals of hiding places were also known to have occurred in Drohobycz.)

A Jewish woman from Warsaw recorded the following cases:

Jewish Gestapo men often went [to the sanatorium in nearby Otwock]. They were called the ‘Thirteens’, because their headquarters was at 13 Leszno Street. They all wore high boots in the German manner. High boots and a rubber truncheon. And they had beautiful girl-friends. The Thirteens didn’t wear armbands with a blue star.

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1074 Goldberg, The Undefeated, 120–21.
1076 Chodorska, Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny, Part One, 29–30.
1077 Testimony of Zofia Skalska, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 3314.
1078 Grynberg, Księga sprawiedliwych, 379. The corresponding entry in Gutman and Bender, The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations, vol. 5: Poland, Part 2, 838, fails to mention that the denouncer was a Jew.
1079 Ibid., 40–43. On p. 51, a survivor recounts the hatred, rivalry and in-fighting among Jews in Nazi camps.
1080 Budzyński, Miasto Schulza, 217, 338.
1081 Szereszewska, Memoirs from Occupied Warsaw, 1940–1945, 214.
Two Jewish Gestapo women in the other [room in a flat in Marszałkowska Street]. … Who were they? They were attractive young Jews who were destined to die, but the Germans had spared their lives on condition that they worked for them by denouncing Jews in hiding. The Germans paid them and they dressed smartly.\textsuperscript{1083}

Another young Jewish girl who had become the mistress of the Gestapo Colonel Von Korta, and her brother the colonel’s chauffeur-valet, had both been plucked from the Warsaw ghetto, and eventually accompanied the colonel to Germany.\textsuperscript{1084} That same memoir mentions a German dentist in Warsaw, a Nazi, who had taken a young Jewish mistress, and a young Jew from Lwów who became the lover of a civilian German homosexual. (The German had rented a room from the Jew’s parents in Lwów, and that is probably when the relationship started. Rumor had it that he had the boy’s parents killed by the Gestapo to maintain the relationship and eventually brought him to Warsaw.)\textsuperscript{1085} Fanny Solomian-Loc mentions a harmful collaborator residing in the same building her family occupied in the Warsaw ghetto.\textsuperscript{1086} Maximilian T. describes the activities of an engineer from Lwów by the name of Koenigl, who worked with the Gestapo in Warsaw “in the department of combating communism.”\textsuperscript{1087} A popular meeting place for Jewish Gestapo agents in Warsaw was the Stanisławówka bar on Senatorska Street.\textsuperscript{1088}

In some cases, Jewish Gestapo agents and informers struck at both Jews and their Polish benefactors. Sztutman aka Pruszyński, known as “Czarny,” a provocateur who posed as an arms dealer, denounced Stefan Prokopek, a People’s Army contact with the Jewish underground. Prokopek’s apartment on Waszyngtona Avenue, which served as a meeting place for the Jewish Fighting Organization (Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa), was raided and Prokopek was shot dead. Simha Rotem managed to escape as did Prokopek’s daughter, but Tuwa Szajngut (“Tadek”), a Jewish underground member, was also killed. The Germans found a Jew hidden on the premises who, under torture (the allegation of torture has never been confirmed), broke down and revealed the hideout of Sara Biderman (“Kryśka”). When the Germans arrived at her hideout, they shot her and left her for dead. Miraculously, she survived. (With the help of Polish friends, she was nursed back to health.\textsuperscript{1089}) About a week after the raid, Sztutman was riding with Germans on Wolska Street. Upon spotting Rotem, he attempted to inform on him again, but Rotem escaped into the crowd and got away. After the war, Sztutman took refuge in Sweden.\textsuperscript{1090} Eleonora Prokopek, Stefan Prokopek’s wife, tells more of this story. Her husband was a member of the People’s Guard, a

\textsuperscript{1083} Ibid., 332, 337.
\textsuperscript{1085} Ibid., 112, 129.
\textsuperscript{1086} Solomian-Loc, \textit{Getto i gwiazdy}, 38.
\textsuperscript{1087} Schoenfeld, \textit{Holocaust Memoirs}, 245–47.
\textsuperscript{1088} Hera, \textit{Policy ratujący Żydów}, 75.
\textsuperscript{1089} Gutman and Bender, \textit{The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations}, vol. 4: \textit{Poland}, Part 1, 68.
Communist underground ground. After he was killed in the shoot-out with the Gestapo in June 1943, she continued to hide Jews in her home in Pustelnik. One of their charges, a 17-year-old boy named Mardeks, was apprehended and gave away information to the Gestapo about the rescuers and other Jews in hiding. He even even helped look for them. This resulted in death of several Jews and Prokopek’s second husband, Aleksander Borkowski, who was sheltering three young Jewish women, underground members from Rembertów. Helena Prokopek stated:

I would add that Mardeks (the Jewish 17-year old) must have known that death awaited him whatever he did, but all the same he accompanied the Germans by motorbike to the forest and gave away his own people. Once they [the Gestapo] no longer needed him, the same fate befell him.1091

Yad Vashem recognized Stefan and Eleonora Prokopek as Righteous Gentiles in 2000, but there is no mention of betrayal by Jews in their official entry, leaving the impression that the denouncers were Poles.1092

Zosia Goldberg, who passed as a Pole in “Aryan” Warsaw, recalled her precarious encounters with “unintentional” betrayers and an active informant.

I was almost exposed three times when I was on the street. Several times I saw the trucks with the placowka [placówka—labor platoons from the ghetto], the Jews who worked outside the ghetto, and many times they would holler, “Zosia, how are you?” I made believe I didn’t know them when they yelled from the trucks because … They were not doing it on purpose to give me away, they were just hollering hello, happy to see someone they knew.

Another time there was one fellow by the name of Lifszitz whom I had known from before the war. He was tall and skinny, with curly, kinky, blond hair, and he worked for the Germans. I was told that he would go into the Aryan section and he would look for Jews to denounce. One day I saw Lifszitz on the street, and he was heading in my direction. So I went up to him, right up to him, and I said, “You know, I have a knife. I will stab you if you try to give me away. Get away!” He ran away from me; otherwise I would have been in big trouble.1093

One survivor, who moved to Warsaw with her parents during the occupation, described three encounters with Jews who were extorting money from fellow Jews or helping the Germans hunt them down. According to Halina Zylberman, her mother was identified by a Jewish woman from Lwów, her father was accosted by a fellow Jew from Kraków in the services of the Gestapo, and after the failed Warsaw uprising of 1944, she witnessed a Jewish Gestapo agent spotting Jews among the evacuees from the city.

1093 Goldberg, Running Through Fire, 74–75.
At last I heard heavy steps on the stairs, followed by lighter ones I recognized as my mother’s. She came in accompanied by a Polish policeman. “I’m sorry I’m so late Halinka, but I had a misunderstanding with the authorities. Everything’s all right now.”

From her flushed cheeks and the unnaturally high-pitched tone of her voice I knew something was very wrong, but Mama gave the policeman a glass of tea and sat down and chatted with him about things in general. He mentioned he would like to take me to the country to visit a close friend of his, a farmer. He would like to make up for inconveniencing her by buying us fresh dairy products. I could see by Mama’s expression that she didn’t like the idea, but she kept on smiling and acting friendly. “I’ll let you know,” she replied.

When at length the man left, she collapsed on the sofa, exhausted. “You’ve no idea what I went through today, Halinka.” I went over and hugged her as the words poured out: “I was just walking in the street when I was stopped by that policeman. He asked for my identification papers, then without even looking at them, he put them in his pocket ‘I’m afraid,’ he said, ‘You’ll have to come to the police station with me.’ ‘On what charges?’ I asked. ‘I’ve been told that you are a Jewess,’ he said. Halinka, I thought I was going to faint. How could he know? ‘You’re making a terrible mistake,’ I told him. ‘It’s no use pretending that you’re not, because I know for sure. There’s a lady sitting in the café over there who knows you from Lwow [Lwów] as a Jewess.’ I glanced over and sure enough, I saw a woman I knew from Lwow. But she was also Jewish. Why should she have turned informant? I almost panicked, but then I thought of you waiting at home and I knew I had to do everything possible to get out of this mess. I asked him, ‘Do you have any children?’ ‘Yes’ he said, ‘I have a daughter.’ ‘So have I,’ I said. ‘She’s waiting for me at home right now. She’s very young and needs me. I’m not a Jewess,’ I told him, ‘but I have black market connections and I wouldn’t like to be interrogated by the police. Please let me go home to my little girl.’ I was crying by now, and I looked him straight in the eyes. I could see he was trying to decide what to do so I took off my wedding ring and watch, and my golden cross, and pushed them into his hand. Thank God he accepted the bribe. He said, ‘I have a daughter waiting at home for me too, and I can’t imagine how she would manage without me. But the informant is watching, so I can’t just let you go. I’ll have to take you home to check on your story.’

My father was warned that a Jewish acquaintance, originally from Krakow [Kraków], had turned ‘Jew-spotter’ for the Gestapo. Soon after, they met in the street and although my father’s blood froze, he greeted him warmly and invited him to a nearby café for a cup of tea. The informant suggested that they exchange addresses and my father readily agreed, and gave him a different pseudonym and address. He wandered the streets for some hours till he was sure he was not being followed, till he dared to go home. Fortunately, their paths never crossed again, but we were shocked to think that someone who was so well-educated and well-liked could have fallen so low.

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1095 Ibid., 71–72.
There was one man standing close by the Germans who attracted my attention. He was the only civilian amongst them and was well dressed and well nourished. I thought I must be dreaming because he looked so obviously Jewish to me. “What is a Jew doing here amongst the German soldiers?” I thought. But when I heard him talking to the Germans saying, “I can’t see any of them in this lot,” shivers went down my spine. He was clearly in the service of the Gestapo—another Jewish ‘Jew-spotter’. Suddenly I was very self-conscious and I felt a touch of ice in my heart. Would he recognise me as a Jew?

But we stayed standing there for about fifteen minutes and then two soldiers of the Wehrmacht approached us and ordered us to follow them.1096

The topic of Polish blackmailers or szmalcowniks has received much attention in Jewish memoirs and from Holocaust historians. However, there is virtually no recognition in mainstream literature that these same blackmailers, usually from the dregs of society, were not always ethnic Poles and that they also preyed on vulnerable Poles, including members of the Polish underground.1097 Szmalcowniks were by and large, though not exclusively, members of the poor lumpenproletariat who were motivated by greed rather than anti-Semitism. Like those inside the ghettos where extortion was widespread, Jews outside the ghettos happened to be easy targets for extortion because of their vulnerability and their inability, in most cases, to seek redress from the authorities. These blackmailers were hardly representative of Polish society, despite the claims of some Holocaust historians to the contrary, and in fact their activities were generally viewed as reprehensible by Polish society at large.1098 The Polish underground condemned such activities, as did Polish society. The underground passed a number of death sentences against betrayers and suspected Gestapo agents but did not manage to carry all of them out because of practical difficulties associated with such executions. Moreover, very little publicity is given to their Jewish counterparts either operating on their own or in mixed gangs. The latter phenomenon is described in greater detail below.

Polish szmalcowniks were generally either members of extortion rings, which were usually made up of professional criminals with ties to German officials and the Polish police, or amateurs, who were often young ruffians interested above all in extorting money and not actually in denouncing Jews. As one Jew hiding in Warsaw attests,

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1096 Ibid., 86–87.
1097 Józef Garliński describes extortion directed at stores which served as drop-off points for the Polish underground in Warsaw. See Józef Garliński, Świat mojej pamięci (Warsaw: Volumen, 1992), 305–306. While living in the house of a Polish prostitute in Warsaw, Edward Reicher experienced this firsthand. One morning, two “policemen” came to her door. They were not trying to blackmail the woman for hiding a Jew (something that they did not know at the time), but for being a prostitute. They demanded a “tax” in exchange for not reporting, to the authorities, that she was a prostitute. When she refused, they threatened to denounce her, in which case, they threatened, she would end up paying twice as much. See Reicher, Country of Ash, 186–87.
1098 Historian Tomasz Szarota, an unequaled authority on occupied Warsaw, states unequivocally that szmalcowniks were on the margins of Polish society, a component that became more numerous because of wartime conditions. See Wojciech Klewiec interview with Tomasz Szarota, “Miasto paragrafu śmierci,” Rzeczpospolita, March 26–27, 2011. See also Marcin Zaremba, “Człowiek drży jak liść”—trwoga przed badytyzmem w okresie powojennym,” in Eisler, Niepiękny wiek XX, 375–76.
Did these young ruffians, or ‘Shmaltsovniks’ as they were known in the Occupation jargon, really want to hand over their victims to the German authorities? No, they were not particularly interested in that. Instead they wanted to rob the Jews, relieve them of their money, jewellery and other valuables, or at least of a jacket or winter coat.1099

Furthermore, since the German authorities had little use for freelance blackmailers, despite threats of turning the Jews in by the latter, these rarely materialized. Even Blue policemen who turned to blackmailing Jews could turn out to be more interested in procuring small payments, rather than turning in their victims.1100 Members of the Communist underground were also active in extorting and robbing Jews, often with lethal consequences.1101

Most Jews survived their encounters with the amateur szmalcownik, even several of them in a short span; hence the abundance of references to such incidents in Jewish accounts. For the most part amateur szmalcownik had their sights set on relatively small amounts of money or jewelry, and could often be bargained down. Dov Weissberg describes one unfortunate Jew who was robbed in Warsaw three times in a row; by the time the third blackmailer appeared on the scene he had no money to offer him: “The bum let him go. After all, he was only interested in the money, not in bringing a Jew to the police station.”1102 Some blackmailers were careful not to take all of the victim’s money and even gave tips on how to conduct oneself and dress to avoid future encounters with blackmailers.1103 One Jewish apartment in Warsaw was visited several times by a blackmailer who contented himself with taking small amounts of money and valuables and provided “practical hints about better and safer ways of hiding their identity.” The two women never ended up moving.1104 Amateur szmalcownik were afraid of actual contact with the police, because extortion was a punishable offence, and Jews who were extorted could sometimes get the szmalcownik to back down with bravado denials that they were Jews and threats of reporting the szmalcownik to the police.1105 Even policemen who extorted money from Jews are known to have backed away from harming those who had no money to hand over or who they had already blackmailed.1106

1099 Reich-Ranicki, The Author of Himself, 194. For a description of a “timid” szmalcownik see Grynberg, Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories, 197.
1100 Grynberg, Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories, 197.
1101 Gontarczyk, Polska Partia Robotnicza, 212 n.43. Members of the Communist underground were also caught robbing Jews during the final stages of the Warsaw ghetto. See Zuckerman, A Surplus of Memory, 304.
1102 Weissberg, I Remember..., 70. For other examples from Warsaw see Zuckerman, A Surplus of Memory, 441; Bronisława Alland, Memoirs of a Hidden Child During the Holocaust: My Life During the War (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen, 1992), 21 (the companions of a female szmalcownik did allow her to leave her victim without a coat); Reiss, Z deszczu pod rynnę..., 110; Reich-Ranicki, The Author of Himself, 194–97; Rosenberg, To Tell at Last, 122 (a crooked policeman).
1104 Cyprys, A Jump For Life, 140. Although there was no real risk of denunciation, the author explains: “Nonetheless the danger lay elsewhere. During his numerous drinking bouts he might blur out to the more ruthless type and sooner or later the Jew would be done for.”
1105 Reiss, Z deszczu pod rynnę..., 122–23.
1106 Melchior, Zaglada a tożsamość, 194. A Jew from Mosty Wielkie and his brother were stopped in Warsaw by a blue policeman who demanded money. When this same policeman ran into the brother a year later he said: “You’re still
Encounters with gangs of professional blackmailers, who were generally much more ruthless and usually included Jews, Polish policemen and German officials among their members, were far more precarious. But such encounters were not routinely lethal, and the blackmailers could also be bargained down or, on occasion, even befriendied.\textsuperscript{1107} Samuel Willenberg describes a Warsaw gang headed by Antoś, who obtained counterfeit identity documents for the author.\textsuperscript{1108} Another source indicates that even the “king” of the Warsaw szmalcowniks was recruited, albeit for payment, to help Jewish insurgents escape from the ghetto after the failed revolt of April 1943.\textsuperscript{1109}

As mentioned earlier, mixed gangs of szmalcowniks which counted Jews among their members were already visible in the fall of 1939. Under the date November 4, 1939, Chaim Kaplan recorded the following entry:

> The conqueror has surrounded himself with spies, traitors, and talebearers, some of whom are found even among our Jewish brethren. The Jews fill a triple role here. First, they are “informers” pointing out the way for the thieves. Visits are made to one place and then another, and each visit ends in a loss of money and life. Valuables are brazenly stolen, accompanied by threats and most often by blows and injuries. …

> The second role filled by the Jews is to serve as sacrificial victims. As a result of our sacrifices, they take nothing from the Christians except in unusual cases. A third role is, to our shame, filled by those Jews who buy the stolen goods from the robbers.\textsuperscript{1110}

The topic of szmalcowniks is dealt with extensively in a recent study by historian Jan Grabowski which is based on court records from Warsaw relating to trials of persons charged by the German authorities with extorting Jews. It is now beyond dispute that this phenomenon was not an exclusively Polish undertaking, but one in which persons of other nationalities, including Jews, played a prominent role. Of the more than 240 persons charged in 1940–1943, Poles accounted for about two thirds (159 in total), 45 were Germans (almost 20 percent), and more than 30 were Jews (there were also a few others including Ukrainians). Organized gangs targeted well-off Jews, usually included Jews among their members (some of these Jews were Gestapo agents), worked hand in hand with German officials, and often had connections with corrupt

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[1107]{For examples of bargaining with szmalcowniks see Janina Bauman, \textit{Winter in the Morning}: A Young Girl’s Life in the Warsaw Ghetto and Beyond, 1939–1945 (London: Virago, 1986), 111–12, 118; Bakowska, \textit{Not All Was Lost}, 173.}
\footnotetext[1108]{For examples of szmalcowniks who befriended the Jews they extorted see Schoenfeld, \textit{Holocaust Memoirs}, 245–47; Kaplan, \textit{I Never Left Janowska…}, 74–80; Cyprys, \textit{A Jump for Life}, 140; Reich-Ranicki, \textit{The Author of Himself}, 195–96.}
\footnotetext[1109]{Grupińska, \textit{Po kole}, 220.}
\footnotetext[1110]{Katsh, \textit{Scroll of Agony}, 63.}
\end{footnotes}
members of the Polish “Blue” police. Jewish scum were indispensable for extortion operations within the ghetto itself.\footnote{1111 Jan Grabowski, “Szmalcownicy warszawscy, 1939–1942,” Zeszyty Historyczne (Paris), no. 143 (2003): 85–117; Jan Grabowski, “Ja tego Żyda znam!”: Szantażowanie Żydów w Warszawie, 1939–1943 (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 2004), especially 45–47, 86; Engelking and Grabowski, “Żydów łamiących prawo należy karć śmiercią!”, 56–61. See also Dorota Siepracka, “Mordercy Żydów przed nazistowski Sądem Specjalnym,” Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość, no. 2 (6), 2004: 233–46. In his important commentary on Jan Grabowski’s study, Marek Wierzbicki points out that the gangs operating prior to 1942 targeted Jews and other victims not primarily because of their race, but because they were easy targets. Thus they were thus not classic szmalcowniks who threatened the Jews with denunciation to the Germans, but rather common bandits who could be punished under German law. See Marek Wierzbicki, “W kwestii szmalcownictwa w Warszawie w czasie II wojny światowej,” Zeszyty Historyczne, no. 148 (2004): 120–26. For an example of a hold-up ring in Warsaw consisting of German soldiers who were eventually apprehended by the German criminal police, see Brand, I Dared To Live, 20–27, 30–31. For an example of a group of German criminal police involved in a home invasion, see Sten, Memoirs of a Survivor, 25–26. Another case, based on the memoir of Helena Szerszewska, strongly suggests that Polish hooligans worked in the Warsaw ghetto in cooperation with Jews. See Levin, Walls Around, 76–77. Two well-known known rings of denouncers in Łódź also had ties to German officials and could, for payment, secure the release of persons arrested by the Germans. See Jones, Żydzi Łwowa w okresie okupacji 1939–1945, 185. For an account which suggests that a Ukrainian from Lwów was working in cahoots with szmalcowniks in Warsaw, see Christine Wincecki, The Girl in the Check Coat: Survival in Nazi-Occupied Poland and a New Life in Australia (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), 69.} Maria Radziewicz, a doctor’s wife, recalled that she and others who had relocated from Łódź to Warsaw ended up seeking safety in the Warsaw ghetto because of the activities of Olek Kon from Łódź, who joined with a gang who blackmailed and denounced Jews.\footnote{1112 Testimony of Maria Zadziewicz, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 2225.} Jan Grabowski’s study is also important for another reason: The Polish underground is often taken to task for delaying, until mid–1942, to take measures against szmalcowniks. However, since the Germans were actively prosecuting szmalcowniks until that time, there was no need to engage the complicated procedures of the underground state: it was far easier for someone, even the Jewish victims themselves, to simply report the szmalcowniks to the German authorities.\footnote{1113 German Special Courts also prosecuted Poles accused of harming Jews. See Dorota Sieracka, “Mordercy Żydów przed nazistowskim Sądem Specjalnym,” Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość, vol. 6 (2004, no. 2): 233–46. Jewish police records in Częstochowa reveal that the Polish police were also frequently enlisted to curb crimes committed by Poles against Jews. See William Glicksman, “Daily Record Sheet of the Jewish Police (District I) in the Częstochowa Ghetto 1941–1942,” Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance, vol. 6 (1967): 331–57, at 352–57.} Until 1942, Jews could also obtain justice through Polish criminal courts which continued to operate to deal with ordinary transgressions, such as theft, robbery and assault, not involving Germans. Another recent study by Jan Grabowski of the court records from the environs of Warsaw yielded the following conclusions regarding the fairness of the criminal proceedings involving Jews as victims (witnesses) and as accused:

Once in the Polish court, proceedings involving Jews advanced along the lines prescribed by the Polish pre-war criminal code. Although the criminal law remained in force, the social context changed dramatically, and the magistrates seem to have been aware of the new reality and were ready to make certain allowances. In some cases … the judges quite clearly commiserated with the Jews and, while weighing their decisions, took into consideration the particularly dramatic plight of the “non-Aryan population.”

When Mendel Don and Izaak Butliński, both severely beaten by a group of hooligans, abruptly changed their testimony, the court “aware of the important discrepancies between the earlier testimonies of the victims and those given more recently,” decided to pay heed to the original
statements. “The last testimony,” declared the judge, “must have been given under pressure, which could have been easily applied (especially in the case of the Jews) by Kaliński [one of the accused] who works in the mayor’s office.” [The accused, local peasants who assaulted and wounded a Jewish artisan, were sentenced (on appeal) to eight months in prison.] In another case, the court in Siedlce sentenced Chaim Lewin to three months in jail for charging black-market prices. The sentence was successfully appealed. The Warsaw Court of Appeals stated in its April 1941 decision that, “the accused Lewin is a poor artisan, and a sole provider for a family of six. In the present, tough times, he faces extreme financial hardship, and this speaks in his favour. In this context, the arguments of the prosecution are irrelevant.”

The Polish judges were also aware of the problems facing Jewish victims and witnesses summoned to court. In most cases, in order to appear before the bench, the Jews had to apply to police authorities for special travel permits. Such permissions were usually denied, and the witnesses’ absence could have been used to cut the proceedings short. The judges would have none of it, and refused to dismiss cases based on testimonies of absent Jewish witnesses or victims. The trials went ahead, and some Poles were even sentenced, although the Jewish victims had already been sent away to the death camps. [Several examples are cited of Poles being fined and sentenced to jail terms for stealing from or assaulting Jews.]

In all criminal cases heard by the Siedlce District Court, which involved Jewish victims and Polish accused, the trials went ahead even when the former were unable to testify. What may seem more surprising, in most cases the defense went along with the prosecutors’ requests to have testimonies of absent Jews admitted in court. [Examples are provided.] In all sentences that were appealed in the Warsaw Court of Appeals, the higher court upheld the decisions of the Siedlce court. The fact that the victims were Jewish, and the witnesses were unable to attend the hearings, seemed to have played no role in the judges’ deliberations.

The phenomenon of relative judicial impartiality as demonstrated in the Siedlce District Court and in the Warsaw Court of Appeals is corroborated by evidence from the Municipal Court in Otwock. There, the sentences imposed on Jewish defendants differed little from those imposed on Polish culprits. A comparison of fifty-four cases involving Jews with an equal sample of “Polish” cases reveals that the ethnic origin of the accused played no visible role in the court decisions. The cases heard by the court during the 1940–1942 period dealt mostly with theft and assault, and the judges were more preoccupied with the pre-war record of the accused than with their racial features. Repeat offenders were given harsh treatment regardless of their origins. Overall, the judges strayed on the side of leniency, often explaining in their decisions that the times were difficult and prison conditions were appalling. …

Although ultimately unsuccessful, the accused and their lawyers often appealed to the “racial solidarity” of the judges. …

A lawyer tried to link the Jews to “smugglers, thieves and Bolsheviks” who threatened the villagers east of Warsaw. Another accused peasant justified the assault on one Szwarcberg, “because the Jew pretended to be a Pole.” … these exhortations seem to have carried little or no weight with the judges …
… The records of Municipal and District Courts in the Warsaw area testify to the fact that the sentencing of Jewish defendants was carried out, for the most part, without a visible bias.\textsuperscript{1114}

Survivor and rescuer accounts confirm that Jews were frequently involved in blackmailing fellow Jews. Maximilian T., a Jew from Lwów passing in Warsaw, describes how Jews from his native Lwów worked hand in glove with a gang of Polish blackmailers in Warsaw by compiling detailed lists of Jews in hiding. After his arrival in Warsaw, Maximilian T. gave his address to a Jewish friend he recognized from his home town of Lwów, also living in Warsaw under an assumed identity. Soon after, he was visited by blackmailers who demanded a payoff, but with whom, curiously, he developed amicable relations. They even urged him to change his address.

When I asked him who had given them my name, he said that I was not the only one on their list of Jews living in Warsaw under Polish names. … I was beside myself when I saw the list. It contained quite a number of Jews, among them about ten from my hometown, all registered by their assumed Polish names, their addresses in Warsaw, their real names, and also their means, the size of their families, their profession before the war, and finally, the place where they were working in Warsaw, if one held a job. Although I had my suspicions about who the author of the list was, I still was not sure and asked my friend to tell me who he was. My friend, the ‘szmalcownik’, gave me a few names of Jews who belonged to their gang. I was stunned to learn that, among others, there were the two colleagues of mine whom I mentioned earlier. They both came from so-called good Jewish families, and who would have believed that they could have been the source of information given to the blackmailers, by which they betrayed a fellow Jew, their former class-mate?\textsuperscript{1115}

Maximilian T. acknowledges the wartime complexity as follows: “And to this question I would only add, and what about the Jews? Have we all been saints? Have there not been any rotten apples in our barrel? Based on my experiences during the Holocaust, I have come to the conclusion that a generalization in this matter [i.e., about the behaviour of Poles] would be unfair.”\textsuperscript{1116} Ozjasz Landau, who left Lwów and took up residence in Warsaw, reported that shortly after his Jewish friend’s cousin took him to an apartment where a family of Jews was living, the apartment was visited by Kuba Perlmutter and two Polish “bandits” who took 16,000 złoty from the Jewish family.\textsuperscript{1117} Henryk Reiss, who also took refuge in Warsaw, was warned by his aunt, a native of Lwów, of Jews in the service of the Gestapo: “Refugees from Lwów were exposed by others from Lwów, usually members of the so-called golden youth. She mentioned the name of the son of a known pharmacist E.”\textsuperscript{1118} Another Jew from Lwów who found refuge in Warsaw, where he personally

\textsuperscript{1115} Maximilian T.’s account appears in Schoenfeld, \textit{Holocaust Memoirs}, at 240–42.
\textsuperscript{1116} Schoenfeld, \textit{Holocaust Memoirs}, 237.
\textsuperscript{1117} Testimony of Ozjasz Landau, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 1146.
\textsuperscript{1118} Reiss, \textit{Z deszczu pod rynnę...}, 106.
encountered Jewish blackmailers, was Marion Andre (Marian Andrzej Tenenbaum aka Czerniecki), who later became a theatre director in Toronto.  

Joseph Rosenberg from Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, who was passing as a Christian in Warsaw, described his family’s misfortunes (a robbery) at the hands of group of szmalcowniks with whom Józef Goncho, a Jewish acquaintance from Wolbrom, worked. A Jew named Włodek S. got entangled with a Warsaw policeman and his wife, a prostitute; the Jews on whom he informed were then blackmailed by szmalcowniks. A Jewish woman who was offered an opportunity to work together with szmalcowniks on Warsaw’s “Aryan” side after being unable to pay a ransom was Luba Gawisar.

A Jewish woman named Stefania K. recalled how a young Jew living in a tenement house in Warsaw she moved to, lured those he suspected of being Jewish to other premises on the pretext that they would be safe there from denouncers. In fact, it turned out this person worked together with the Gestapo, and the “safe” premises were soon visited by Germans to extort money from the Jews who fell into the trap and relocated. Zosia Goldberg, who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto with her mother, described how her “friend” Franka, in whom she had confided, betrayed the fact that she had jewelry to a Volksdeutch plainclothes policeman, who then staged a robbery in her home, forcing her and her mother to relocate.

Another account tells of a Jewish woman confiding in a Jewish friend about family members passing as Poles in Warsaw: “And at parting, she even gave them our address and telephone number.” Soon the blackmailers came and, when the author’s father refused to give anything, he was arrested by the police. Fortunately, the Pole who interrogated his father had pity on him and released him. However, the father’s mother was suspicious of the policeman’s motives so, in a bizarre twist, she turned her son in to the police for trading in dollars. Although his fellow prisoners learned he was Jewish, a certain criminal protected him and he was eventually released in exchange for a large bribe. The aunt who had triggered this series of events had an affair with an informer, and when his wife learned of this she denounced the author’s mother, who she mistakenly believed was having the affair.

A Jewish family passing as Christians in Warsaw faced extortion by a mixed gang of szmalcowniks, possibly with police connections, after a young Jewish woman from their native Białystok sought their assistance to pay a bribe to the Kripo. Within days a gang of three men, including two Germans, who knew all about their circumstances, descended on their residence. The Jewish woman had obviously been used as a decoy. The Jews spotted one of the szmalcowniks on the street a few weeks later and he offered to return the bracelet he had taken from them in exchange for cooperating with the group by finding other victims.

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1119 Marion Andre’s account in the author’s possession.
1120 See Rosenberg, My Name is Józef Nowak, 34–36.
1121 Marianowicz, Życie surowo wzbronione, 115. That author confirms that Jews in hiding managed to establish good connections with various German agencies. Ibid., 116.
1122 Her account is found in Grupińska, Po kole, 152–54, and Grupińska, Ciągle po kole, 160.
1123 Melchior, Zagłada a tożsamość, 168.
1124 Goldberg, Running Through Fire, 62–63.
1125 Gryńberg, Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories, 197–202.
1126 Gustaw Kerszman, Jak ginąć, to razem (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation, 2003), 84–85.
Gary Keins describes several encounters in Warsaw with a Jewish woman, a Mrs. Salc, whom he had met in Zamość, where she first revealed his cover. Originally from Lwów, Mrs. Salc eventually moved to Warsaw where she worked together with a gang of szmalcowniks, tailing Jews passing as Poles. But that wasn’t the author’s only worry: “If Mrs. Salc only speculated about my origin, there was at least one other person who could finger me—a young man and former member of the Ghetto police who suddenly showed up on the Polish side.”

The author recalls that the Nazis had their agents, including Jewish ones, all over Warsaw and “used Jewish cowards to track down their co-religionists hiding on the Polish side. We heard that they made dozens of denunciations every day to the Gestapo. The numbers were so numerous that the Nazis fell behind in their frenzied Jew-killing, so much so that betrayals from December, 1942, were not yet disposed of in March of 1943, according to the information of the underground.” He had heard that “about one hundred fifty Ghetto dwellers had pledged themselves as agents to the Gestapo. … about one hundred and fifty Jewish escapees were caught every day with the help of those betrayers and various other headhunters.”

Rescuer Kazimiera Żuławska recalls a number of raids on her Warsaw apartment whose purpose was to extort large sums of money. The Gestapo was accompanied by spies or denouncers who were Jews, Volksdeutsche or Poles. Another rescuer recalls an extortion by a Polish policeman. The Jewish woman in question was denounced by a Jew, and the extortion money had to be shared with the Germans.

Jewish Gestapo agents and informers on Warsaw’s Ayran side were involved in blackmailing as an important sideline, in addition to their assigned tasks of ferreting out Jews in hiding, searching for Jewish goods hidden with Poles, gathering intelligence about the rescue network and infiltrating underground organizations. Henryk Grabowski, a legendary Home Army liaison between the Polish and Jewish underground, who smuggled scores of Jews out of the Warsaw ghetto, recalled that there were Jewish, as well as Polish szmalcowniks he had to watch out for. Ludwik Hirszfeld, a Jew who converted to Christianity and also had to hide to survive, confirms, albeit with some exaggeration, the same state of affairs: “In the city [of Warsaw] there moved about thousands [sic] of spies—Volksdeutsche, Poles and Jews …”

Irena Tarłowska (Szenberg), who survived passing as a Christian in Warsaw, after recounting her experiences with Polish blackmailers, concludes: “What is so surprising about this? Robbing Jews was such an easy way to make a profit. In every nation one can find rogues. There were after all Jewish blackmailers too.” Miriam Peleg-Mariańska, a Jew who worked closely with Żegota, the Council for Aid to Jews, writes: “In spite of the fact that the streets of Warsaw were swarming with many informers, collaborators

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1127 Keins, A Journey Through the Valley of Perdition, 131–32, 151, 179.
1128 Ibid., 145, 151, 154.
1129 Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej, 461–62.
1130 Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej, 568.
1131 Hempel, Pogrobowcy klęski, 179.
1132 Stanisławczyk, Czterdzięści twarzach, 92. Grabowski also described how he tried in vain to find Jews in the Białystok and Wilno ghettos who were willing to run the risks involved in conspiratorial activities. Ibid., 92–94.
1133 Hirszfeld, Historia jednego życia, 286.
and stool-pigeons, both Polish and Jewish ones, the city always awakened in me feelings of admiration with regard to its general attitude to the occupiers.\footnote{1135}

Israel Shahak, a Jew from Warsaw, has stated:

Of course there were Polish policemen who rounded up Jews and Poles, who blackmailed Jews whom they recognized as such. … But who of the Jewish survivors does not know … that there were also Jewish blackmailers, some of them even quite famous by name, outside the Ghetto, who were neither better nor worse than the Polish ones, and also Jewish policemen in the Ghetto whose duty in the first weeks of the extermination of summer 1942 was to deliver, each of them a specified number, of Jewish victims to ‘be sent’ to extermination. \textit{Now}, I hold that both kinds of murderers or accessories to murder are fully equal and that the abhorrence in which one should hold them does not depend on nationality, but my memories (and memories of all the survivors who are honestly ‘talking among themselves’) tell me that at the time we Jews hated the Jewish policemen, or the Jewish spies for the Nazis in the Ghetto, much more than we hated anybody else.\footnote{1136}

Of this tragic and complex phenomenon Władysław Bartoszewski, an active member of Żegota, writes:

The struggle against the blackmailers was exceedingly difficult. It was nevertheless carried out systematically as far as possible by the Polish underground organizations during 1943 and 1944. If, however—as events would show in several cases—the memory of the wrongs and the personal tragedies suffered as a consequence of denunciation was stronger and more lasting in those who were rescued than the memory of the incomparably more numerous cases of proffered assistance, this has to be regarded as a characteristic, but also understandable, trait of human nature. In general, tragic and negative experiences leave a deeper and more lasting impression on the human psyche than do good and positive ones. Aside from the German police and the informers and extortionists, who were recruited from the dregs of the Christian Polish and Ukrainian population, it was the Jewish confidence men who represented the greatest threat to Jews living in hiding. Seduced by false hopes and promises, they frequently helped the Germans to track down fellow Jews who were hiding in the ‘Aryan’ sector.\footnote{1137}

Elsewhere Bartoszewski wrote that confidants, renegades and betrayers constituted a greater plague, and were much more visible, inside the ghettos than the parallel phenomenon on the Polish side.\footnote{1138} It is also

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\item \footnote{1135} Peleg-Mariańska and Peleg, \textit{Witnesses}, 150–51. Edward Reicher, who pretended to be a gentile in Warsaw, recalled the following act of defiance of the Germans by Poles when he boarded a tram: “On the steamed-up window, someone had written: ‘Your underpants may be lined with fur, but you’ll never win the war!’ It was clear the Poles lacked neither humor nor courage. A Jew would never have dared to use such words.” See Reicher, \textit{Country of Ash}, 133.
\item \footnote{1137} Władysław Bartoszewski, \textit{The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: A Christian’s Testimony} (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), 89.
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worth noting that the Germans employed many non-Polish agents and informers not only in Warsaw, but throughout occupied Poland, even in areas where those ethnic minorities did not live. According to historian Jan Pietrzykowski, the city of Częstochowa was plagued by both Ukrainian and Lithuanian Gestapo agents. Other Polish historians note that Ukrainians, Belorussians and Russians were employed not only in Warsaw, but also in a small town like Augustów. Jewish memoirs also confirm that Ukrainian Gestapo agents and informers were plentiful in Warsaw. However, despite the existence of such copious evidence, historian Gunnar Paulsson, who has recently published an important study about Jews in wartime Warsaw, insists that the supposition that blackmailers included substantial numbers of Jewish turncoats is “quite mistaken.” Moreover, he maintains that he has not encountered in his research a single “concrete example” of a Jew betraying his Polish benefactor, even though such cases were already reported during the war and confirmed afterwards.

Conditions were much the same outside Warsaw. Historians Józef Bratko and Witold Mędykowski deal extensively with the activities of Gestapo agents of various nationalities in Kraków, where a group of about thirty Jews worked under Maurycy Diamand (Diamant) and Julian Appel and another smaller group under Aleksander Förster. There was a special division for Jewish affairs—Department No. 3—at the Gestapo headquarters on 2 Pomorska Street in Kraków, which consisted of a large network of agents, drawn mainly from the Jewish ghetto police, and informers. One of the most active German Gestapo agents in Kraków was Rudolf Körner, originally from the Sudentenland, who was responsible for the capture of hundreds of Jews on the Aryan side. A postwar investigation revealed that Gestapo confidants Julian Appel and Grun (likely Marcel Gruner) apprehended Michał Kaczor, a Jew living in Kraków on Aryan papers, and brought him to a police station. Roman Sperber, a member of the Jewish underground in Kraków, was also denounced by Julian Appel, whereas Henryk Sperber, Roman’s older brother, was denounced by a

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1142 Keins, A Journey Through the Valley of Perdition, 116, 219–20; Rosenberg, To Tell at Last, 117; Goldberg, Running Through Fire, 64; Grynberg, Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories, 196–97.
1143 Paulsson, Secret City, 150.
1145 Szapiro, Wójna żydowsko-niemiecka, 163. These two rather well-known and well-documented cases are described earlier.
1147 One of the most active German Gestapo agents was Rudolf Körner, originally from the Sudentenland, who was responsible for the capture of hundreds of Jews on the Aryan side. See Taubenschlag (Townsend), To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland, 23–24. Interestingly, Taubenschlag also befriended Eduard Schubert, the head of two sections of the criminal police (Kripo) in Kraków, who took a bribe to transfer Taubenschlag’s mother from Lwów to Kraków.
female Jewish agent and apprehended by Jewish police. Both brothers were murdered by the Gestapo.\textsuperscript{1149}

Fearing being blamed for aiding resisters inside the ghetto, Jewish policemen, among them Julian Appel, Wilek Giemski and Weiss, with the assistance of the informer Stefania (Stefa) Brandstätter (née Rottenberger), tracked down members of the Jewish underground on the “Aryan” side.\textsuperscript{1150} Erna H.’s chances of hiding among the Poles were higher than average: she had false documents, spoke flawless Polish, and because she happened to attend Catholic school, knew religious rituals and prayers. Furthermore, the priest in the school she attended was the secretary of the Primate of Poland, Cardinal Adam Sapieha, and had the connections and the willingness to hide Erna in a convent. The only thing that stood between Erna and successful evasion of the Nazi persecution was Stefania Brandstätter, who combed the convents searching for hidden Jews. Eventually, Erna H. had to abandon the idea.\textsuperscript{1151} Stefania Brandstätter also betrayed two Polish colleagues, Anna Maria Heydel and Izabela Czecz, who were deported to concentration camps.\textsuperscript{1152}

The Jewish underground had little success in eliminating Jewish Gestapo agents (some were eventually executed by the Polish underground, others like Diamand, who had personal Jewish bodyguards protecting him, avoided his death sentence). According to members of the Jewish underground, these Gestapo agents succeeded in destroying almost completely the Jewish underground in the ghetto and its members, liaison officers, supply depots and printing shops on the Aryan side. When the ghetto was liquidated on March 13, 1943, most of the remaining underground members perished when a Jewish informer betrayed their bunker.\textsuperscript{1153} Not only did the Germans employ groups of Jewish Gestapo agents to ferret out Jews in hiding, but also to spread propaganda, particularly for the benefit of the West, by creating Jewish organizations dedicated to the “welfare” of fellow Jews.\textsuperscript{1154}

Aleksander Biberstein, the chronicler of Kraków Jewry, describes at great length the activities of numerous members of the Jewish police—the \textit{Ordnungsdienst} (OD or Order Service), and various other Jewish agents active both inside and outside the ghetto.

During the entire period of the occupation the \textit{Ordnungsdienst} was a tool in the hands of the Gestapo. On its instructions the OD-men carried out without reservation the basest activities, frequently surpassing the Germans in their ruthlessness. They were the ones who pulled Jews out of homes to their deportation, pressing them on with screams and often with beatings. They were the

\textsuperscript{1148} Hera, \textit{Polscy ratujący Żydów}, 369.
\textsuperscript{1149} Testimony of Eugenia Halbreich, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 1674.
\textsuperscript{1151} Erna H. Holocaust Testimony (HVT–2914), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library.
\textsuperscript{1153} See the testimony of Cesia Frymer and Pola Warszawska in Grynberg and Kotowska, \textit{Życie i Zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945}, 7–9.
\textsuperscript{1154} Arczyński and Balcerak, \textit{Kryptonim “Żegota”}, 173–74.
ones who filled up the jail cells on the basis of lists of names drawn up with their help and the help of other denouncers. They convoyed the transports of deportees and, on their own initiative, carried out searches of homes to look for those who were staying there “illegally.” …

The OD had three sections: political, currency, and criminal. The Zivilabteilung was a special section that reported directly to the Gestapo and received its instructions from them. That unit struck terror [in the ghetto]…

Only a few members of the Ordnungsdienst did not have shameful deeds on their conscience. …

Over and above the uniformed portion of the Ordnungsdienst, who openly assisted the occupier, there existed during the occupation a broad network of confidants, commonly called informers, who were connected to individual German bureaus such as Zollfahndungsstelle, the Gestapo, Wirtschaftsamt. These confidants spied on Jews in hiding especially members of the Jewish Fighting Organization, searched for hidden Jewish property and that given over [to Poles] for safekeeping, and listened in on conversations. Often the denunciations were trumped up and were the result of personal conflicts. Because of these denunciations hundreds of people were imprisoned or deported to Auschwitz where they died in gas chambers. …

… The number of confidants was elusive, although it probably exceeded significantly the number of official OD workers. …

On instructions from the Gestapo Spira [Symche Spira, the head of the Jewish police] organized the so-called Zivilabteilung, the most ominous part of the OD, which reported directly to the Gestapo. Its workers were: Julian Appel, Blodek, Michal Pacanower, Ignacy Pacanower, Artur Löfler, Natan Schleifer and Wertal. These persons hand ed over to the Germans, without scruples, Jews who had displeased them for whatever reason. … Artur Löfler … made up lists of Jews for deportation, and denounced Jews who hid. Natan Schleifer searched for hideouts of Jews, informed about political conversations, and thought nothing of blackmailing people for bribes. …

The confidants were commonly called informers. This was the most dangerous element, bereft of all scruples and human feelings. … Depending on their assignment they tracked down Jews in hiding, members of the Jewish Fighting Organization, hidden Jewish property, people with party affiliation, etc. The confidants blackmailed their victims and extorted money from them, and once deprived of their money and valuables, they handed them over without the slightest scruple. There were many confidants living both inside and outside the ghetto who were not known at all and consequently were very dangerous.1155

The activities of a Jewish Gestapo agent in Kraków are described by Zvi Helmut Steintiz:

Uncle Jurek had connections to a man whom he claimed would be able to get us residence permits from the Gestapo against payment … Mother’s brother handled negotiations with the mystery man …

Gestapo members were happy to do business with the Jews that they despised, so that they could line their own pockets with east money earned at their victims’ expense. When I saw the agent I

1155 Aleksander Biberstein, Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1985), 164–74; Aleksander Biberstein, Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie, Second edition (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2001), 188–
The activities of a Jewish policeman in Kraków are described by Bertha Ferderber-Salz:

One of the ghetto policemen was a low creature who had been friendly with one of the leaders of the underground during their university days. The police had prepared a satanic plan. This man met his friend frequently and gained his confidence through lies and hypocrisy. The member of the underground movement would rebuke him for serving the Germans. The policeman gradually convinced him that he was in the force not by choice, that he wanted to help the underground, and that in effect they both desired the same end. In order to prove his good intentions he would supply the underground with items of information from time to time, until he was trusted by them. Then, when he knew where the leaders of the underground met he arrived with a group of policemen, surrounded the building, and attempted to arrest its occupants. The policemen, however, were unarmed, whereas the members of the underground had arms in their possession. With their arms at the ready, they prevented the traitors from implementing their foul plan and made their way through the ghetto’s alleys and streets to the “Aryan” side. But the game was up. The traitor knew the addresses of the members of the underground inside the ghetto and outside it. Some of the fighters managed to escape to Warsaw, where they continued the battle. Others fled to the forests, but most of them were caught and flung into the infamous Cracow prison, Montelupich. They were executed after being tortured sadistically.  

The ghetto walls were not a barrier for Jewish collaborators, whose activities were directed at both Jews and the Polish underground. Jews escaping from the ghetto by way of the sewers were betrayed by Jewish informers. There were also cases of Poles who agreed to take in Jewish property for safekeeping being arrested and sent to concentration camps because of betrayals by Jewish agents. As one Jewish witness noted,

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Most of them did not conclude their dirty work with the annihilation of the ghetto but continued collaborating with the Germans on the “Aryan” side, helping them to expose Jews who had tried to save themselves through “Aryan” certificates.\textsuperscript{1160}

Many of the numerous collaborators active in Kraków (some of whom were members of the Jewish order police or Judenrat) have been identified by name and their activities detailed. Not only were they responsible for scores of Jews living outside the ghetto losing their lives, often they also took over their victims’ property and extorted money from them. The list\textsuperscript{1161} includes: Julian Appel, the boxer Anders, Behavier, Białobroda, Leopold Blodek, Stefania (Stefa) Brandstätter, Broda (who was executed by the Jewish underground), Samuel Brodman (who worked for the Foreign Exchange Control Office and informed on Jews who traded illegally in currency), Brzeziński (executed by the Home Army on February 26, 1943), Solomon Desler, Mauryycy Diamand (or Diamant), Esterowicz, Josef Erlich (code name “Josele Kapota”), Szuje Fastak, who betrayed both Poles (such as Home Army members Antoni Szczzygielski and Witold Jernik) as well as Jews to the Gestapo (Fastak was executed by the Home Army), Feiler, Aleksander Ferster, Israel First, Albin Fleischman, Förster or Forster, Szymon Friedman, Wilek Giemski, Marcel Goldberg, Zamek Grajek, Marceli Grüner (who tracked down Jews in hiding and members of the Jewish Fighting Organization; he immigrated to South America after the war), David Gutter (executed by the Home Army), Gurman, the Hand brothers, Heller, Marian Handel or Händel (originally from Lwów, after the war he lived in Caracas, Venezuela, under the name of Klinowski but disappeared when detected by fellow Jews), Hochwald (who informed the Germans about wealthy Jews and, after the liquidation of the ghetto, denounced those still in hiding), Regina Judt (a cabaret owner and prostitute), Katz, Meir (Major) Kerner, Kohn, Leser or Lejzer Landau (who later immigrated to Israel), Leinberger, Willi Leitgeber (executed by the Home Army), Lejtkin, Lewin, the Lichtenbaum brothers, Lisman, Artur Loffler or Löffler, Markowicz (executed by the Home Army), Mendl, Mojsie Müller, Mynis, Bobi Nebel, Alfred Nossig, the brothers Israel or Ignacy and Michał Pacanower or Patzanower, Peschel (executed by the Home Army), Marta Puretz (who was also active in Budapest under the name of Maria Panecka and later became Marta Hercz), Michael Puretz or Purec, Alfred Reich (from Bochnia), Dr. Szymon Rosen (from Bochnia, who was arrested after the war and tried), Marian Rotkopf or Raskof (from Bochnia), Roth (from Rzeszów, who left a trail of arrests after each stay in Kraków), Rozencawig, Jakob Schindler or Szindler (who milked his charges before betraying them), Natan Schleifer, Schomburg, Mojżesz Sellinger or Selinger and his wife (not only did they denounce Jews on “Aryan” papers but also Poles who accepted Jewish property for safekeeping), Silberstein, Symche Spira or Simcha Shapiro (the commander of the Jewish police, executed by the Home Army), Szymon Spitz or Spic, Stein, Steinfeld, Professor Sterling (executed by the Home

\textsuperscript{1160} Federber-Salz, \textit{And the Sun Kept Shining…}, 34.
\textsuperscript{1161} This list is based on the following sources: Biberstein, \textit{Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie}, passim; Bednarczyk, \textit{Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta}, 229–41; Para, \textit{Los polacos y los judíos a través de los siglos}, 269–73; Federber-Salz, \textit{And the Sun Kept Shining…}, 34; Rivka Perlis, “The Hehalutz Fighting Resistance in Cracow,” in Asher Cohen, Yehoyakim Cochavi, and Yuval Gelber, eds., \textit{Dapim: Studies on the Shoah} (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 233–34, 237, 238; Diatłowicki and Roszkowski, \textit{Żydzi w walce 1939–1945}, vol. 2, 157; Witold Mędykowski, “Przeciw swoim:
Army), Świeca, Süsser, Szejn, Szmerling, Szymanowicz, Ignacy Taubman or Traubman (who also went by the name of Gołębiowski), Hersz Waga, Ark Wajntraub, Warszawiak (code name “Parszawiak”), Salo Weininger (Weininger denounced Irena Goldwasser and he and another agent apprehended Leibek Haffner after recognizing him on a streetcar), Natan Weisman or Wiessmann, Weininger denounced Irena Goldwasser and he and another agent apprehended Leibek Haffner after recognizing him on a streetcar), Natan Weisman or Wiessmann, Weitz, Wertal, Witkowski, and many others. Some of the informers were not agents or confidants at all, as in the case of a well-to-Jew who informed on Shimek Drenger in revenge for an “expropriation” carried out by Drenger on behalf of a Jewish underground organization, thus leading to the arrest of Drenger and Gusta Davidson in January 1943. Some of these Jewish Gestapo agents also ventured outside Kraków, especially to Bochnia. Szymon Spitz even made his way to Pilica, where he was followed by Gestapo members from Kraków and Miechów who carried out arrests and executions of Poles and Jews.

The memoirs of Tadeusz Pankiewicz, a “Righteous” Pole who ran a pharmacy in the ghetto and was intimately acquainted with it affairs, provide a number of examples of the activities of Jewish collaborators who endangered both Jews and Poles:

From time to time people would disappear from the Ghetto in this fashion: a list was prepared by a Jewish Gestapo agent, Szymon Szpic, in cooperation with the OD Commander Spira; using this list the suspects were pulled from their homes, usually at night, and delivered to the OD so that they could be transported early in the morning by German cars under heavy police guard, either to Pomorska Street or in an unknown direction where all traces of them disappeared. There were many such cases. Jews disappeared and, also at the outset, some Poles who operated various enterprises in the Ghetto. Even I was included on one of those lists. … The charge against me was that during the night many of the Ghetto inhabitants constantly gathered in my pharmacy. …

Aside from Szpic, I should mention some other informers who carried on their activities both in the Ghetto and beyond its walls, and to whom the Germans assigned various functions. Among them were Julek Appel, … Bialobroda, Stefania Brandstatter or Poklewska, [Wilek or Wilhelm] Chilowicz and his wife [Maria], [Mietek] Finkelstein, Forster, Marcel Gruner, Marcel Goldberg, Kleinberger, [Maier] Kerner, Michal Pacanower, Szymon Rosen, Marian Rotkopf, Ignacy Traubmann, Weininger, Weisman, and many others about whom we did not have positive proof. These informers infiltrated all the institutions of the Ghetto, including the Customs House. …

A very dangerous couple in the service of the Gestapo was the Selingers. … They collaborated with the Obersturmführer [Obersturmführer], Theodore Heinemayer, who was counselor of the Gestapo for political affairs. In the cafes she would eavesdrop on the conversations of the Germans;

he would not slight any task assigned to him by the Gestapo. He [Mojżesz Selinger] denounced Jews who had Aryan papers and Poles who were in contact with the Jews.\textsuperscript{1165} Abraham Brand was one of the Jews passing as an Aryan in Kraków who was recognized and apprehended by Mojżesz Selinger and his colleague Brajtowicz.\textsuperscript{1166} Fortunately, Brand was able to escape. Another Jew apprehended and denounced by Sellinger was Henryk Wachtel.\textsuperscript{1167} After the liquidation of the ghetto, several groups of Jews continued to be employed by the Germans. One group consisting of about 20 (or even as many as 42 according to another report) former Jewish policemen, headed by a Jew named Leopold Blodek, became Gestapo confidants. Spread throughout the city, their primary, but not their only task, was to ferret out Jews in hiding, at which they excelled. Another group consisted of about a score of Jews from the Plaszów concentration camp who, in exchange for their freedom, undertook to infiltrate Polish underground organizations and to expose Jews in hiding. The leaders of these groups (Diamand and Förster, respectively), as well as some of their members (Julek Appel, Natan Weissman, Stefa Brandstätter, Symche Spira, Mr. and Mrs. Chilowicz, and Białobroda), were eventually exposed in the Polish underground press. Having thus been rendered useless and expendable, most of them were done away with by the Gestapo.\textsuperscript{1168} As a result of a grenade assault on the Cyganeria café, carried out in cooperation with the communist People’s Guard on December 22, 1942, according to Jewish sources, or December 24, 1942, according to the official plaque marking the event, the Jewish underground in Kraków basically ceased to exist. The action was part of a gun heist intended to arm the fledgling Jewish Fighting Organization (\textit{Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa–ŻOB}). Its Warsaw members, Yitzhak Zuckerman and Havka Folman, were enlisted in the operation. The plan was to shift the blame for the attack onto the Home Army, avoid reprisals against Jews and divert them toward Poles. (A similar strategy, i.e., directing anticipated German retaliations onto Christian Poles rather than Jews, was behind the alleged derailment of a train by the Wilno United Partisans Organization near Nowa Wilejka, sometime between May and July 1942, which resulted in the execution of scores of Polish villagers,\textsuperscript{1169} and the decision of the Jewish underground in Częstochowa to kill a

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\item\textsuperscript{1165} Tadeusz Pankiewicz, \textit{The Cracow Ghetto Pharmacy} (New York: Holocaust Library, 1987), 35, 37–38. Tadeusz Pankiewicz, a great benefactor of the Jews, was decorated by Yad Vashem. According to Stanisław Taubenschlag, Szymon Szipl’s son was also a Gestapo collaborator, who was sent to England as a spy by the Germans. See Taubenschlag (Townsend), \textit{To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland,} 33–34.
\item\textsuperscript{1166} Rączy, \textit{Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim w latach 1939–1945}, 226.
\item\textsuperscript{1167} See, for example, the testimony of Helena Wachtel, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 2390. Selinger turned over to the Gestapo the author’s husband, who had been in hiding. See also Michał Czajka, \textit{Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz/Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue}, vol. 3, 164.
\item\textsuperscript{1169} Cohen, \textit{The Avengers}, 62. The Jewish underground searched for an appropriate location to strike “somewhere far from the ghetto and far from the forest camps where Jews were used as slave labor. The Nazis met each rebellious act with collective punishment, killing a hundred Jews for one dead German. The underground did not want to give the Germans reason to blame the explosion on Jews.”
\end{thebibliography}
German soldier near the Jasna Góra monastery, which resulted in the execution of twelve Christian Poles.\(^{1170}\)

Disguised as Germans, members of the Jewish Fighting Organization’s Krakow [Kraków] branch were told to launch diversionary attacks on drinking establishments frequented by off-duty German officials: the Esplanade, the Bohemian [Cyganeria] Café (a favored haunt of the businessman Oskar Schindler), and several other locales. The idea was to seize as many weapons as possible and then raid an armory in the ensuing chaos.

The attack was coordinated by local ZOB leader Abraham Leibowicz [known as Laban], a General Zionist from the youth group Akiva. …

At the appointed hour, when Christmas parties were in full swing, Laban’s partisans struck. They lobbed grenades into the bars and restaurants and stormed in, firing pistols. Isaac [Zuckerman] was part of the team that hit the upscale Bohemian Café, where several Mausers were pried from the hands of a tableful of dead Gestapo agents.

The Germans were so stunned by the brazen assault—the first major rebellion in their otherwise tranquil stronghold—that all the assailants got away safely. … Thirteen Germans [11 according to other counts] were dead and a dozen more were in the hospital. It was revenge, pure and simple, and unburdened by moral dilemmas. There were no bystanders in a place like the Bohemian Café—from the waiters to the women of loose virtue who trolled for German clients, everyone there was complicit in the Occupation in one way or another. [This statement is simply ludicrous. Staff working in such establishments were no more complicit than Jews employed in German ammunition factories. \(M.P.\)]

To throw the vengeful Gestapo off track in the aftermath, the ZOB raiders left behind leaflets implicating the Home Army. This, they hoped, would prevent reprisals by the angry SS on innocent Jewish residents of the Krakow ghetto. The shirking of responsibility was a risky gambit that [justifiably] could have provoked the wrath of the Polish Resistance had the Germans retaliated against the Gentile population instead. The Nazis, however, knew full well who was behind the “terrorist” actions because they had two informants in the Krakow branch of the ZOB. The collaborators tipped off the Gestapo to the location of a deserted hospital where Zuckerman was supposed to rendezvous with Leibowicz the following day. The SS was waiting for him when he arrived. … He was hit. Havka Folman and Abraham Leibovich had been caught. Their capture allowed Isaac to slip away …\(^{1171}\)

Havka Folman Raban, who was a courier between the different branches of the Jewish Fighting Organization and the Dror Youth Movement throughout occupied Poland, recalled how she ended up in prison as a result of the betrayal:

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\(^{1170}\) Mizgalski and Sielski, *The Jews of Częstochowa*, 35. In need of a German uniform with a certain rank, the Jewish underground killed a German soldier not near the ghetto, where Jews would be exposed to retaliation, but rather near the Jasna Góra monastery. In retaliation, twelve Christian Poles were executed.

\(^{1171}\) Brzezinski, *Isaac’s Army*, 223–24. Yitzhak Zuckerman was cared for by Polish strangers and, although wounded,
By nine o’clock everyone but Menachem had returned [to the secret base on the Aryan side]. … Suddenly, there was a loud knock on the door. We knew that behind the stoves were weapons, ammunition and banners. One of the guys got up to hide them, but at the same moment a freezing call sliced the air: “Hands up?” Germans burst through the door with guns drawn. We froze on the spot. There were many people: officers, Gestapo men and civilians. They shoved us into the hallway with our hands raised. It wasn’t hard to sense their exalted mood. “We caught a gang of Jews!”

The outside of the building was surrounded by tens, perhaps hundreds, of Germans. It seemed they had received information about us; it looked like an ambush. Guards were stationed beside the doors. There was no chance of escape. … They found the supply of weapons and the banners. … … Two vehicles were parked in front of the gate. They pushed us inside and laid us down one on top of the other. By the light of the moon we could see Menachem. He was lying in a corner of the vehicle covered in blood. … When we reached the prison we learned that the two informers were (Julian Appel and Natan Weissman) young men who worked with our people in Krakow.

… The vehicle stopped beside one of the buildings. I knew that one of our people lived there with the Polish gatekeeper. After a few minutes, the gatekeeper’s entire family was dragged into the vehicle. On the way the car stopped a few more times, dragging in additional prisoners. Eventually there were about twenty of us. …

We reached the Gestapo headquarters on Pomorska Street. … There were many weeks of interrogations, beatings, pain and blood. …

Meanwhile the Germans continued searching for the “bandits”. … They went through the city and surroundings. … The Germans succeeded in arresting tens of underground activists, Jews and Poles. Every day prison cells were filled with additional prisoners.1172

When a number of Poles and Jews from the Polish Communist People’s Guard made their way from Kraków to Klimontów and Prądnik Biały, they were betrayed by Birner (“Mietek”), one of the Jewish members of the underground group.1173

As in Warsaw, Jewish agents played a crucial role in ferreting out Jews passing and hiding in Kraków and its vicinity after the liquidation of the ghetto. According to Aleksander Biberstein, the “greatest threat” facing Jews with “Aryan” papers, i.e., passing as Poles, was “confidants in the service of the Germans, who most often were Jewish betrayers. … Many cases of denunciation are known to me where Polish rescuers lost their lives along with the Jews they hid.” Biberstein mentions the following victims of Jewish betrayal by way of example: Dr. Michał Schnell, Dr. Wilhelm Porański, Dr. Izydor Fischhab, Dr. Zygmunt Thur, Dr. Regina Thurowa, Dr. Maria Hirschtal, Dr. Leopold Jakobsohn, Dr. Adolf Engel, Dr. Maria Englowa, Dr. Helen Fisch.1174 Sometimes fate smiled on near victims and they managed to avoid falling into the
hands of the Germans. A Polish “Blue” policeman in Kraków rescued a Jewish family from a Jewish informer named Ignacy Taubman:

Members of the clandestine Organization to Assist Jews [Żegota] secured us an apartment at 30 Sebastian Street. However, this was the apartment of a policeman named Pitera, and Mama was afraid to stay there. Then, it turned out that this Polish policeman was one of the most decent men Mama encountered during the war. …

We were spied on all this time by a certain Jew, Ignacy Taubman, who was a Gestapo informer and wanted to denounce us. Policeman Pitera relocated us to Józefińska Street, because Germans used to drop in on him, and this was dangerous for us. There, we saw Taubman again snooping under our windows. 1175

The activities of a Jewish woman identified as Stella (perhaps Stefania Brandstätter), who became the mistress of a high-ranking Gestapo officer, are described by her friend Samuel Honig:

Nobody in the ghetto knew or would ever suspect that Stella, moving freely in Krakow, would be a denouncer, nor the Jewish people hiding their identity in the free Aryan part of the city. On one occasion she met a school friend on the street. … She whispered to him that she was also hiding on Aryan papers and she assumed so was he. … She … proposed to meet him in the same café the next day. … He came on time, but Stella wasn’t there. Instead two Gestapos in civilian clothes suddenly appeared and took him away. Stella did this not once, but often, denouncing friends and mothers with children. … a person like Stella is called a “muser”, a denouncer, and people that she denounced faced certain death. 1176

Ada Kessler-Pawlak confirms that Jews in hiding had to be on guard constantly because of the large number of Jewish spies seeking out fellow Jews whom they often knew. 1177 Maria Stecko reported that the Gestapo employed Jews at the railway station to detect Jews leaving or arriving in Kraków. 1178 One such agent was Salo Weininger, who made travel for Jews extremely hazardous. Weininger also patrolled streetcars looking for Jews passing as Poles. One of the Jews he apprehended and brought to the police station was Leibek Haffner. Weininger was also involved in a scam, orchestrated by the German

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1175 Śliwowska, The Last Eyewitnesses, 8. Ignacy Taubman, who also went by the name of Gołębiowski, was eventually shot by the Polish underground in a failed execution attempt. He may have settled in Australia under the name Borkowski. See also the testimony of Julian Aleksandrowicz, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 3202, who was stocked by Taubman.


1177 Kessler-Pawlak, Nie chcę nocy, 93, 102.

1178 Testimony of Maria Stecko in Grynberg and Kotowska, Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945, 25.
authorities, in which some 80 Jews were lured out of hiding on false promises of passage to a safe country; these Jews were taken to the former Jewish cemetery on Jerozolimska Street and shot in 1943.\footnote{Mędykowski, “Przeciw swoim: Wzorce kolaboracji żydowskiej w Krakowie i okolicy,” Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały, no. 2 (2006): 207–208. According to a Jewish source, Weininger was arrested after the war in Romania or Hungary but managed to buy himself out from prison. See the testimony of Marian Faber, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 4604, as cited in Czajka, Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz/Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue, vol. 5, 215.}

Janina Ekier recalls that her brother, who was passing as a Christian, was denounced by a Jewish Gestapo agent at the train station in Kraków and taken to Plaszów (he later perished in Auschwitz): “Jews from the ghetto had to turn in every day ten people hiding on Aryan papers.”\footnote{Isakiewicz, Harmonika, 248.}

Izydor Landesdorfer is another Jew who testifies to the activities of Jewish Gestapo agents operating in Kraków. Groups of Jews—consisting of men, women and children, who had been ferreted out of their hiding places on the Aryan side by these agents—were brought to the concentration camp at Plaszów and executed.\footnote{Marian Turski, ed., Losy żydowskie: Świadectwo żywych, vol. 2 (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Żydów Kombatantów i Poszkodowanych w II Wojnie Światowej, 1999), 184–85.}

The Jewish informers Julek Apel and Natan Weissman discovered and betrayed Jews hiding in a bunker in the nearby town of Bochnia.\footnote{Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, The Children Accuse, 173.}

Informers and agents active in Bochnia included Mojsze Müller and Szymon Friedman, both from Kraków, and a teenager from Wiśnicz named Fichtner or Wertheimer. Müller travelled with the Gestapo throughout the Kraków district. After the liquidation of the ghetto in Bochnia, the Jewish police, among them Cukerman, ferreted out several hundred Jews hidden in bunkers. One of the Jews found in a bunker, Kalfus from Wiśnicz, betrayed the Jews who had smuggled his brother out of the Kraków ghetto, hoping thereby to save his own life.\footnote{These informers were eventually themselves killed by the Gestapo in November 1942.}

A Jew by the name of Jakob Szindler (or Schindler), who passed as a Pole, took in dozens of wealthy Jewish escapees from the Kraków ghetto for large sums. Once the charges ran out of cash, they paid their rent with valuables. After running out of any means of support the Jewish fugitives were handed over to the police. Szindler eventually betrayed his own wife when she found out that he kept a young mistress, who was also a Gestapo collaborator.\footnote{Frister, The Cap, or the Price of a Life, 76–80.}

Marta Puretz approached Elżbieta Jasińska, who was involved with the Polish underground, to obtain false documents. Puretz arrived at Jasińska’s home for the documents accompanied by the Gestapo, who arrested Jasińska and deported her to Auschwitz.\footnote{Mędykowski, “Przeciw swoim: Wzorce kolaboracji żydowskiej w Krakowie i okolicy,” Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały, no. 2 (2006): 207–208.}

Henryk Reiss encountered Marcel Gruner, a prewar acquaintance, in the town square. Acting in a friendly manner and not wearing an armband, Grüner asked Reiss where he was staying and took Reiss to see his cousin Genia Stillman, who was surprised to see him and was panicky. Reiss managed to extricate himself and left for Warsaw. Later he learned that Grüner was executed by the Polish underground for betraying Jews in hiding.\footnote{Reiss, Z deszczu pod rynnę..., 108–9.}
Henryk Wachtel, who was passing as a Pole, ran into Mojżesz Sellinger, a good prewar friend turned confidante, on the street and unsuspectingly agreed to meet with him to discuss plans to escape to Hungary. Sellinger came to the meeting with two Gestapo men who arrested Wachtel. Wachtel was deported to Płaszów.\footnote{Mędykowski, “Przeciw swoim: Wzorce kolaboracji żydowskiej w Krakowie i okolicy,” \textit{Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materały}, no. 2 (2006): 209.} A German Jew by the name of Förster ran a restaurant near the ghetto which was a meeting place for Jewish confidantes and their German overlords. He acted as a spy and confidante, moving around both inside and outside the ghetto without an armband.\footnote{Mędykowski, “Przeciw swoim: Wzorce kolaboracji żydowskiej w Krakowie i okolicy,” \textit{Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materały}, no. 2 (2006): 208–209.}

Roman Frister had several run-ins with Jewish Gestapo agents—professional informers—spying on Jews passing in Kraków:

There was something shiftless about the way he stood, as if waiting to see what would happen next. He was about fifty, a short, thin fellow in an unfashionable grey suit and black hat. … The connection between the strange onlooker and the police only dawned on me when the policeman holding my ID turned to look at him. The man nodded with a slow, accidental-looking movement of his head that must have been a pre-arranged signal.

That Jewish agent reappeared at the police station to provide positive identification for the German police.\footnote{Frister, \textit{The Cap, or the Price of a Life}, 112–14, 193–94.} Later on another Jewish informer by the name of Diamant (likely Maurycy Diamand) betrayed Frister’s parents, who were arrested in their home by the German police and perished in concentration camps.\footnote{Ibid., 193–98.}

Stanisław Taubenschlag, who passed as a Pole in Kraków, recalls:

They [i.e., the Germans] formed, at 6 Sławkowska Street, what we Jews amongst ourselves called “the Jewish Gestapo”. This was a group of informers comprising several Jewish traitors. Among them were Diamant, Szpiec, Branstätter, Appel. Their task was to denounce to the Gestapo Jews who were in hiding.\footnote{Taubenschlag (Townsend), \textit{To Be a Jew in Occupied Poland}, 31.}

Henryk Zvi Zimmerman provides extensive information about Jewish collaborators operating both inside and outside the ghetto in Kraków:\footnote{Henryk Zvi Zimmerman, \textit{And Tell the Deeds of God} (forthcoming in English translation), especially chapters 13, 15, 17; published in Polish as \textit{Przeżyłem, pamiętam, świadczę} (Kraków: Baran i Suszczyński, 1997). As in Warsaw, Zimmerman notes that the Jews in the Kraków ghetto refused to believe firsthand reports brought to the ghetto about the operation of the death camps. Ibid., chapter 14.}

… people from the ghetto were rounded up according to special lists. These lists had been drawn up by police informers of Jewish origin—who were generally well known to the residents—or by
other secret collaborators with the mass murderers, who were all the more dangerous because no one knew how to identify them. The lists were drawn up for the most part by Spira’s people [Symche or Simcha Spira headed the Jewish order police], a particular sort of “elite,” distinguished for their sadism and abasement, and handpicked by their chief. One of Spira’s most zealous collaborators was the agent Szymon Schpitz [Szpic]. … The lists were, of course, a way of settling personal scores as well as of fulfilling German wishes. … Blackmail was applied against the wealthiest families, who were rounded up in the hope that they would offer monetary ransom to the Gestapo. This rounding up of people was a way of keeping the Jewish population in continual fear.

When it came to uncovering safe houses for Jews on the Aryan side, informers, searches and round-ups took an enormous toll.

Unfortunately, Jewish informers were best at recognizing their fellow Jews! Determined criminals or desperate people of weak character often fell victim to the agents. … Worst of all, however, were the German agents of Jewish origins. One of them was a stunningly beautiful gimnazjum student, Staf Branstetter [Stefania Brandstätter], who got herself mixed up in some sort of affair of the heart with Rudolf Körner, assistant chief of the Gestapo Political Department. … She supposedly became his mistress, and if this were indeed true, then she represented a source of reliable information. Her looks, deportment and knowledge of Hebrew made her one of the most dangerous seekers-out of shelters, bunkers, and safe houses. She spied principally on wealthy Jews who had enough money and valuables to assure themselves of good living conditions in hiding. … A second perfidious operative and informer was an acquaintance of mine, another student from the Hebrew gimnazjum, Artek Löffler. … A pleasant-looking youth, he had blond hair and did not appear at first sight to be Jewish. He became especially dangerous for the young resistance fighters and the economic underground.

The Jewish informers, who turned against their own people to serve the oppressors, had become a true plague. They thought that they could save their own lives and families through servility and treason. There were others, psychopaths, who were even worse. The chance of accumulating property and tormenting their brothers gave them pleasure. They were ardent and effective collaborators in the liquidation of armed groups and the denunciation of Jews in hiding. … it was decided by a majority vote [of the Jewish underground] that the Jewish informers would have to be liquidated as a final measure, but this should not occur inside the ghetto—so that the Germans would not be sure that Jews were responsible. Otherwise, they might be provoked to mass executions and a speeding up of the liquidation of all those who remained in the ghetto. … We had various ways of doing this, since we were cooperating with Aryan partisan bands.

Zimmerman also describes the execution of seven men, among them one or two Jews, hanged near Wodna Street and the Jewish cemetery in the Płaszów suburb. The Germans assembled the Jewish Council and others there on June 26, 1942 to witness the spectacle, the first public execution carried out in the city. Jewish policemen brought a long rope, cut it in lengths, made nooses, fastened them around the
necks of the condemned men, stood them on a board, and then, on the given signal, removed the board. The condemned men were suspended from the gallows at the same time.

The executioner was Feiler, an OD man … He was clearly necessary to German propaganda, which wanted to show in the next day’s newspapers how partisans were hanged by a Jewish executioner in the presence of dignitaries from the ghetto. Nevertheless, the Germans knew that, all their efforts at isolation notwithstanding, the contacts between the Jewish underground and Polish partisans were growing …

The Jewish police in fact carried out further executions of Poles in Kraków at the behest of the Gestapo. A few days later, on July 1, 1942, in Wola Duchacka, they hanged 11 more Poles sentenced to death in retaliation for the liquidation, by the Polish underground, of a German confidant.1193

Jewish informers, agents, and collaborators were active throughout occupied Poland. They held out promises for those willing to pay their price, but were ruthless towards who stood in their way. Corruption flourished and small fortunes were made. Jack Werber, the son of a well-to-do merchant in Radom, wrote:

In Radom there was a man named Brenner, who had been deported from Germany a year before as an Ostjüde. People felt sorry for him at first, and generally made him feel welcome. But he turned out to be a traitor and an informer for the Nazis. By acting friendly towards everyone he was able to get invited to many peoples’ homes, including our own. In this way he was able to learn who had money and who didn’t, who was politically active and who wasn’t, and so on. Brenner also became a good friend of Nathan. Like many others, Nathan divulged quite a bit about his financial dealings to Brenner as well as those of the rest of the family. Nathan was flattered by Brenner’s friendship and got involved in some of his schemes. What Nathan didn’t know was that Brenner was also having an affair with his pretty wife.

Nathan began to ask me for loans. I gave him money on several occasions, but when I saw that he wasn’t paying me back, I realized that this was simple extortion. As a result, I stopped giving him money. Unbeknownst to me, my father continued to make payments to Nathan, fearing that he would betray us to the SS. When my father finally put an end to the blackmail, Nathan became angry and told Brenner that I had hidden leather in my house. Brenner related this information to the Gestapo. However, when the Nazis came to the house and tore up the floorboards, they were unable to find the merchandise because I had already sold it.1194

Joseph Freeman, a resident of Radom, recalls some of his own dealings with the Germans:

1193 Krystian Brodacki, “Co z tymi napisami?” Tygodnik Solidarność, June 22, 2001. In both cases, the inscriptions on the monuments blame only the “Nazi occupier” or “Nazi executioners” for these crimes but, as that author correctly points out, the actual perpetrators were neither Nazis nor occupiers.

I then worked for the disinfection department … The SS had ordered the Jewish police to disinfect the ghetto with sulfur, block by block. … the rich came to pay the police in order to avoid the process. The police then sent them to our department where I collected the money—forty złoty [złoty] per apartment—with my assistant, a boy named Mietek Wiszlicky. … As we worked, I gave the head of the typhus department, Gimpel Weintraub, the names of the rich as well and their payment which he divided among the three of us, the police, and Dr. Szwenderowicz, the hospital director. In order to make extra money, over the next few months of my work I accumulated 4,000 pounds of sulfur and sold it to Polish citizens. Money, as long as we were in Radom, opened doors.

Some Jews who felt it would save them by collaborating had reported the wealth of my family to the police. After the first day of my imprisonment, my parents found out they would be required to pay the police a ransom of 50,000 złoty. …

Upon my release I did not go back to my job …

With money it was possible to gain work that was not too difficult. The Jewish police and individuals in the Arbeitsamt (employment office) knew which jobs were easier and would secure them for a price. After a while my father was able to arrange to pay a large sum of money in exchange for a position for me at the Kromolowsky [Kromołowski] Palace factory.

Knowing that in the ghetto I found ways to obtain food, a quite wealthy many by the name of Mr. Richtman approached me and asked if I could buy food for him and others, saying I would be paid for doing so. …

I decided I had to speak with a Volksdeutsch named Minsky who was the gatekeeper in the small building at the factory’s entrance. … I approached Minsky the next evening … Talking to him, I began to feel we could do business. …

It took a lot of courage to go to him the next evening and ask him to help me buy food. I said I would pay him. … Later that evening I spoke with Richman to tell him to have the money ready.

The next evening I returned to see Minsky. I paid him for the basket of food he had ready and took the food back to my room, where I divided it into small packages, then brought them to Richman. This was the first time I made money selling food. …

Pulling my little cart full of food, I returned to Minsky, paid him fifty złoty, then went to my room, as I had the night before divided the food into small packages, and brought them to Richman. That night there were people waiting in his room to buy food. Shortly I sold all of it. I made my first 400 złoty profit and I had some free food, too.\footnote{Joseph Freeman, \textit{Job: The Story of a Holocaust Survivor} (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 1996), 19–21, 33–35.}

However, most Jews were not so fortunate and enterprising. With the help of Polish friends Dr. Lejbuś Dyment and his wife had moved to Radom from Szydłowiec and lived there under false identities. They were soon denounced to the Gestapo by a Jewish policeman and arrested. Although tortured, Dyment did
not betray his Polish benefactors and committed suicide in prison; his wife was deported to Auschwitz.  

A Jew confined to the Szkolna Street camp in Radom recalled:

I remembered what had happened to Dudek Margulies. He had plotted an escape, and even succeeded in getting false papers attesting to being a Christian. One night he managed to escape and was supposed to be joined by his friends the next day. Gestapo agents, supplied with information furnished by informers planted by them in many of the camps, swooped down and executed all of Dudek’s friends as well as his aged mother.

When a young Jewish woman turned to Dr. Szendorowicz, the Judenrat representative, for protection from deportation for her mother and her sister, his reaction was brutal.

Szendorowicz lost his temper now; he had to show the Germans how he dealt with such situations. “Stop making a spectacle of yourself,” he shouted. “Your tears will not help anyone. I will make no exceptions.”

Bella rose now. Her hair was disheveled and her face streaked with tears. “No exceptions, you say?” she screamed. “What about your mistresses, with the medical arm bands you gave them? And if I would hand you money, then what would you say? You’re a dirty scoundrel and a shameful traitor.” She spat the words at him.

Szenderowicz clenched his fists and screamed for “Ordner!” As though out of the shadows, two Jewish policemen appeared and began to pull Bella away. In the courtyard, one of them tried to remove her medical arm band. She resisted so hard that she knocked him to the ground. An S.S. detachment came by, and one of the officers ordered the Jews to leave Bella alone.

In the Łódź ghetto,

On 7 June 1944, our enthusiasm was suddenly dampened. In the preceding days, round-ups and arrests of large numbers of underground radio-listeners had taken place—amongst them, my school friend’s father, Yankel Weksler, his two brothers and many others. A Jewish Kripo informer, by the name of Sankiewicz, had denounced them, and they were interrogated, tortured and taken away, never to be seen again.

According to Jewish sources, in Opatów,

We cannot dismiss the role of informers in the ghetto. A young German Jew by the name of Mandelbaum, regularly supplied the German gendarmes with information on what went on in the

1196 Jacek Wijaczka, ed., Żydzi szydłowieccy: Materiały sesji popularnonaukowej 22 lutego 1997 roku (Szydłowiec: Muzeum Ludowych Instrumentów Muzycznych w Szydłowcu, 1997), 131 n.64.
1197 Friedman, Nazi Hunter, 63.
1198 Friedman, Nazi Hunter, 55–56.
ghetto—the smuggling of food or the secret slaughter of chickens or other livestock. Some of these “transgressors” were apprehended [by the Jews] and sentenced to death. One day Mandelbaum got drunk and paraded through the ghetto streets singing songs of the Germans. The Germans caught him and shot him. Another young Jew, Poznerson from Lodz [Łódź], approached Governor Frank of the General-Government requesting that his parents be brought from Ghetto Lodz. In return, he promised to reveal to the Germans names of Opatow Jews who had hidden property. Poznerson also indicated in his letter that the Opatow Judenrat had bribed local officials and security police to avoid searches where the property was hidden. When the local SD found out, they arrested Poznerson and shot him to death.1200

According to Nachum Alpert, the German Sicherheitsdienst (security services) “kept installing agents among the Jewish population in the ghetto” of Słonim and describes the activities of a refugee from Warsaw named Mariampol.1201 Another informer was Sarah, the daughter of a poor old Jewish woman whom she renounced, who “gave the Germans much useful information.”1202 Nechama Tec describes the activities of a Jewish informer in the Lida ghetto.1203 The Germans employed a Jewish woman whom they had apprehended with false papers as a confidante to seek out other Jews hiding on the Aryan side in Wilno.1204 Isaac Kowalski mentions the activities of a Jewish Gestapo agent named Goldin operating among the Jewish partisans in the Wilno area.1205 Yehuda Bauer refers to a Jew named Schulzinger, from the town of Szczuczyn, who informed on Jews who were planning to break out of the forced labour camp in Wilejka Stara, near Mołodeczno; except for a small group who managed to flee in time, all those left in the camp were killed.1206 Witnesses report on “traitors and enemy agents” in the ghetto in Baranowicze.1207 An escape of Jews from a Luftwaffe base near that town was betrayed by a Jewish teenager from Łódź who worked there and informed the German commander about the underground group.1208 Jack Sutin describes the betrayal of Oswald Rufeisen in Mir by a Jewish collaborator named Stanislawski.1209

The activities of Isser Schmidt, a special agent with the Soviet Jewish Brigade operating in the Rudniki forest south of Wilno, are described as follows:

He took to hunting Jews who collaborated with the Germans. … In the winter of 1943, he grew suspicious of Natek [Natan] Ring, a Jewish policeman from the ghetto. Ring was charged with collaborating. In the ghetto, Jews had seen him lead enemy soldiers to rooms where people were

1202 Ibid., 339. Sarah ended up leaving with the Germans when they retreated.
1203 Tec, Defiance, 178.
1204 Account of Mozes Fejgenberg in Gryenberg and Kotowska, Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945, 540.
1207 Ibid., 148.
1208 Ibid., 138.
hiding. On his latest venture [to Wilno], he had moved through the city with surprising ease; some felt he was even now working for the Germans. Isser was bareheaded as he led Natek into the trees. Two shots and the birds stopped singing. Isser came back down the trail alone, wearing a fur cap and new boots.\textsuperscript{1210}

Haim Lantzman (Lansman), a Jewish agent provocateur active in the Nowogródek ghetto was executed by Jewish partisans when he was sent by the Germans into the forest to act as an informer.\textsuperscript{1211} It is not clear whether this is the same incident as mentioned in other sources:

In the winter of 1942/43 an underground group of dissenters formed in Novogrudok [Nowogródek] with plans of revolt in the ghetto and escape to the forest. ... The Germans tried to infiltrate the underground through a Jewish informer, but he was disclosed, tried by his friends and executed.\textsuperscript{1212}

On 4 February 1943 we heard the bad news that the Ghetto had been liquidated in the early hours. And on the following day there was an additional Jew in our camp. He said that he had escaped from the massacre and managed to get into the camp. It had not snowed that night, the leaders looked for his footprints near the toilets, but could not find any. He had been planted by the Germans. A meeting was called by the escape organizers and it was decided to behead him. The execution was done the same day.\textsuperscript{1213}

When a group of Jews decided to dig their way out of the ghetto in Nowogródek, they discovered that they had been infiltrated by an informer. Sonia O. recalled:

In the ghetto I was part of a small group determined to find a way out; we had been digging a tunnel. A kid dug with us, but we found out he had been hired by the Germans and [Jewish] police to inform. We later learned that he had been responsible for the deaths and capture of several families. Apparently the Germans and police paid him or told him he his family wouldn’t be killed if he told them where to find Jews.

There was a barber in our group, a gentle guy; we knew him as a person who never hurt anyone. … One night, after digging, he grabbed an ax and without a word hacked off the head of that kid.

\textsuperscript{1209} Sutin, \textit{Jack and Rochelle}, 59–60.
\textsuperscript{1210} Cohen, \textit{The Avengers}, 121–22. Several other Jewish ghetto policemen were executed together with Natek (Natan) Ring: Lutek Zalcwasser, Schwarzbard, and Szurka Kewes. See the testimony of Abram Mieszczankański, dated June 10, 1947, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 2536.
\textsuperscript{1213} Kagan and Cohen, \textit{Surviving the Holocaust with the Russian Jewish Partisans}, 170.
remember his eyes; how wild they were. We buried the head and body in the tunnel. No one ever spoke of it.\textsuperscript{1214}

Several accounts describe the activities of Yitzhak (Izaak) Kaplan from Mielec, who was allegedly a prewar Communist, then a member of the Judenrat, and finally a full-fledged Gestapo agent.\textsuperscript{1215} According to Irene Eber, Kaplan and possibly his brothers were active informers in the Cyranka-Berdechów labour camp. They also hunted down Jews who were sheltered by Poles.

They were free to come and go as they pleased, using their freedom not only to betray Jews sheltered by Poles in the vicinity of Mielec, but also to give away anyone who had come into the camp illegally. … it was a Kaplan who informed the Germans about the three tired fugitives in the barracks. Father, Aunt Feige, and Cousin Esther were apparently shot in the camp … The bodies of the three were left to lie where they had fallen for all to see when they returned from their day of hard labor. Later they were buried in the forest surrounding the camp. To this day somewhere in a forest near Mielec in an unmarked grave are their remains, as are the bones of many other victims of the Kaplans and the Germans.\textsuperscript{1216}

The Jewish policemen in the work camp near Mielec—among them Yitzhak Kaplan, the Kleinman brothers from Wielopole, Fenichel from Mielec, Rosenwasser from Nowy Sącz, the brothers Henryk and Josek Friedman from Wielopole, Hirsch Rosenblum (known as Gawryś) from Dąbrowa Tarnowska, Buciu Gotinger from Mielec, Imerglück, Wilhelm Chilowicz from Radomyśl Wielki (later transferred to Płaszów)—became notorious for abusing and robbing Jewish prisoners and denounced those who planned to escape from the camp.\textsuperscript{1217} Chaja Rosenblatt mentions a group of Jewish men from Radomyśl Wielki near Mielec, who were known as “dangerous denouncers.” When she and her husband took refuge with a villager, this Pole was also hiding these Jews from Radomyśl Wielki, and, as it turned out, was working in cahoots with them. The Jews robbed the Rosenblatts of all of their possessions and even wanted to kill them.\textsuperscript{1218}

A Jew from Wasilków near Białystok, mentions a Jewish Communist from his small town who switched masters after the German invasion of that region in June 1941, and began “to serve the Nazis as a so-called

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{1214} Glass, \textit{Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust}, 71.
\bibitem{1215} Mark Verstandig, \textit{I Rest My Case} (Melbourne: Saga Press, 1995), 142–43.
\bibitem{1216} Irene Eber, \textit{The Choice: Poland, 1939–1945} (New York: Schocken Books, 2004), 130. Eber owes her life to at least two Polish families who aided her—Korpantowa and Leokadja and Stanislaw Orłowski, neither of whom have been recognized by Yad Vashem.
\bibitem{1217} Krempa, \textit{Zagłada Żydów mieleckich}, 57, 104, 149, 122–23, based in part on the testimony of Izak Steiglitz, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, Record Group 301, number 1637. Hirsch Rosenblum survived the war and was investigated for abusing fellow prisoners, but the outcome of this matter is not known.
\bibitem{1218} Tomasz Frydel, “Konstrukcja pamięci o ratowaniu Żydów na polskiej wsi: Studium przypadku Radomyśla Wielkiego i powiatu mieleckiego,” in Sitarek, Trębacz, and Wiatr, \textit{Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji}, 352–53. Based on the testimony of Chaja Rosenblatt, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 303, number 318. Chaja Rosenblatt and her husband were hidden afterwards in Dulcza Mała near Radomyśl Wielki by the family of Adam Kokoszka, whom she endangered by giving birth to a child there.
\end{thebibliography}
Another Jew describes how he had to flee from the Białystok ghetto because a Jewish policeman reported that he was smuggling cows into the ghetto and wanted to hand him over to the Germans. Afterwards, during the deportations from Białystok,

The first operation of expelling Jews on February 5th [1943], the first victims in Białystok were the Jews who had recently arrived from the forests in the area. The veteran residents of Białystok had worried about themselves a long time ago, and had prepared hiding places for times of trouble, supplied with food and arrangements for providing air to breathe. A person from outside had no possibility of joining the veteran groups. …

One of the neighbors, a baker by profession, also requested that they accept him into our hiding place. The owner of the place refused, and then the baker threatened to inform the Germans about them. Not having a choice, they also accepted the baker.

To our dismay, after a few days, the Germans, accompanied by Jewish policemen, revealed our hiding place. Every day, from three o’clock in the morning until three o’clock in the afternoon, there were searches in the courtyards of the houses and many Jews were taken out of their safe places. …

In the Łódź ghetto,

The group of Bundists, Zionists, and others who organized the secret radio listening met a tragic end. Betrayed by an unknown informer, all but one were arrested between July 6 and 8, 1944. The remaining member, a Zionist activist, committed suicide so that he would not fall into the hands of the Gestapo.

In the Radzyń ghetto, a clandestine youth group, composed of members of the Hashomer Hatzair and other Zionist organizations, who sought to arrange for Jews to flee to the forests and set up fighting units, gained the support of the Hasidic Rabbi Shmuel Shlomo Leiner. In June 1942, the Gestapo learned of this through informers and executed the rabbi in the square in front of the synagogue. When the ghetto was liquidated in October 1942, the Jewish police were ordered to lead the Germans to possible hiding places.

Edi Weinstein, an escapee from Treblinka, recalls his experiences in a work camp in Siedlce:

I was to report to Moshe Huberman, a Jew from Lodz [Łódź] who had recently reappeared in the camp. Huberman was on friendly terms with the camp commander … and commanded the Jewish

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1219 Munro, Białystok to Birkenau, 82.
1220 Testimony of Paltiel Lopata, dated October 5, 1948, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, Internet: <www.zabludow.com/Paltierstestimony.html>.
1221 Chaim Yehuda Goldberg, “At the Height of the Decay,” in Kalisher, Sokoly, 158ff.
1222 Trunk, Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution, 37.
police in the camp. Known as an informer and an extortionist, he harassed anyone from whom he thought he could squeeze a little money. … Huberman said he heard we had been in Treblinka and possessed a great deal of money. He demanded 200 złotys [złoty] from each of us for what he called the “general fund.”

Later, in Łosice, Weinstein recalled:

A new elite took shape, composed mainly of former policemen, most of whom were young men from well-to-do families. They were the first to move into the best apartments. They still had their parents’ money, retrieved from the family strongboxes. Living for the moment, they often got together to drink and gamble at cards. Most of those who returned to the ghetto lacked the means to live that way … Anonymous informers frequently denounced persons with concealed funds … Sometimes the hoarders got off with a beating; in other cases they were locked up until they paid a ransom.

Inmates of the Plaszów concentration camp in the outskirts of Kraków recall:

Lackeys from among the Jewish prisoners helped [Goeth, the camp commander] plunder all the camps [around Cracow]. … In our camp, Plaszow, his faithful servants were the camp eldest, [Wilek or Wilhelm] Chilowicz, and his wife [Maria], as well as several other souls who had sold themselves to the devil. … Once, as we were being made to do one of these additional tasks, the Jewish overseer imagined that I was doing my job negligently. He attacked me viciously, beating my left hand with his whip, and my hand swelled up and turned blue. … That lackey of the murderers caused trouble for many of the prisoners, but he got his due after the war, when he returned to Cracow and was hanged.

One day, I had worked night shift and was allowed to sleep during the day. Suddenly, out of my sleep, I heard someone yell, “Down from the bunk! Down, fast!” It was the policeman everyone feared, tall, fat, brutal, aggressive. He yelled insults: unrepeatable, unmentionable words. I didn’t get a chance to explain that I had worked all night. He hit me with a lash three times on my back. Great red welts suddenly appeared. My skin was scarred for weeks. It hurt, naturally, but no more than the pain of my humiliation. There wasn’t a single German in sight! There was nothing to justify his action but his own base nature.

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1224 Weinstein, Quenched Steel, 74–75. All of the belongings of the author’s father were stolen while he was in the camp. Ibid., 92.

1225 Weinstein, Quenched Steel, 86. Another Jewish testimony from Łosice describes how, at the beginning of 1942, the Judenrat asked the German authorities to expel Jewish refugees from Warsaw who supported themselves by begging. Some of them died during their forced return to Warsaw. The Jewish police later assisted the Germans in rounding up and deporting the Jews. See Zylbersztajn, A gdyby to było Wasze dziecko?, 28–29, 146.

1226 Ferderber-Salz, And the Sun Kept Shining..., 100–102.
Once the same policeman came into the barracks and saw a woman sitting on the edge of a table, talking to another woman. He lifted the lash and hit her so hard that she lost one eye as a result. She was a poet; her name was Ester Sztub.\footnote{Thon, \textit{I Wish It Were Fiction}, 99.}

Anyone who faltered or did not work quickly was whipped by the \textit{Ordnungsdienst} (Jewish police) appointed by the murderous [\textit{Kommandant}] Mueller. \textit{Ordnungsdienst} Chilowicz and his wife—a petite archetype of evil—and the brutish Finkelstein were the cruelest. Always dressed in uniforms, these \textit{Kapos} beat, pushed, and mercilessly whipped their fellow inmates. I remember one woman was forced to lug large rocks up the hill, but was not fast enough for Finkelstein, so in a rage, he whipped her. … After the war, this animal received the long jail term he deserved. …

One day Father told me that \textit{Ordnungsdienst} Zanger had insulted and beaten him. He had tears in his eyes when he told me the story of how Zanger caught him in \textit{talis} and \textit{tefillin} at the moment he called an \textit{Appell} [roll-call]. Father was not able to put away his \textit{talis} and \textit{tefillin} fast enough for Zanger, so the \textit{Kapo} cursed, shove, and hit him. …

Mundek Reich, the inveterate bully, was the \textit{Ordnungsdienst} assigned to the barracks containing the tinsmithing and roofing workshop. When I commented to fellow prisoner Shloime Lefkovich that Jewish \textit{Kapos} were terrible, he tried to curry favor by repeating my opinions to Mundek, who punched me in the face several times. Reich had been a professional boxer, and my face was swollen for days. After the war, Reich was tried in Poland for committing atrocities, and sentenced to two years in the penitentiary, a lenient sentence in my opinion.\footnote{Tenenbaum, \textit{Legacy and Redemption}, 126, 131–32, 137. Tenenbaum, later imprisoned in Melk, a small camp 100 km east of Mauthausen, recalled a German gypsy called \textit{Zigeunerkapo}: “When he got hold of an inmate, he usually finished him off, and we were terrified of him.” Ibid., 147. The Russian prisoners of war were known for “their habitual thievery” and the French inmates for their antisemitism. Ibid., 148. When liberated from Ebensee, another satellite camp of Mauthausen: “The Russians were hell-bent on revenge, and those of us who could muster the strength joined them. The first \textit{Kapo} we caught was the despicable gypsy who had tortured and killed so many of us. The gang beat him badly and kicked him to the ground. We urinated on him, and then the Russians unloaded their weapons into him. I was not proud of what happened, but under the circumstances, the \textit{Zigeunerkapo} got what he deserved.” Ibid., 160.}

But the \textit{ordners} and Kapos beat people with truncheons. Mrs. Hilewicz [Chilowicz] from Kraków, in a shapely suit and knee boots, goaded the women on with a riding whip: “Hurry on, you Venetian cunts, you’re not in Drohobycz!” “Hurry on, pricks!” shouted Mr. Hilewicz, the boss of the men’s camp. The jackals approached us before we entered the showers: “Give me what you have, I’ll give you half of it back. If not, they’ll take all of it.” The people gave, and naturally didn’t get anything back. And anyway everything went into the pockets of the Hilewiczes and Finkelstein, the main \textit{Kapo}. … Kleinman, a young son-of-a-bitch, would position us by the barracks next to the ditch filled with shit. I stood in the first line of fives and shielded Father who could barely stand on his legs. Kleinman walked up and pushed him. “Straighten up, old geezer!” I pushed him off and he fell into the ditch with shit. Everybody was delighted, but Finkelstein came and dislocated my jaw with a single blow.\footnote{Account of Dr. Leopold Lustig in Grynberg, \textit{Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories}, 33.}
The head of the Jewish police in Płaszów had been a suspected informer, but said he’d only been a milkman, in Cracow. His name was Chilewicz. He knew I was going by a false birth certificate, that I was still a child. His wife was the head inmate of the women’s camp. Soon, during an Appel, Chilewicz’s wife took me out of line and sent me to the children’s home where all the other children were being gathered for deportation. She said I was also a child and belonged there. [The author managed to escape and hide.] …

Finally, the head of the women’s camp—Chilewicz’s wife—found out about us and informed the camp commandant, Goeth. This German said to her that if we four children had the guts to jump into the waste to save ourselves, then we should be spared and not deported like the other children. This is how we were able to remain in camp legally.1230

Another memoir identifies Dr. Leon Gross as “the basest collaborator” in Płaszów. (Dr. Gross was another of the very few Jewish collaborators brought to justice after the war in a Polish court, and was sentenced to death for his crimes.) That same author acknowledges: “From the beginning of the war when we lived in Cracow and later in Rzeszów, we were aware of many dangerous Jewish informers working for the Gestapo and other German authorities.” He also takes credit for detecting Moszkac Selinger, one of Kraków’s most notorious Gestapo agents, in Bratislava after the war and ensuring that he was brought to trial.1231

A Jew from Piotrków Trybunalski who was forced to work in the Hasag factory (labour camp) in Częstochowa recalled:

The worst part was going to work and coming back. In the yard, there were always Kapos (Katzet-Polizei or Head foremen) or just “hitters”, who walked around beating up everybody in sight. The worst offender of them was a tall giant whom we called “Bulldog”. His real name was Szie Biodra from Chmielnik. He would walk around with a whip, without feeling or conscience, like a robot, and hit everyone in sight.1232

There are numerous other accounts that attest to similar occurrences throughout German-occupied Poland,1233 as well as in camps in Germany proper:

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1230 Trunk, Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution, 118–19.
1231 Herzog, ...And Heaven Shed No Tears, 306, 311–15.
1232 Kotkowsky, Remnants.
1233 See, for example: Stanisław W. Dobrowolski, Memoary pacyfisty (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1989) (Kraków); Śliwowska, The Last Eyewitnesses, 8 (Kraków), 20 (a denunciation by a Jewish collaborator in the Warsaw ghetto); Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, The Children Accuse, 173 (Bochnia), 183; Peleg-Mariańska and Peleg, Witnesses, 152 (the liquidation in Warsaw of “one of the chief Jewish stool-pigeons, Lolek [Leon] Kosowski”); Szajn Lewin, W getcie warszawskim, 26, 52, 54 (Warsaw); Stanisławczyk, Czterdzieści twardych, 16, 23, 24, 107 (Warsaw); Bednarczyk, Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta, 233 (Warsaw), 234 (Warsaw), 235 (Kraków), 236 (Warsaw), 238 (Kraków and various other localities); Rafael F. Scharf, Poland, What Have I To Do with Thee..., Essays without Prejudice, Bilingual edition (Kraków: Fundacja Judaica, 1996), 45–46 (Kraków); Chwalba, Dzieje Krakowa, vol. 5: Kraków w latach 1939–1945, 159, 287–88 (Kraków); Nechama Tec, Resilience and Courage: Women, Men, and the Holocaust (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 106 (Lwów); Katarzyna Zimmerer, Zamordowany świat: Losy Żydów w Krakowie, 1939–1945 (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2004), 84, 158, 166–67, 179, 180, 189–90, 195, 209, 216 (Kraków). For reports regarding Kaunas, Lithuania, see: Alex Faitelson, Heroism & Bravery in
In Augsburg Soviet prisoners of war stole and robbed. They’d throw a blanket on your head and take away shoes, bread, whatever you had, even bowls and spoons. They had intimate relationships with German criminals for whom they served as whores. And the Gypsies sold themselves too. They worked as barbers and shaved our genitals, so as not to leave a single hair, and they cut us on purpose—“Ah, entschuldigen Jude.” And we had our own sons-of-bitches as well. The Friedman brothers from the Mielec transport sliced our bread more thinly and stole like ravens. Felczer, a Kapo from Sosnowiec, dished out nothing but water from the top of the cauldron, and whoever protested got hit on the head with a ladle. The Greek Jews hated us for “Canada,” the kommando which in Auschwitz sorted out the baggage of those sent to the gas, and gorged themselves, keeping others away. A camp was hatred. They couldn’t do anything to the Germans, so they hated one another. 1234

Abraham Landau, for example, encountered Jewish kapos at several camps, as well as Gypsy kapos.

Without delay we were assigned to a kapo, or foreman, in charge of our block. The kapos at Gutenbrunn were mostly German Jews, so I thought they would go east on us, but this was not so. … Kapos made a pact with the devil: To survive they had to please their masters, which meant oppressing their countrymen. … In exchange for their obedience, kapos received additional freedoms and privileges. You kapo was your master; some of them were angels—friendly while others were the very devil—vicious. …

Evil kapos were not hard to find. The one who earned the distinction of being the worst was the Polish Jew who guarded us at work. He was chosen, no doubt, because he was a big, tall guy and strong as an ox. He was also merciless and stupid. …

Our kapo carried his long, rubber truncheon and beat us along the way. … Many of the boys were not strong enough to put in a full day’s work and fell or fainted. This meant more beatings by the kapo. He didn’t care. He would kill them right away there by the wayside, and they would be taken away and not seen again. …

And there were always kapos who were crueler than others. As we marched back from work, one kapo made us crawl on our hands and knees—fast, then faster—and sing German songs or make animal noises, like a cow or a pig. He did this as we passed through the village in order to humiliate us all the more. 1235

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1234 Account of Dr. Leopold Lustig in Grynberg, Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories, 36–37. Another account in that book notes the hostile attitude of Czech Jews toward Polish Jews in a German camp in Inowrocław: “The bread was divided by Czech women who knew German well. They didn’t wear stripes, they had real shoes and canes and had the right to hit. Polské svíne [“Polish pigs”] they called us. Polské svíne, ted zemřete! They were Jews, but when Jews are by themselves, then this one is Polish, this one Czech, and that one Hungarian, like at no other time.” Ibid., 127.

[Buna subcamp of Auschwitz:] On one very cold evening in late December [1943], … I swapped
the knife [a friend had given me] with another boy for a piece of bread. Unfortunately, the kapo in
charge, a German Jew named Paul, was watching and saw the transaction.

Some of the German Jews, I’m ashamed to say, were as brutal as the SS. They got their orders
from the SS, which they had to follow, but they could have done things to help us not to suffer so
badly. Instead, they did everything they were told, and sometimes more. For their barbarity they got
better rations, better clothes, more privileges. …

Suddenly he [Paul] went wild and grabbed me with both hands. He was very strong and I
weighed about a hundred pounds, so I couldn’t fight back. In the middle of the barracks was a
freestanding stove, and it was very hot. … Paul put me on the stove and held me there for about a
minute, burning my whole behind from below my waist all the way down my butt. He then threw
me on the floor and left.

I staggered back to the barrack, lay down on my bunk and wept. … As darkness fell, I couldn’t
sleep from the pain; blisters erupted all across my buttocks.1236

[Dora-Mittelbau near Nordhausen:] … some Gypsies arrived—the Germans had assigned them as
kapos to watch this particular barrack, and they were a murderous group. They went after us right
away, for no reason, with rubber truncheons, sticks, and whips, beating us over our heads, feet and
bellies.1237

As shown in the examples cited earlier, German Jews, who were known for their contempt of
Ostjuden,1238 acquired a particularly servile and hostile reputation among Polish Jews. An Austrian Jew
who was imprisoned in a labour camp near Landsberg recalled:

The first day in Lager Eins passed with exercises. The Kapo was a Jew from Germany who made
us march up and down the camp with intervals of ‘caps down—caps up’. He especially had it in for
the Jews from Poland, who, in his words, were Muselmaenner [Muselmänn was a nickname for an
emaciated prisoner] anyway, and every bit of food was wasted on them.1239

1236 Ibid., 94–95.
1237 Ibid., 101.
1238 This was not a new phenomenon. Władysław Szpilman, an accomplished Polish pianist, recalled from his days as a
student in prewar Germany: “But I have never met such ‘patriots’ as the German Jews. During my studies in Germany I
used to hear them say: ‘Finally Hitler will come and will straighten out those Eastern Jews [Ostjuden].’”” See
Engelking, Na łące popiołów, 119. See also Hirszfeld, Historia jednego życia, 240, and Steven E. Aschheim, Brothers
and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923 (Madison: The
University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), passim. It should come as no surprise, therefore, as reported by Hannah Arendt,
that “Hitler himself is said to have known three hundred and forty ‘first-rate Jews,’ whom he had either altogether
assimilated to the status of Germans or granted the privileges of half-Jews. Thousand of half-Jews had been exempted
from all restrictions, which might explain [Reinhard] Heydrich’s role in the S.S. and Generalfeldmarschall Erhard
Milch’s role in Göring’s Air Force, for it was generally known that Heydrich and Milch were half-Jews.” See Hannah
Books, 1977), 133.
1239 Ben-Dor, The Darkest Chapter, 112.
Despite their own persecution by the Germans, German Jews often remained ardent German nationalists and retained loyalty to members of their families who were committed Nazis. According to one Polish Jew,

The Polish Jews considered their German coreligionists equal to the Goyim (Gentiles) and dreaded having one of their families settled in their homes. The German Jews, likewise, bore a strong dislike for the eastern Jew, the Hasid. Some blamed the Hasidim for the dismal fate they had suffered, having been rejected as rightful citizens of their beloved Germany. “Had it not been for your peculiar deportment and unmistakably Jewish appearance, the Führer might have been kinder to all of us,” some remarked.1240

Another Polish Jew recalled a Jewish inmate in Bergen-Belsen who had married a German and converted to Christianity. Her husband became a member of the SS, while her two sons joined the Hitler Youth.

However, as far as the Nazi authorities were concerned, she was still Jewish, and, together with the other Jews of Polish nationality, she was deported to Poland, imprisoned in the ghettos, and later sent to various camps. She maintained that the Jews alone were responsible for all the disasters that had befallen her, regarding herself as the victim of a tragic misunderstanding. She would boast about the things her husband and sons had done, declaring that they would soon get her out. In the camp she cultivated the friendship of SS men …

She was rapidly appointed supervisor of the block and would torment us as if she were a real German.1241

A young Jewish man from Germany, who had been deported to Poland because of his parents’ Polish nationality, displayed a similar attitude:

His mother had been a Jewess from the Warsaw area and her surname had been Mekhlovitz, while his father had been a pure German. He had been given his mother’s name because he had been born out of wedlock. He talked about his mother with open hatred, condemning her for having placed him in a Jewish orphanage when he was a child, thus making him a Jew.

“If it hadn’t been for that Jewish w…e [whore], I wouldn’t be considered a Polish Jew.”

He spoke about his father, on the other hand, with obvious admiration. He was an important figure in the Nazi party, and his legitimate sons were members of the Hitler youth organization.1242

This man too became a German lackey when he was eventually imprisoned in Płaszów.

German Jewish intellectuals retained their strong affinity for German culture, even in its most nationalistic and xenophobic manifestations. Prominent German-Jewish historian Hans Rothfels promoted Nazi positions of ethnic expansion in the East despite experiencing progressively greater discrimination.

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1241 Ferderber-Salz, And the Sun Kept Shining..., 162.
1242 Ferderber-Salz, And the Sun Kept Shining..., 125.
from the Nazis owing to his Jewishness. He failed to secure the status of “honorary Aryan” from Joachim von Ribbentrop, and finally had to emigrate from Nazi Germany just before WWII. Even if Rothfels’ views fell short of the fullness of Nazi racial ideology relative to the Slavs, they nevertheless, at very least, promoted the elimination of Slavic nation states in favor of German rule and the relegation of Slavs to vassal status. No sooner had Rothfels returned to Germany after WWII than he became the first German historian to attack the new Oder-Neisse (Odra-Nysa) boundary.  

Even among Austrian Jews transported to the Łódź ghetto, such vestiges of pro-German sentiments remained as late as 1942, as Israel U. recalls.

When we asked them why they were sent to the ghetto, they said that the Germans wanted to protect them from the bombs, because where they were [from] there were severe bombings, and here there were no bombins. You know the German Jews!

Curiously, Polish Jews who left Wrocław (formerly Breslau) after the war in transports for returning German citizens were betrayed by German Jews to the British occupation authorities on arrival in Germany. The British wanted to detain the Polish Jews and send them back to Poland.

In almost every European country, but not among ethnic Poles in Poland, collaborators easily outnumbered the ranks of the anti-Nazi resistance. Hundreds of thousands of non-Germans—many of them from Western Europe—willingly joined the German war effort. Virtually every European national group, except for Poles, volunteered to serve in the ranks of the elite SS, which included the following nationalities: Dutch—50,000, Belgians—40,000, Hungarians—40,000, Croatians—40,000, Ukrainians—30,000 (of the 80,000 who had volunteered), Cossacks—30,000, Latvians—30,000, French—20,000, Albanians—19,000, Russians—18,000, Estonians—15,000, Belorussians—10,000, Italians—10,000, Tatars—10,000, Norwegians—8,000, Danes—6,000, Slovaks—6,000, Czechs—5,000, Romanians—5,000, Finns—4,000, Serbs—4,000, Bulgarians—3,000, Armenians—3,000, Georgians—3,000, Uzbeks—2,000, Greeks—1,000, Swiss—1,000, Swedes—300, English—100. Many more fought in other military formations. For example, Ukrainians fought in at least 70 of more than 150 so-called Eastern Battalions, including at least 35,000 in 58 Guard Battalions or Schutzmannschaftsbataillons. In total, there were nearly 250,000 Ukrainians in the units of the Eastern Troops and German auxiliary units. According to General Ernst Köstring, the Eastern Troops commander, in October 1944, over 800,000 Eastern volunteers (including Ukrainians) served in the German army and an additional 100,000 served in the Luftwaffe and navy.

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1244 Niewyk, Fresh Wounds, 176.
1245 Meyer Kron, Through the Eyes of the Needle (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 1999), 115–16.
1247 See the English language “Summary” in Andrii Boianovskyi, Ukrainski viiskovi formuvannia v zbroinykh sylakh
The phenomenon of civilian collaboration was by no means unique to Poland or endemic to Poles, although some historians have attempted to elevate it to some exceptional level. Lucy Dawidowicz, for example, contends: “In no other country in Europe did such police informing and unsolicited cooperation with the SS assume the massive proportions they took on in Poland.” However, Dawidowicz ignores Jewish conduct in Soviet-occupied Eastern Poland, which constituted de facto collaboration with an ally of Nazi Germany, nor is there any evidence that Dawidowicz carried out any serious comparative research before reaching her sweeping conclusions. Historian Philip Friedman has pointed out that a special branch of the Jewish Defence Committee in Belgium daily employed 300 persons, Jews and non-Jews, to assist post-office workers to intercept denunciations of Jews mailed to the German authorities. In fact, thousands of letters denouncing Jews were sent to the occupying authorities—an enormous number given the size of that country’s Jewish community (90,000 or about one percent of that country’s population). French Jews were also confronted with the problem of collaboration and denunciation on a daily basis. The French wrote between three and five million signed and unsigned letters of denunciation, often sent directly to the Gestapo. An estimated 20,000 of these denunciations pertained to Jews.

In Norway, nearly half of the minuscule Jewish population of 1,600 (0.05 percent of the total population) was killed during the war and none would have died without Norwegian collaboration. Norway had only a few convinced Nazis but enough anti-Semites and law-abiding policemen and bureaucrats to make the Final Solution a near-success. During the war, many Norwegians who would otherwise not have helped the Germans, took part in registering, arresting, and handing over Jews to the German authorities. As for the

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*Nimechchyny (1939–1945)* (Lviv: Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, and Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 2003), 569–89.


powerful Norwegian resistance movement, it resembled all the other European resistance movements in
caring little about what happened to the Jews. Those Norwegian Jews who did survive the war were not
sheltered in Norway for long years but smuggled into Sweden where they were out of reach of the
Germans. Only a handful of Jews survived in hiding in Norway.\textsuperscript{1254}

According to Raul Hilberg, “In the Netherlands the Jews were destroyed with a thoroughness comparable
to the relentless uprooting process in the Reich itself.” Although Holland had no puppet regime, the local
bureaucracy and police played a pivotal role in the Final Solution. The various Dutch police forces—the
Security Police, the Order Police, the Dutch police from Amsterdam and the Hague, the Dutch auxiliary
police (not to mention the Jewish Order Police from Westerbork)—were crucial to the success of German
designs. Ninety percent of the Amsterdam police reportedly cooperated with the round-ups, and a German
occupation official proclaimed after the war that without the Dutch police “it would have been practically
impossible to seize even ten percent of Dutch Jewry.” In the small towns and villages “both the local
mayors and the police were complicit in the round-ups.” Westerbork, the transit camp where Dutch Jews
were loaded onto trains for the gassing centres, was guarded by the illustrious Royal Marechaussee,
comparable to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Equally accommodating and essential to the Germans
were the personnel of the Dutch transport system who hauled the Jews from the localities to Westerbork
and thence east, i.e., to the border where German railroad personnel took over. However, inside
Westerbork, the Germans set up an elaborate Jewish camp directorate, Jewish clerks made up weekly lists
of Jews for deportation, and the Jewish order police supervised the loading of Jews onto trains.\textsuperscript{1255} The
situation was much the same in most other countries.\textsuperscript{1256}

\textsuperscript{1254} Samuel Abrahamsen, \textit{Norway’s Response to the Holocaust: A Historical Perspective} (New York: Holocaust
University Press, 2003), vol. 2, 584–89. Fortunately for Norwegian Jews, Hitler did not invade Sweden. As was
revealed in February 2000, Swedish Nazis had compiled lists of Jews for liquidation and even started to gather building
materials for the construction of concentration camps.

\textsuperscript{1255} Hilberg, \textit{The Destruction of the European Jews}, Third edition, vol. 2, 600–32; Bob Moore, \textit{Victims and Survivors: The Nazi Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands 1940–1945} (London: Arnold; New York: St. Martin’s, 1997), passim; Suzanne D. Rutland, “A Reassessment of the Dutch Record During the Holocaust,” in Roth and Maxwell, \textit{Remembering for the Future}, vol. 1, 527–42. According to Raul Hilberg, “In the Netherlands the Jews were destroyed with a thoroughness comparable to the relentless uprooting process in the Reich itself.” That the survival rate in Holland was as high as it was had to do in large measure with the exemption from deportation to camps created for 8,000–9,000 Jews in mixed marriages and for some 4,000 Jews in special categories. See Hilberg, \textit{The Destruction of the European Jews}, Third edition, vol. 2, 619, 622–24, 229 n139. Betrayal of Jews in Holland was an extremely frequent phenomenon, and indeed reached massive proportions, as survivor testimonies confirm. See, for example, Martin Gilbert, \textit{The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust} (Toronto: Key Porter, 2003), 320–55; Mordecai Paldiel, \textit{Sheltering Jews: Stories of Holocaust Rescuers} (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 15, 169, 170; Mordecai Paldiel, \textit{The Righteous Among the Nations} (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem; New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 53, 56, 98, 172, 208, 215, 251, 254, 519, 554; Emily Taitz, ed., \textit{Holocaust Survivors}, vol. 1 (Westport, Connecticut, and London, 2007), 24, 108; Interviews with Ursula Stern, Selma Wijnberg, and Jozef Wins, Internet: <http://www.sobiborinterviews.nl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6>. The so-called Henneicke column first extorted money from Jews, and then when the Germans started paying large rewards they handed over Jews to the Gestapo. As a result of pioneering research, Dutch investigative journalist Ad van Liempt exposed the activities of a committed group of volunteers who denounced Jews and concluded that about 8,000 to 9,000 Jews were turned in to the Germans for cash. This represents almost half of the Jews who attempted to hide. See Ad van Liempt, \textit{Hitler’s Bounty Hunters: The Betrayal of the Jews} (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005).

\textsuperscript{1256} For an overview of conditions in France, see Hilberg, \textit{The Destruction of the European Jews}, Third edition, vol. 2, 645–703 (France). Historian Michael R. Marrus wrote: “The Germans needed and received a great deal of assistance
Reprisals against collaborators reached massive proportions in Western Europe. The number of persons lynched or murdered during the last months of the war, or at the moment of liberation, ran into the tens of thousand. Beatings of suspected collaborators by unorganized mobs were commonplace. In France, “military operations during the Liberation were often accompanied by acts of revenge perpetrated either by individual score-settlers or by members of the resistance. The number of deaths, which is sometimes put as high as 40,000, certainly exceeded those caused by occupying German forces in 1940–44. … Special courts of justice condoned 10,800 executions, but the spontaneous épuration or purging of collaborators claimed many more victims …”125 (These figures are all the more surprising in light of recent French scholarship indicating that German terror in France was not nearly as extensive as once believed. In fact, the Germans executed only some 4,500 persons, more than 70% of them Communists, after being condemned to death from the French to carry out their plans. … Most of the work was done by the French police. … it seems highly unlikely that the Germans would have been capable of deporting large numbers of Jews from France without the help provided by the French authorities. … Unlike Poland, where there was always a heavy German police presence, there were few men to spare for France—only three battalions for the occupied zone, for example, or about three thousand men.” Thus reliance on the French police to carry out the round-up and deportation of the Jews was absolutely essential. See “France: The Jews and the Holocaust,” in Israel Gutman, ed., Encyclopedia of the Holocaust (New York: Macmillan; London: Collier Macmillan, 1990), vol. 2, 509–513; see also the entry for the infamous French assembly and detention camp in the Paris suburb of Drancy in vol. 1, 404–406. By way of comparison, there were about 150,000 SS or Waffen SS stationed in Poland in 1944. See Prekerowa, Zegota: Commission d’aide aux Juifs (Monaco: Éditions du Rocher, 1999), 285. According to American historian Joseph Rothschild, “the achievements of the Polish resistance movement were indeed prodigious. It tied down approximately 500,000 German occupation troops and, according to official German figures, prevented one out of every eight Wehrmacht transports headed for the Russian front from reaching its destination. … And Poland was the only Axis-occupied country in Europe without a quisling.” See Joseph Rothschild, Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II, Second edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 28. (The peak strength and accomplishments of the Polish underground occurred in 1944–1945. By that time, however, the Holocaust of Polish Jews was essentially over.) A recent revelation of the extent of complicity in the Holocaust in Western Europe came in January 1993 with the release of documents implicating the English authorities on the Channel Island of Guernsey of close cooperation with the German military in identifying and tracking down that occupied island’s small Jewish community. Only one member of the eight-member cabinet categorically refused his assent to anti-Jewish edicts. As indicated earlier, the Holocaust in Poland was not dependent on such forms of collaboration. See “Guernsey officials put Jews into Nazi hands, records show,” The Toronto Star, January 6, 1993; Madeleine Bunting, The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands under German Rule, 1940–1945, Revised paperback edition (London: HarperCollins, 1996). Writing about the Holocaust in Belgium, historian Jean-Philippe Schreiber arrived at a conclusion that aptly sums up the experience of the Jewish population throughout Western Europe. The truth of the matter was that, as elsewhere, the average Belgian “does not like the Jews.” (Indeed, anti-Semitism was pervasive in Western countries where Jews constituted a microscopic majority.) Moreover, “the suggestion that there would be a direct link between democratic values and a century of emancipation of the Jews in Western Europe and a widespread readiness to help them is superficial and not substantiated by the facts revealed through a close analysis of the rescuers.” See Jean-Philippe Schreiber, “Belgium and the Jews Under Nazi Rule: Beyond the Myths,” in Bankier and Gutman, Nazi Europe and the Final Solution, 480. 125 Norman Davies, Europe At War: No Simple Victory (London: Macmillan, 2006), 302, 319. See also Herbert R. Lottman, The Purge: The Purification of the French Collaborators After World War II (New York: William Morrow, 1986); Herbert R. Lottman, The People’s Anger: Justice and Revenge in Post-Liberation France (New York: Hutchinson, 1986); H.R. Kedward and Nancy Wood, eds., The Liberation of France: Image and Event (Oxford and Washington, D.C.: Berg, 1995). According to a review of Julian Jackson, ed., France: The Dark Years, 1940–1944 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): “Some 9,000 collaborators, suspected collaborators, or people who had simply incurred their neighbors’ dislike were killed just before and during the Liberation; about 1,500 more were executed after trial; more than 40,000 were sentenced to prison terms; 20,000 to 30,000 public servants were sanctioned. Among these were few policemen [who had played a pivotal role in the round-up and deportation of French Jews to the death camps]. In August of 1944 the police in Paris and other cities had mutinied against the Germans with whom they had collaborated for so long, and thus qualified for resister status. From 10,000 to 20,000 women (though not Coco Chanel or Arletty) were accused of horizontal collaboration and had their heads shaved, or were subjected to other forms of public humiliation in repulsive and sexist acts. But 80,000 Frenchwomen of the occupied zone had by mid-1943 claimed children’s benefits from the German authorities and requested German nationality for their
by military tribunals or as hostages, and not the previously claimed 80,000. In addition, at least 1,000 persons were executed in mass reprisals in places such as Oradour, Maillé, Saint-Genis-Laval, Bron, Tulle, and Asq.) It is estimated that some 20–25,000 French women were subjected to ritualized shearing (head shaving) and other humiliations following liberation. An eyewitness described the atmosphere that accompanied a procession of “sexual collaborators” in Paris:

Near to the metro stop Danube (19th arrondissement of Paris), a crowd was following a woman who was entirely naked. Her head had been completely shaved, and on her breast two swastikas tattooed in Indian ink. … On her back she also had tattooed a portrait of Hitler. The crowd which was out of control were throwing stones at her, pushing her and insulting her.

And yet the vast majority of police officers suspended after the liberation of Paris in 1944 for extreme forms of collaboration, including assistance to the Parti populaire français and similar groups) were later reintegrated into the police forces. The epurazione was particularly brutal in Italy, where somewhere between 12,000 and 20,000 Italians lost their lives. Some 9,000 Fascists or their sympathizers were killed in April and May 1945 alone. On July 6, 1945, local Communist partisans broke into the prison at Schio in the province of Vicenza, and butchered 54 prisoners, thirteen of them women, accused of various Fascist crimes. Lynching of alleged collaborators took place in Belgium and the Netherlands as well. In Norway, a country with a population of less than three million, Norwegian authorities arrested some 90,000 of their compatriots on suspicion of collaboration with the Germans. Some 46,000 people were found guilty of some degree of helping the enemy, 17,000 were sentenced to prison with 600 to terms of eight years or longer, and 25 were sentenced to death. In Denmark, 22,000 people were arrested for collaboration, 14,000 were sentenced to prison terms, and 46 sentenced to death (of whom 23 were executed). In the Netherlands,

Some 65,000 Dutch collaborators had already fled to Germany.

… The mass arrests of suspects by Dutch resistance forces started even before allied forces arrived, and between 120,000 and 150,000 men and women were rounded up. In part, this was to protect them from ‘blitz-justice’ or mass lynchings, a reaction so feared by the Dutch government-in-exile that they alerted their secret representatives in the country to deal with it. So did the Roman

1259 Fabrice Virgili, *Shorn Women: Gender and Punishment in Liberation France* (New York: Berg, 2002). The quotation is found at p. 137.
1260 Keith Lore, *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II* (London: Viking/Penguin, 2012), 149–53. Political violence, often initiated by Communists, also took a large toll in both Italy and France. Ibid., chapter 23.
1262 Lore, *Savage Continent*, 150.
Catholic Church. In September 1944, ... it asked priests to open their church buildings as places of
refuge for suspected collaborators.

In the event, lynching on a massive scale was largely avoided. ... In the town of Winschoten, for
example, a crowd dragged the Nazi-appointed Mayor from his office, threw him into the canal, and
hurled his portrait of Adolf Hitler and the Dutch Nazi Party (NSB) leader Anton Mussert into the
water after him. In the nearby town of Farnum, a mob simply murdered the Mayor, a man also
appointed by the Nazis. Lower-level collaborators were humiliated by giving them dirty and menial
tasks ...

Across the Netherlands, special ‘cleansing committees’ were hard at work. ... In the end, some
fifty thousand collaborators were given prison sentences, and over a hundred and fifty were
condemned to death. Of these, though, only forty were actually executed. ...

In and around Groningen, the arrested were held in schools, hotels, cafés, gymnasia and large
barns. ... At the height of the arrest wave, the city had 18,000 internees—8,500 men, 6,500 women
and 3,000 children, a proportion of the population considerably higher than the Dutch national
average. Some camps were reasonably comfortable, but overall there was little and bad food, poor
hygiene and plenty of dysentery and diarrhoea. ... But after the peak in June, the numbers rapidly declined ... It was widely accepted that Dutch society had to be reformed, but in an orderly way, and this meant being more stricy about who was
purged and cooling the radical mood that had developed in the resistance.1265

In early September 1944, about 10,000 people—approximately 3,500 collaborators and their families—left
Luxembourg with the German civil administration. In 1945, 5,101 Luxembourgers were imprisoned for
pro-Nazi activities, which constituted 1.79% of the population. Twelve collaborators were sentenced to
death and were shot; 249 were sentenced to forced labour; 1,366 were sentenced to prison; and 645 were
sent to workhouses. Thus, about 0.8% of the population was legally punished. This included one former
minister, the 1925–1926 prime minister, Pierre Prüm, who was sentenced in 1946 to four years’
imprisonment. At least one mayor was also deposed for political activities by grand-ducal decree. There
were still acts of violence directed against the families of collaborators as late as 1947.1266

On postwar retaliations historian Norman Davies writes: “Across Europe, people wanted to settle
accounts with wartime collaborators. ... Proceedings were most thorough in the Netherlands, where some
200,000 suspected collaborators were detained, and in Belgium, where, of 634,000 detained, 77,000 were
sentenced.”1267 According to another source, as many as 450,000 Dutch citizens were arrested. In Belgium,
“Dossiers were opened on 405,067 individuals accused of collaboration, and 57,254 were prosecuted. Of
these, 2,940 were sentenced to death (of whom 242 were executed); 2,340 were sentenced to life

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imprisonment.” However, the Antwerp policemen who took part in the deportation of the Jews were never brought to trial, nor were many other Belgians who denounced Jews. According to historian László Karsai, the ‘sentences’ of partisan courts of law and spontaneous and/or organized eruptions of popular wrath took 8,000 to 9,000 victims in France and at least 8,000 to 10,000 victims in Italy during 1944 and 1945. In France, 350,000 people were investigated, 45,000 were convicted, and 1,500 were executed. In Holland, 120,000 to 150,000 people were arrested, 50,000 were tried, and 40,000 were convicted, of whom 152 were sentenced to death. Forty of these were executed (five were Germans). Tens of thousands were fired from their jobs. According to other figures, the various courts set up to hear charges of collaboration examined the cases of 555,100 Frenchmen, and judgments were brought against 127,063 defendants. Of this number, only three were executed, whereas the kangaroo courts had killed up to 9,000 Frenchmen.

It is estimated that Polish courts sentenced about 20,000 individuals for war crimes between 1944 and 1948, while the number of cases under investigation may have reached 80,000. The bulk of the trials took place between 1944 and 1950, when special penal courts and then the district courts convicted and sentenced 16,428 defendants. German nationals constituted about one-third of this number, while the rest were either Polish citizens or residents tried for collaboration with the Germans. Close to 1,800 of these defendants were charged with crimes committed in concentration, labour, and death camps as well as in Jewish ghettos. The majority of the convicted were German—887 individuals—followed by 489 Volksdeutsche (of whom 198 came from Poland), 282 Poles, 59 Ukrainians, and 30 representatives of other ethnic groups. As Gabriel Finder points out,

Unlike the tendency by 1948 in many countries in Western and Eastern Europe to bring the trials of Nazi perpetrators and collaborators to an end and to offer them amnesty in an effort to gain their implicit support for postwar regimes, the prosecution of Nazi perpetrators and collaborators in Poland did not abate until much later. … “among the former Soviet satellites, Poland was the most consistent in investigating and prosecuting war crimes: between 1944 and 1985, Polish courts tried more than 20,000 defendants, including 5,450 German nationals.”

However, it was very rare for Jewish collaborators to be punished for their wartime misdeeds. After Yitzhak Zuckerman rescued a former Jewish policeman from an angry mob of fellow Jews in late January

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or early February 1945 and had him arrested by the Polish Security Office, he was somehow freed. Zuckerman then dispatched his own men to find him, and after locating him they alerted the Soviet army to arrest him, but he was set free once again.\textsuperscript{1272} Some 44 Jews stood trial in Polish state courts on charges of collaboration in this immediate postwar period. They were charged with assisting the Germans in the murder and mistreatment of their fellow Jews in ghettos and camps. Thirty of the Jewish defendants were convicted, with ten sentenced to death (two death sentences were commuted); ten were acquitted.\textsuperscript{1273} With the approval of the Polish government, a Jewish tribunal or honour court was established. Between November 1946 and December 1949, the Legal Bureau of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland opened files on 31 suspected Jewish collaborators from Warsaw. Most were former ghetto policemen, but there were also three putative Gestapo informers and two agents of “The Thirteenth.” Only three of these investigations led to a trial before the Honour Court. The outcomes were as follows: one acquittal; one conviction with a subsequent commuted sentence; and one conviction that was overturned on appeal.\textsuperscript{1274} The Jewish Honour Court submitted to Polish courts its findings regarding three Jews from Międzyrzec Podlaski, including two former Jewish policemen, Lubicz and Szymon Tob (Topf). Although arrested, the latter two managed to escape from prison in 1946 and joined the third culprit abroad. Tob was convicted \textit{in absentia}, in January 1949, and sentenced to death for revealing to the Gestapo the hiding places of Jews during the deportations.\textsuperscript{1275} Some thirty Jews, mostly from Eastern Europe, were tried by Israeli courts from the 1950s until 1972 under Israel’s 1950 Nazi and Nazi Collaborators Law.\textsuperscript{1276} Germany’s record was nothing short of abysmal. The least likely of all Europeans to be charged and sentenced for their wartime activities were the Germans themselves. Most of those found guilty served little or no prison time. American historian Donald McKale writes:

\begin{quote}
The Federal Republic of Germany, founded in May 1949, prosecuted a tiny minority of the estimated several hundred thousand former Holocaust perpetrators. … Altogether, from the war’s end in 1945 to 1992, the West Germans investigated 103,823 persons suspected of participating in or committing Nazi crimes. Of this number, courts convicted only 6,487 (of which 5,513, or 85 percent, were condemned for “nonlethal” crimes). Thirteen were sentenced to death (before the Federal Republic abolished the death sentence), 163 to life imprisonment, 6,197 to temporary imprisonment, and 114 to only fines. If one excludes defendants prosecuted for robbery or assault charges, the disturbingly low number shrinks further. Between May 1945 and January 1992, West German courts tried only 1,793 cases related to Nazi capital crimes.
\end{quote}

crimes during the world war. Of those, 974 led to convictions, while 819 ended with either the court acquitting the defendants or terminating the proceedings for other reasons.

In May 1955 an agreement among the United States, Great Britain, France, and West Germany included the provision that German courts could not investigate or prosecute anyone whom the Allied occupation powers had investigated earlier. The overwhelming majority of [the 7,000 to 7,200] SS personnel who had served at the Auschwitz camps … avoided postwar arrest and punishment. Of the four thousand former Einsatzgruppen members who, between the fall of 1939 and 1944, slaughtered well over one million Jews in Poland and the Soviet Union, nearly all escaped retribution. By 1948, the Western Allies had captured, and a U.S. tribunal had placed on trial for war crimes, barely two dozen of them. Later, Western German courts tried only a tiny number of other former Einsatzgruppen members.

In the Federal Republic, nearly all of the convicted—in contrast to their crimes of mass murder—received light prison terms. How did such miscarriages of justice in West Germany happen? As punishment for the crime of murder, West German law mandated a maximum sentence of life in prison. But the new Bonn [democratic] government, under its first chancellor Konrad Adenauer, chose not to prosecute Nazi criminals using the charges or legal procedures of the IMT [International Military Tribunal]. Instead, the government wanted to utilize the long-standing German penal code (with its Nazi revisions repealed) …

For all these and other reasons West German courts … seldom applied the maximum punishment. Instead, the courts judged many defendants as accomplices or accessories who, in fact, had ordered, arranged, or supervised mass killings but who hadn’t been shown to have committed themselves an act of murder. More often than not, such persons received much lighter prison sentences than some of their former subordinates, whom the courts convicted of shooting or otherwise killing Jews themselves.1277

American historian István Deák explodes the myth of Germany having come to terms with its sordid past as having no foundation in its postwar treatment of Nazi war criminals:

But why were so few tried at Nuremberg? The answer is that the victorious powers agreed to punish only those who best represented the crimes of entire groups and institutions, such as the Reich Chancellery or the leadership of the Nazi Party, the SS, the SA, the armed forces general staff, the war industry, lawyers, judges, and the medical profession. The prosecution of other war criminals was left to the Germans, but this never really happened in the American-, British-, and French-occupied parts of Germany. Yet it was in those occupation zones that most German war criminals settled after the war. The reason for this was the Cold War, during which the West

1277 Donald M. McKale, *Nazis After Hitler: How Perpetrators of the Holocaust Cheated Justice and Truth* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 216–18. On the shameful inadequacy of the prosecution of Nazi mass murders in West Germany, see, among others, Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germany* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), 267–333. Remarkably, the West German courts, generally presided over by judges who had themselves been Nazi Party members, were reluctant to condemn even such German doctors and nurses who had murdered thousands upon thousands of mentally and physically handicapped fellow Germans. Nonetheless, the myth of Germany having come to terms with its past prevails even today.
Germans turned into valuable allies of the Western great powers and the East Germans turned into allies of the Soviet Union.

We must also face the fact that while in many European countries the new regimes, made up of former resisters, wished to purge and to change society, the German people had no such wish.

In theory, the Nuremberg trials should have been followed by the Germans trying their own war criminals, but the West German courts, mostly presided over by former Nazis, were reluctant to act. When they rarely did, they claimed lack of evidence or, in extreme cases, meted out symbolic punishment. In any case, the West German authorities made sure that the prisoners would soon be released, mostly on grounds of ill health. Because all the Western Allies agreed to appease and to support the Federal Republic of Germany, by the end of 1956 there were just a handful of Nazi war criminals in German, British, French, or American prisons. … we can state with confidence that in contrast to non-Germans, many German war criminals got away with murder.1278

Austria’s postwar settling of scores proved to be a complete farce as the initial steps taken against Nazi collaborators were soon reversed.

In Austria people’s courts initiated proceedings against 137,000 persons, a figure that does not include the many of hundreds of thousands of civil servants, including teachers, postmen, railway workers, and others who were dismissed from their jobs because they had been members of the Nazi Party. Needless to say, these judgments and decisions were quashed within a few years, and so, ultimately, the proportion of Nazi killers punished in Austria was even lower than in Germany.1279

Despite the constraints imposed by the Allied occupation, anti-Semitism and anti-Slav sentiments continued to run high among the German population after the war:

It wasn’t just Nazis in Germany who espoused nationalist or racist ideas and attitudes. Poles, Russians and Slavs in general were still widely despised … And, disturbingly, anti-Semitic views remained entrenched. While some Germans were genuinely horrified by Auschwitz, others continued to regard Jews as a race apart—and definitely unequal. Despite all the revelations about the Nazi death camps, such prejudices could still be found even among the ‘compassionate’ professions …

Alongside the resolute denial of responsibility for the catastrophe, anti-Semitism continued its insidious life. In the initial shock over revelations about the death camps, anti-Jewish feeling became muted. …

Deák, *Europe on Trial*, 193, 213–14. As Deák astutely observes at p. 226, “We also know, incidentally, that all German SS men and policemen were free not to participate in the mass shootings of Jews and Gypsies in conquered Eastern Europe. Yet only a few of these men made use of this privilege …”

Deák, *Europe on Trial*, 205.
Anti-Semitic views even rose in Bavaria. … Here, just twelve months after Hitler’s death, another survey revealed that almost 60 per cent of Bavarians exhibited racist, anti-Semitic or ‘intense anti-Semitic’ views. … But Bavaria was by no means unique. Elsewhere, those who had openly denounced the Jews under Hitler simply donned new clothes and reinvented themselves.¹²⁸⁰

Unlike virtually every other occupied country, Poland did not have a Quisling regime or organized native collaborators, although a number of persons had been approached to fulfill such a role, nor did it produce national SS formations. During the course of the German occupation, Poland’s underground authorities passed approximately 5,000 death sentences against collaborators, about half of which were carried out.¹²⁸¹ After the war, the Communist authorities prosecuted thousands of alleged collaborators, but it also used a newly enacted law ostensibly targeting “Fascist-Hitlerite criminals” to strike at the anti-Communist underground, who were often branded as wartime “collaborators.”¹²⁸²

But it was rare for Jewish collaborators to face punishment for their wartime conduct. Polish courts prosecuted some 40 Jewish collaborators between 1944 and 1945, most of them former kapos, and convicted three quarters of them.¹²⁸³ Among those prosecuted, and sentenced to death, were the following: Dr. Leon Gross and Meir (Majer) Kerner, the former was the chief medical officer and the latter, the deputy chief of the Jewish police and head kapo at the Płaszów concentration camp; Maks Zimmerman, a policeman who betrayed the hiding places of Jews in the Kraków ghetto; Max Heimberg; and a man named Goldstein. Dr. Szymon Rosen of Bochnia, Mendel Grünspan of Rzeszów, Henoch (Henryk, Chaim) Klajman of Płońsk, Henryk Gnat, Pinkhas Grynszpan, Samuel Wintraub, Alfred Kannengisser, Symcha Binem Smolarz, a foreman at the labour camp in Budzyń, Marian Borenstein, Chana (Hanna) Lender, Issie Zilbiger (a kapo at Bunzlau), and Willy Filkelberger, a Gestapo confidant who was known to accost Poles as well as Jews, were also arraigned before Polish courts and sentenced to prison terms. Dr. Mojżesz Zabramny was prosecuted in 1946 for mistreating prisoners in the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. Moszek Freifeld and Dawid Liebling, members of the Jewish police who abused prisoners in Płaszów, were both acquitted.¹²⁸⁴ Wilhelm Lerner, a Jewish policeman from the Tarnów ghetto and later a kapo in Płaszów, faced prosecution in 1946 for cooperating with the Gestapo by searching out Jews in hiding

¹²⁸² Between 1944 and 1969, 17,845 people were convicted including 5,432 Germans; the rest were Poles, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Jews, and others. In total over 1,500 death sentences were passed. Five of the Jews who were convicted sought clemency. See Czesław Pilichowski, ed., *Zbrodnie i sprawy: Ludobójstwo hitlerowskie przed sądem ludzkości i historii* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1980), 73–74; Zdzisław Biegański, “Kara śmierci w orzecznictwie Specjalnych Sądów Karnych w Polsce (1944–1946),” *Echa przeszłości* (Olsztyn: Uniwersytet Warmiński-Mazurski, 2004), vol. 5, 175, 194.
(allegedly, he delivered his own mother to the Germans) and cruelty toward fellow Jewish prisoners.  

(There is more about Jewish policemen from Tarnów later.) Others who faced prosecution included Azryl Blumensztok, an overseer at the labour camp in Ostrzówie Świętokrzyski, and Maks Heimberg aka Szymon Falk, a Jewish policeman from Borysław. An inmate of the Gross Masselwitz camp who originally hailed from Oświęcim provides another example:

I had a landsman in camp who came from a family of rich Khasidim, named Zajdband. He knew my parents, too. He was a Kapo in camp. When I met him, I asked him to help me. He looked me up and down with a sadistic smirk on his face, then told me to remove my hat. He suddenly struck me over the head with his rubber club and beat me again and again till I was delirious from the pain. The Khayim Zajdband was one who reached the height of sadism in the camps. He was condemned in Poland in 1947 to twenty years hard labor.

However, most collaborators escaped punishment, as was the case with Zygmunt Witkowski and Lismann, who stole from and terrorized prisoners in the camp at Küstrin (Kostrzyn) on the Oder River, and were responsible for the deaths of many Jews. Witnesses were simply not summoned for Witkowski’s trial and the culprit was acquitted.

Apart from a small number of cases submitted to Jewish honour courts and social ostracism within the community, most Jews largely overlooked the deeds of those Jews who had collaborated with the Nazis to the detriment of their own people. Fania Krawczyk recalled how a Jewish policeman caught her sneaking back into the ghetto in Prużana with some food for her family and seized everything. She said to him, “I will forget the Germans, but I will never forget you, and if I survive, we will settle this.” Later, when this policeman settled in the United States and heard Fania was alive, he got scared, changed his name and moved. Fania writes, “I would never have hurt him. You can’t revenge everything, but it hurt.”

Although the Central Jewish Historical Committee looked into allegations of collaboration by Jews and compiled a list of a several thousand suspected collaborators, lawyers from the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce) opened only 175 files against suspected collaborators. Of the 25 alleged collaborators who ultimately stood trial before the Jewish civic court, eighteen were convicted and seven acquitted.

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1285 "Znęcał się nad współwyznawcami i matkę swoją wydał na mękę i "śmieńć," Gazeta Ludowa, np. 39 (1946), 4.
1286 Trunk, Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution, 178.
1287 Wroński and Zwolakowa, Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945, 304–306. Zygmunt Witkowski later emigrated to Israel. The author of this account, Leon Borkowski, a Jew, credits many helpful Polish labourers for his survival.
1288 On the topic of honour courts see Laura Jockusch and Gabriel N. Finder, eds., Jewish Honor Courts: Revenge, Retribution, and Reconciliation in Europe and Israel after the Holocaust (Detroit: Wayne State University, 2015). An example of communal ostracism follows. Although a former kapo was exposed in a DP camp in Bindermichl near Linz, and some people wanted to lynch him, his accuser intervened to say that he “only wanted people to know what kind of animal this man was and, if he had a conscience, that he should continue to live and suffer the consequences of his degradation.” Apparently, the man committed suicide some time later. See Laizer Blitt, No Strength to Forget: Survival in the Ukraine, 1941–1944 (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), 177.
1290 Gabriel N. Finder and Alexander V. Prusin, “Jewish Collaborators on Trial in Poland, 1944–1956,” in Polin:
years were Jakub Haubenstock and Aleksander Eintracht, policemen from the Kraków ghetto and the Plaszów concentration camp, whereas Mieczysław Grade was simply reprimanded. Michal Weichert, the head of the Jewish Relief Organization, who was acquitted by the criminal courts, was deemed a collaborator by a Jewish civic court. The brothers Bernard and Ferdynand Sperling, former policemen, were also acquitted. The fate of Hirsch Rosenblum, a policeman who was investigated for abusing Jews in a work camp near Milec, is unclear. Some prosecutions, like the curious case of singer Wiera Gran (Grynberg), whose charges were dropped and who was exonerated by a Jewish civic court, may simply have been inspired by vengeful adversaries.

Jerzy Lewiński, a notorious policeman who rounded up Jews in the Warsaw ghetto and brought them to Umschlagplatz from whence they were sent to their deaths in Treblinka, joined the Communist party and became a prosecutor in Łódź who passed sentence on “collaborators” and enemies of the Stalinist regime. Despite pressure and threats by co-religionists not to testify against him, Edward Reicher and the renowned pianist Władysław Szpilman refused to succumb. Although he lost his position, Lewiński never faced criminal charges and soon became the director of the state movie production enterprise, “Film Polski.” Fiszke Ikka, the chairman of the Judenrat in Brzeziny ghetto, was accused in a postwar trial of having been a German Gestapo agent who pointed out well-to-do Jews to the police, who would then arrest and extort money from them.

In early 1947 the Ha’aretz newspaper published the following report. While visiting Paris a Jew from Buczacz spotted a childhood friend, who during the occupation had been the head of the Jewish police in Buczacz. This former policeman had executed this young man’s parents during an Aktion and came to take him and his brother away later on. (He escaped, his brother perished in a death camp.) The young man beat the policeman viciously in his hotel room on two occasions with heavy objects and smashed some bottles against his head. He reported the policeman to the French police but they refused to take any action. He

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Studies in Polish Jewry, vol. 20 (2008): 137. Shepsl Rotholc, a professional boxer turned ghetto policeman, was the first of 25 persons put on trial. The tribunal (sąd społeczny) found Rotholc guilty of reproachable behaviour for his continued service in the Jewish police after the first wave of deportations from Warsaw in the summer of 1942. He was expelled from the Jewish community for two years and his right to participate in communal activities was revoked for three years; the tribunal ordered the publication of his conviction in the Jewish press. After two years Rotholc petitioned for and received a commutation of his sentence. He then left Poland and immigrated to Canada. See Gabriel N. Finder, “The Trial of Shepsl Rotholc and the Politics of Retribution in the Aftermath of the Holocaust,” Gal-Ed: On the History and Culture of Polish Jewry, vol. 20 (2006): 63–89 (English section); Gabriel N. Finder and Alexander V. Prusin, “Jewish Collaborators on Trial in Poland, 1944–1956,” in Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, vol. 20 (2008): 138.

1291 Rączy, Zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie krakowskim w latach 1939–1945, 223. See also Ewa Koźmińska-Freijak, “I’m Going to the Oven Because I Wouldn’t Give Myself to Him’: The Role of Gender in the Polish Jewish Civic Court,” in Laura Jockusch and Gabriel N. Finder, eds., Jewish Honor Courts: Revenge, Retribution, and Reconciliation in Europe and Israel after the Holocaust (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2015), 265–66.


1293 Krempa, Zagłada Żydów mieleckich, 122 n.388.

1294 Gran, Sztafeta oszczerców, 44–80. Later, in Israel, Gran ran into one of the Stalinist security men who dealt with her case; he was working there as a police officer. Ibid., 85. See also Agata Tuszyńska, Oskarżona: Wiera Gran (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2010), translated as Vera Gran: the Accused (New York: Knopf, 2013).

1295 Reicher, Country of Ash, 246.
then went to the Polish consul in Paris. After the Polish consul intervened, the French police agreed to arrest the murderer. Supposedly he was to be sent to Poland to stand trial, but there is no evidence this ever occurred.\(^{1297}\) Eliezer Grinbaum, a Communist, was known as brutal kapo at Auschwitz. He was arrested by the French police in Paris after being spotted by some survivors, but was released and left for Palestine.\(^{1298}\) After immigrating to Israel, he was known as Eliezer Gruenbaum. He became Israel’s first minister of the interior and died mysteriously during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.\(^{1299}\)

In 1948, a Jewish Court of Honour in Munich condemned as a traitor to the Jewish people a former Jewish policeman from the olkusz ghetto who rounded up Jews for labour, requisitioned Jewish furniture for the Germans, and exposed the bunkers where Jews were in hiding during the “resettlement.”\(^{1300}\) A Jew from Tarnów recalls:

> While in Linz I found out that a Jewish man who had been a ranking O.D. [policeman] in our ghetto and later on a ‘Sonderkommando’ (he loaded corpses into the crematoria) lived there. Just the sound of his name Zimmet conjured up ugly memories. He was a brute of the first order; in the Ghetto, he beat a friend of mine, Srulek Fenning, to death. He committed other heinous crimes in the service of the Gestapo. I was told that the D.P. camp inmates tried to bring him to justice in Austria, but the local authorities wanted nothing to do with it. He was subsequently beaten up severely, but he stayed on in the camp, being afraid to venture elsewhere for fear of a worse fate. Some time later on, he made his way to Montreal, Canada where he was adjudicated by a ‘Bet Din’ (a Jewish court) and released. The verdict was ‘insufficient evidence’ and ‘it’s a shame before the gentiles’ to bring it out in the open.\(^{1301}\)

(There is more about Zimmet or Zimet later on.) This Jew also recalled another Jew, an Austrian exile named Distler (Diestler), who “fully and brutally” cooperated with the Gestapo in Tarnów. Occasionally, private “justice” was exacted. Miriam Jaszuńska, a Jewish partisan who took up residence in Wilno after the city’s liberation, stated that Jews looked for surviving policemen from the ghetto in order to settle scores. Jewish partisans shot a sergeant by the name of Bernstein and handed over a certain Ferdman to the Soviet authorities, who tried and sentenced him.\(^{1302}\)

Dr. Lopold Lustig from Drohobycz identifies several Jewish collaborators who fled to the West and were never brought to justice because of inaction on the part of the Jewish community:


\(^{1297}\) Kahan, *Sefer Buczacz*, 297ff.


\(^{1300}\) Trunk, *Judenrat*, 556–57.


\(^{1302}\) Testimony of Miriam Jaszuńska, dated July 15, 1947, Jewish Historical Institute (Warsaw) archive, record group 301, number 2530.
At a party [in New York] to honor Helmrich, I saw Wilek Ornstein [a ghetto policeman from Drohobycz]. I wanted to inform on him. I spoke to Mrs. Laufer. She said she didn’t remember. I also spoke to Kuba Gold and Stella Wolfgang about Bross when we testified at the trial. “S’past nisht far dey goyim.”—it’s unseemly in front of the goyim. They didn’t want to. Ornstein was the main stoker of the crematorium in Mauthausen and Bercio Gutenplan was his helper …

Attorney Holzman, who delivered my aunt Yetka to her death, lived in Düsseldorf and sat on the supervisory board of the synagogue. No one wanted to touch his case. … Baumgarten and Giza Bachman [confidants and extortionists] were deported to Siberia, sent there by Izio Weisberr who returned with the Soviet Army. They came back later as victims of Stalinism. [Izio Weisberr or Weissber served in the security police after returning to Poland] … In New York, I saw Mičko R.’s brother. He said Mičko [Maciek Ruhrberg, an extortionist] got married again, lived in Toronto and was doing well. Nobody wanted to remember. Nobody wanted to tell on a Jew.

“Not one of them was ever tried?”

“Only one, Bronek Dauerman, in Poland. Someone fingered him, but he had money from his robberies, so he hired good lawyers who got him out on bail and he made a getaway to Germany.”

Jacob Tannenbaum, a former kapo, faced deportation from the United States fin 1987 for his brutal treatment of prisoners. He was accused by fellow Jewish concentration camp survivors of ordering 300 Jews to their deaths in 1945, for raping women, and torturing and killing male prisoners, including a rabbi. “He was a nasty, nasty guy,” said a former head of the Office of Special Investigations, Martin Mendelsohn, “There were a lot of witnesses who remembered him and his bestiality.” The Jewish Week (February 12, 1988) reported, however, that “most [Jews] agreed, in the words of Elie Wiesel, Auschwitz survivor and Nobel Peace Prize winner, that ‘the kapos were victims. They were chosen by their enemies. It is true that some were very, very cruel, but even those were acting as instruments of the enemy.’” Tannenbaum was eventually stripped of his U.S. citizenship, but not deported. “This is the best solution for all concerned,” said Tannenbaum’s lawyer, Elihu Massel. “It will also avoid a truly ghastly trial in which Jews would have had to testify against Jews, none of whom really want to remember.”

The role of the Jewish police in assisting the Germans to carry out round-ups of Jews came to the fore when Hirsch Barenblat, the local commander of the Jewish militia in Będzin, was tried for collaboration, both in Poland immediately after the war and again in Israel in the early 1960s. Barenblat became the assistant conductor of the Israeli National Opera and was identified by a Będzin survivor at a concert in June 1960. He was investigated and eventually arrested in 1961. In 1963 the Tel Aviv District Court convicted Barenblat of collaboration and sentenced him to five years’ imprisonment. The following year, however, the Israeli Supreme Court overturned the decision and Barenblat was acquitted in February 1964.

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1303 Grynberg, Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories, 42–43.
1304 Fulbrook, A Small Town Near Auschwitz, 224.
Exceptionally, there were incidents of revenge killings, especially in camps in Germany proper. But those incidents occurred during the occupation or at the time of liberation, when Jewish informers posed a threat or were still in the midst of their victims. For example, Jewish testimonies mention that several members of the “elite” from the hard labour camp of Starachowice, such as Jeremiah Wilczek, head of the camp council, his younger son, and Rubenstein, head of the camp kitchen, were murdered in the train during the evacuation of prisoners to Auschwitz, which was ironic in that the Jews on this transport were not gassed.\(^{1305}\) A Jewish inmate of Budzyń recalled: “I remember a cruel lynching—ordered by Sztokman—of a Budzyń prisoner who had previously been a Jewish policeman and extorted huge bribes from Jews in exchange for not taking them to [Warsaw’s] Umschlagplatz.”\(^{1306}\) Another Jewish survivor mentions the killing of Jewish policeman Josef Krzepicki active in the Skarżysko-Kamienna labour camp.\(^{1307}\) Godel Wroby (Wroblewski) states that he joined a group of prisoners who decided to beat to death ten Jews deemed to have abused their positions of power and betrayed their people.\(^{1308}\) Baruch Shub describes the killing of kapos in Jewish DP camps in Metra and Bari, Italy.\(^{1309}\)

According to Michel Mielnicki, an inmate of Birkenau, “We killed those of our ilk who sold out others among us to the SS or their flunkies for an extra half-litre of soup.”\(^{1310}\) Another memoir refers to the efforts of resistance members in liquidating kapos during the final weeks of the war, especially those judged to be overly brutal toward fellow prisoners or too servile to the camp authorities: “the hated kapo would be killed, his clothes taken off him and exchanged for another set, which had the camp number of a sick prisoner sewn on. The death of the sick prisoner was marked in the file, thereby enabling the other to live.”\(^{1311}\) One memoir describes how a young German Jew named Rudy, who had served as a kapo in several camps, was lynched and hanged by fellow Jewish prisoners after their liberation. According to his victims, “He had whipped, beaten, and even killed thousands of Lithuanian, Estonian, and Latvian Jews.”\(^{1312}\)

In Bergen-Belsen, the only concentration camp in Germany proper where Jews constituted a majority of the prisoners, kapos endured a bloodbath as the British and Canadians liberated the camp. Reportedly, some 150 of them were thrown out of the second-floor windows under the eyes of British soldiers.\(^{1313}\) Russian POWs dangled them by their ankles from the top floor of the tallest building in the camp, shouting to the crowd below: “Was he good or bad?” When the crowd roared “Bad!” the kapo was dropped. “Even

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\(^{1305}\) Browning, *Collected Memories*, 77–81, 83. The fate of Szaja Langsleben, a “much-hated” policeman in the camp. Is not known. Ibid., 69. According to an inmate of Starachowice, only Wilczek’s son was killed on the train to Auschwitz, but not Wilczek, who was shot in Auschwitz-Birkenau. See Frister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life*, 268–71.

\(^{1306}\) Wiszniewicz, *And Yet I Still Have Dreams*, 81.

\(^{1307}\) Hagstrom, *Sara’s Children and the Destruction of Chmielnik*, 131.


\(^{1309}\) Interview with Baruch Shub, November 5, 1993, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archive.

\(^{1310}\) Munro, *Bialystok to Birkenau*, 173.

\(^{1311}\) Mittelberg, *Between Two Worlds*, 69. Mittelberg recalls one of his Gypsy kapos, who has an “outstanding talent for inflicting pain”. Ibid., 71.

\(^{1312}\) Rosenblum, *Defy the Darkness*, 286–87.

\(^{1313}\) Giles MacDonogh, *After the Reich: From the Liberation of Vienna to the Berlin Airlift* (London: John Murray,
before he hit the ground, the spectators closest to him were flailing at him with bats, stones—anything they could grab or hold in their emaciated hands. The Kapo was unrecognizable when the crowd was through.” A mass grave was dug to bury those who were put to death: “… camp inmates passing by made a point of bringing garbage and dumping it there, or failing that, spitting and urinating on it.” However, two Jews allowed a notorious kapo named Walter Steuer to escape punishment, because he had performed a personal favour for them.

According to Israel Mittelberg, the following prisoners received “their just sentences” from fellow Jews in Buchenwald: a German Jewish policeman named Korn, Abram and a policeman Alek from workshop three, Dr. Zaks, a Jewish policeman named Tepperman, a camp leader in the munitions factory in Skarżysko named Kinneman, Shepicki [Krzepicki], and others. Other testimonies also speak of retaliation in Buchenwald. Jack Werber, a member of the camp’s underground, recalls:

Acceptance into the Underground was certainly a factor in my survival. Their people were in key positions and, in many ways, really ran the camp, even though it was the Nazis who supervised them. … They sent collaborators to the quarry or to slave on the railway lines.

The members of the Underground carried out a wide range of activities. Kapos who were too eager to beat prisoners for no reason, mysteriously disappeared after interrogations by Underground leaders. …

From 1942 on, the prisoners had their own police force that enforced discipline …

In the summer of 1944, Carlebach told us about a transport of several thousand Jews that was coming in from Skarżysko [Skarżysko], a town not too far from Radom. … Gustav spoke with them about collaborators, saying: “If there are among you people who collaborated with the Germans, report them to us now and we will take care of them.” …

Many witnesses testified against him [Leibel, a red-haired fellow from Kozienice] and he was found guilty of a number of charges: that he had betrayed Jews to the Germans, and that he constantly cursed, hit, and kicked women in Skarżysko. And so he was found guilty and executed by those who came into the camp with him. Justice was visited upon him by those who suffered at his hands. …

In another case, a former collaborator ran up to the camp gate and said to the Nazis: “I was a kapo in Skarżysko and I am ready to work for you here.” The conversation was overheard by a member of the Underground who reported it to the blockaltester in Block 7, which was a barrack for the insane. He, in turn, sent two nurses to the gate who said that the man had escaped from their block.
He was taken away and never seen again. The Underground usually won in such matters. They had an excellent network and were highly efficient.

Very few collaborators came out alive from Buchenwald. One who did was a doctor who showed up with his two young sons. He was accused by the people who came with him to Buchenwald of being a collaborator, and they related a terrible story. Five hundred Jews had been taken in his town and quarantined in the synagogue for a month for fear of typhus. The SS called this doctor in and asked him if they were in good health and if they could be sent out to work. He replied: “They’re all shit!” Consequently, all of the Jews were pulled out of the synagogue and shot. The doctor was implicated in other killings too; *akcje* where ten, five, or three Jews were murdered. In one case it was alleged that he turned in sixteen Jews who were hiding in a Jewish hospital. To our dismay, the stories were confirmed.

… We intentionally postponed his case until we were liberated [because of his children]. Suddenly, amidst the chaos, the doctor was forgotten about.\(^\text{1318}\)

Charles Kotkowsky describes a “hit squad” in Buchenwald that took revenge against Jews who had mistreated their fellow Jews:

Once, after the SS Commandant had finished checking and had left, some pushing began. As I approached the scene, I noticed a few men were kicking someone lying on the ground in the snow. It was dark and I could not see very well.

The next morning, the same group of men came into our barracks and beat up the big “Bulldog” from Czestochowa [Częstochowa]. Later, when I saw him lying there on his bunk, which was situated close to the door, his face looked even larger than in Czestochowa. It was badly swollen and all bloody and his eyes were puffy and closed, and he was breathing heavily. He could not get up anymore for the evening roll call and was counted sick. This job was done by a special “hit-squad” under the leadership of an inmate called Gustaw, allegedly from Lemberg [Lwów]. He was the Block leader of No. 66. The hit-squad watched every new transport of prisoners that arrived in Buchenwald and inquired as to who had been the “bad apples” in former camps. They then sentenced the culprits.

When Gustaw was informed of a traitorous Jewish foreman named Heinrich of Berlin, he told the foreman to hang himself. The cowardly foreman did not heed Gustaw’s advice, so two days later Gustaw returned with his aides and completed the job for him.

Although I saw [Nachum] Wengliszewski once with Gustaw and his “hit-squad”, he did not keep his promise to visit me. That was the last time I saw him. (Later Kudish told me that he was killed by the same “hit-squad” he had served.) Allegedly he had defrauded another inmate.\(^\text{1319}\)

Later, when Kotkowsky was transferred to Flößberg, a labour camp near Leipzig, he witnessed similar brutality and brutal retaliations:

\(^{1318}\) Werber, *Saving Children*, 79, 81, 84–85.

\(^{1319}\) Kotkowsky, *Remnants*. 

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The next day when we left for work, he [i.e., a block leader] summoned the Jewish German Kapo who hated the Polish Jews with a vengeance and always cursed us as unworthy citizens of the world. “You Polish Jews are not even worthy to go to hell,” he used to say.

Otto [i.e., another block leader] beat him so badly, that we never saw him again. (We learned later that Otto hanged him).\textsuperscript{1320}

When Kotkowsky left Flossberg and put on a train destined for another camp, he again encountered collaborators from his hometown of Piotrków Trybunalski who had haunted him at various junctures:

I closed my eyes and half-dozed off when the door opened and Arie and Shlome Yukel Pinkusewicz came in loaded with lots of bread. They were Kapos in Flossberg [Flößberg], and when the train stopped, they had gone in the dark to “organize” bread. Everyone looked at them in silence with big hungry eyes as nobody dared jump at them. I approached them and asked for a few crumbs for my brother because I knew them well. The younger of the two brothers, Szlome Yukel, got curious and crossed over to my brother to check as to why he needed bread crumbs. As he saw him lying on the floor, talking deliriously from fever, he got angry with me and shouted, “Why don’t you let him die?” and he hit me over the head with his thick, strong hand. I did not have the strength or stamina to hit him back. I told him that if I survived, I would not forget this. He did not like that and struck me again on the forehead even harder, so that I thought I received the blow in the back of my head. I fell down from shock near my brother and lay there helpless.

Lying next to my sick brother, I was thinking, “Is this really a Piotrkover? Yes, this is a Piotrkover who stems from the Chapuszes (catchers), the underworld, the scum of the Staro Warszawska [Starowarszawska] Street. What could I expect of him?”\textsuperscript{1321}

The brothers Pinkusewicz both survived the war. One lived in Israel, the other in the United States.

When Harry Haft returned to his hometown of Bełchatów after the war, he ran into a Jewish kapo named Mischa, who had beaten Harry repeatedly in a slave labour camp in Jaworzno. Harry gave Mischa a good thrashing and almost shot him, but his gun did not fire.

Harry grabbed him and threw him into two garbage cans lined against a wall in the alley. ... He picked up a garbage can and started to beat him with it. ...

Harry started beating him again with the lid of the can. ... Mischa layed there bleeding. ...

Harry pulled out his revolver and said, “Mischa, now it is your turn to die.”

Harry enjoyed watching Mischa beg and plead for his life, but he pulled the trigger anyway. The gun did not fire. Harry cursed and pulled the trigger again.

Again, it only clicked.

“Maybe it is not your time to die. Next time, you may not be so lucky.”\textsuperscript{1322}

\textsuperscript{1320} Kotkowsky, Remnants.
\textsuperscript{1321} Kotkowsky, Remnants.
\textsuperscript{1322} Haft, Harry Haft, 89–90.
Sonia Guss-Hornstein, who lived with her family in Łódź after the liberation, witnessed a group of men ambush and beat to death a Jew whom her father later told her was a kapo.1323 A similar, perhaps the same event was witnessed by Yankel (Jack) Pomerantz in May 1945:

As we were arriving in the city, I watched a group of Jews converge on one man. He had been a collaborator with the Nazis in a concentration camp. He had overseen the killing of children, one man joining the group told us. Now in Lodz [Łódź], Jewish survivors from the camp had recognized him. They set upon him and beat him right in the street. They delivered blow upon blow until he died.1324

Szaja Langleben, the most hated Jewish polieman in the slave-work camp in Starachowice, returned to Poland and was killed in a restaurant in Radom, an apparent target of revenge killing.1325 There is no indication that the authorities took any action against the assailants.

A Jew by the name of Blat, who arrived at a Polish refugee camp in Mohács, Hungary, toward the end of the German occupation, posing as a Pole, was recognized as an informer for the Germans and killed by a group of Jews assigned to this task.1326 Another Jewish confidant, Lezer Landau, who had been active in Bochnia and resurfaced in Budapest, was put on trial before a secret Jewish court but a verdict was never delivered in his case.1327 No such leniency was shown to non-Jewish collaborators. A Jewish family who set off from Marseilles to Australia on the SS Derna in August 1948 with 600 hundred other refugees recalled: “One of the Ukrainians on board boasted that he’d killed Jews during the war. One moonless night, he vanished and was never seen again.”1328 The fate of several Jewish policemen accused of torturing Jews and turning them over to the Germans who were recognized by Jewish passengers aboard the Marine Perch is not clear. Apparently, an investigation was conducted on board to prevent a lynching, and the case was supposedly turned over for further investigation after the ship docked.1329 Not all base and reprehensible conduct, however, was necessarily considered to be worthy of sanctions. A booming business developed in Sachsenhausen where Jews working in the crematorium commando removed gold teeth from corpses with pliers and then sold them to guards and a criminal mafia organized by German prisoners, the so-called Beruf Verbrechers, who were known to eliminate prisoners who stood in their way.1330 No investigation of these activities is known to have taken place.

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1325 Browning, Remembering Survival, 360 n.35. Langleban had been severely beaten in Auschwitz by a prisoner who was “settling scores” with collaborators. See Pinchas Hochmitz, “We Were Ten Brothers,” in Schutzman, Wierzbnik-Starachowitz, 263ff.
1326 Zimmerman, And Tell the Deeds of God, chapters 35 and 37.
1327 Zimmerman, And Tell the Deeds of God.
1328 Armstrong, Mosaic, 409.
1329 Helmreich, Against All Odds, 22–23.
1330 Iwo Cyprian Pogonowski, “Handel złotymi zębami w obozie w Sachsenhausen pod Berlinem,” Internet:
The famed Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal addressed the “cover-up” by the Canadian authorities and leaders of the Canadian Jewish community in prosecuting David Zimet (Zimmet), an ex-Gestapo agent who had attacked Wiesenthal with a knife in a DP camp near Linz. Wiesenthal’s perceptive remarks on the entire topic are well worth repeating.

Zimet had been a ghetto policeman in the southern Polish city of Tarnów and, says Wiesenthal, ‘the right hand of a very known Gestapo sadist with the name of Grunov. Later, Zimet was sent to Mauthausen to work in the crematory. His family stayed in Tarnów. When the Russians came near Tarnów …, the Germans started more deportations of the few hundred Jews that were left … Since there were no more trains, they sent them in trucks. In one truck of Jewish women was the wife and the daughter of Zimet. And the hatred against him was so great that the Jewish women in that truck taking them all to die killed his wife and his daughter then and there.’

By 1946, Zimet was a DP in Austria and was recognized by several survivors from Tarnów. Wiesenthal was still collecting testimony about him in the DP camp when Zimet learned that Simon was, as he puts it, ‘occupied with his case, so at seven o’clock in the morning he is coming to my office there with a knife. He was a big, strapping healthy man back in ’46 while we were all still so thin. He had lived good in the ghetto and, in the crematorium at Mauthausen, they were all given double food … I pick up the inkwell from my desk and throw it at his face to protect myself and I shout so loud that people come running to help me and his is arrested. Zimet was four weeks in jail for this. But then, because he had worked in the crematory, they need him for the Mauthausen trial and bring him to Germany as a witness. From Germany, he emigrates to Canada.’

Years later, Wiesenthal was looking over a confidential list of cases being investigated by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, when he read:

ZMET, David. A policeman in ghetto in Tarnów. Witnesses have attested to his brutality.

‘Zimet!’ Wiesenthal exclaimed. ‘This is my old case!’ He informed the Canadian authorities of his evidence against Zimet, but they proved unwilling to prosecute a Jew for Nazi crimes. The Canadian Jewish Committee intervened and Zimet agreed to submit to a council of arbitration established by the committee.

‘Nothing ever came of it,’ says Wisesenthal, ‘because the Jewish community was reluctant to publicize the case since Zimet was himself Jewish.’ This is so terrible! Through this false attitude that we must ignore Jewish helpers of the Nazis, we are losing credibility when we say we are acting against all people that commit crimes. If everybody could see that we are not looking only for Germans and Ukrainians, but even for our own Jewish criminals, then we would have much less opposition.’

‘I first saw Jewish collaborators in the ghetto of Lwów,’ Simon Wiesenthal says in his memoirs, ‘and later I saw them in various concentration camps. There were some shocking cases, and when I talked about the problem after the war, many Jews were perturbed. Perhaps they had expected the Jews to be immune from corruption. Like all races, we have had our saints and our sinners, our cowards and our heroes.’

Reinhard Heydrich, who engineered the Final Solution, believed that the secret of manipulation lay in involvement and collaboration. With the appointment of Jewish councils of elders, even rabbis, to enforce Gestapo edicts, Heydrich’s hatchet-man Adolf Eichmann could compel each Jewish community to co-operate in its own destruction. …

‘After the war, I not only arrested Jews who were Nazi collaborators, but, from the committees running the Displaced Persons camps and the former concentration camps, I expelled people who could not bring evidence about their activities during the Nazi time. I made a rule that was approved by the American military government authorities and became known in the camps as Lz Wiesenthal: Latin for Wiesenthal’s Law. It was very simple: Whoever had a function of authority in the Nazi period could not have a function in postwar Jewish life. I wasn’t saying such a man was a criminal. I wasn’t even looking into whether he was good or bad. But I needed to protect our Jewish society from more bad surprises.’

‘Don’t push it, Simon,’ a friend he describes as an ‘official Jew’ pleaded with him. ‘What you are doing will only diminish the guilt of the Nazis.’

‘No,’ said Simon, ‘this is an extension of the guilt of the Nazis. When they brought pressure on Jews to work against other Jews, when they were guilty of corrupting hundreds of Jews as well as murdering millions of us.’

Wiesenthal noted that ‘in many cases, such people after the war found jobs with Jewish organizations. …’

Israeli scholars Orna Ben-Naftali and Yogev Tuval have argued that small number of Kapo trials, which took place in Israel between 1951 and 1964 and then brought to an abrupt halt, have been expunged from Israel’s collective memory, and that this matter has been the subject of deliberate collective forgetting. As Jan Peczkis points out in his penetrating review:

Israel’s Nazi and Nazi Collaborators (Punishment) Law 1950, best known for its application in the trial of Adolf Eichmann, was originally enacted to punish Jews who had collaborated with the Nazis against other Jews. (pp. 128–129). The law stemmed from the following: There were 200,000 Holocaust survivors in the young State of Israel, and they angrily wanted the collaborators to be brought to justice. (p. 144).

Some 30–40 trials of Jewish collaborators took place between 1951 and 1964 (pp. 128–129), but very little is publicly known about them. Court judgments, in Israel, are normally available. With some exceptions, the trials of Jewish kapos are not. They have been sealed, as recently as the 1990’s (when interest in them increased), for many decades. (pp. 150–151). Is the privacy of those involved the only consideration?

Ben-Naftali and Tuval point out that the trials have been expunged from Israel’s collective memory, and this matter has been the subject of deliberate collective forgetting. (p. 128). They are not part of the curriculum of the Israeli educational system. (p. 129). Ironic to accusations that

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Poles do not want to face up to “dark chapters” in their history, is it possible that it is the Jews who do not want to face up to “dark chapters” in their history?

The authors complain that the Nazi Collaborators law legally equated the Jewish traitors with the perpetrators without distinction—although this consideration met with legal dissension. (p. 137, 147, 153). However, the sentences imposed by the judges were relatively lenient, and the authors suggest that this stemmed from judges actualizing the distinction between Jew and Nazi perpetrator. (p. 168).

The authors suggest that the Nazi Collaborators law functioned the way it did because the Holocaust had been so recent that its implications had not yet been fully appreciated. Could it be, instead, that there was a growth of Jewish identity politics relative to the Holocaust, and that this new identity made it possible to see Jews only as victims but never as victimizers?

It very much appears that the authors, in this article, are trying hard to re-define terms such as Nazi collaboration, and perhaps to make Jews special, in order that Jews who collaborated with the Nazis not be seen as such. I examine their contentions below.

THE UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Ben-Naftali and Tuval argue that the Holocaust may as well have happened on another planet (p. 140), because the customary human norms did not apply. For this reason, the Jewish kapos should not be reckoned as collaborators.

To be consistent, much the same considerations should apply to other genocides. Consider, for example, the brutal German occupation of Poland. Is it surprising that some Poles denounced Jews, were “greedy” over the acquisition of Jewish property, became szmalcowniki (blackmailers of fugitive Jews for their belongings), etc.? Should they, too, be excused in some way?

CAN VICTIMS OF NAZIS BE COLLABORATORS?

The authors argue that the Jewish kapos were not collaborators because they were themselves members of a victim group (Jews), because they never adhered to Nazi ideology, because they were never seen by the Germans as fellow Nazis, because they lived under the same inhumane conditions as their victims, and because they were nothing more than order-fulfillers. (p. 157, 167-168). This, too, is problematic.

The Poles were a despised victim group (Untermenschen) situated only one rung above the Jews in German thinking. Polish collaborators, as well as other Poles, lived under very inhumane conditions. Virtually no ethnic Polish collaborators (as opposed to Volksdeutsche—Polish-speaking Germans) adhered to Nazi ideology. The Germans, most certainly, never saw Polish collaborators as fellow Nazis! Members of the Polish Blue Police (policja granatowa) who participated in the Judenjagd [i.e., German-ordered “hunts” for fugitive Jews] were also direct or indirect order-fulfillers. Should Polish collaborators, therefore, be exonerated?

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES: FEAR OF DEATH, AND MINIMIZING DEATHS

Let us consider an auxiliary matter. Ben-Naftali and Tuval (p. 138) note that, in a criminal proceeding involving charges of collaboration, saving oneself from the threat of immediate death, or to avert worse consequences, can serve as mitigating circumstances. However, they do not specify when these mitigating circumstances would be valid.

Let us focus on facing death for non-compliance. Consider, for example, the following three situations: 1). The Jewish ghetto policeman, at a ghetto in German-occupied Poland, is in the first
half of 1942 or so. He believes the German claim that the Jews he is daily loading upon the trains are being resettled for labor. Both he and the Jewish community are confident that the vast majority of Jews will survive the war, just as Jews had survived past wars and persecutions. He is hardly thinking of death. 2). The Jewish ghetto policeman, now in the second half of 1942 or later. He strongly suspects that the Jews he is boarding on trains are being put to death, and the Jewish community suspects that, unless the war ends very soon, nearly all the Jews will be exterminated. However, at this point, there is no direct or imminent threat to his own life. 3). The same situation as (2), but now the Germans have promised to shoot the policeman, his family, and additional hostages, if he does not fulfill his train-loading tasks. Do the exculpations mentioned by the authors apply only to situation (3), or also (2) and even (1)?

How would fear of death inform the conduct of Poles at Jedwabne … ? Could it be said that Poles were under immediate fear of death because armed Germans were standing not far from them? Alternatively, would the Poles actually have to be looking down the barrels of German guns before they would be recognized as being in a death-threatening situation?

Now consider the commission of untoward acts in order to forestall worse ones. Consider, for example, the controversial Chaim Rumkowski (Rumkovsky), the head of the Łódź [Łódź] Ghetto. There is no consensus among Holocaust survivors as to whether it was all right for Judenrat leaders to obey Germans in sending some Jews to their deaths in hope that other Jews would be spared.

This quandary can be extended to peoples under relatively mild German occupation, such as Norway. Vidkun Quisling, whose very name has become synonymous with collaboration, argued that his acts were noble ones, in that they actually reduced the German-made harm that befell the Norwegians. Should Quisling have been exonerated?

In conclusion, the issues raised by Ben-Naftali and Tuval require further analysis. If applied to reduce or eliminate the guilt of Jewish kapos that served the Nazis, they, if applied fairly and consistently, would also reduce or eliminate the guilt of non-Jewish Nazi collaborators.1333

Historian Piotr Wróbel has raised the following pointed questions in this regard: “But how are historians supposed to judge when such important events of the past are not resolved? How can non-Jewish bystanders be condemned for their passivity when Jewish Kapos, policemen, and former Judenräte leaders were rehabilitated? Many similar questions appear when we study the Holocaust and most of them have no satisfactory answer yet. This aspect of the Holocaust is still far from settled.”1334

Finally, mention should be made of the well-hidden fact that some Jews, whose instinctive reactions to placate the enemy overtook their appreciation of events, greeted and even assisted the German invaders of Poland in September 1939. Jews built triumphal arches for the German invaders in several towns in central Poland, and a few Jews openly collaborated with them.1335 A Jewish delegation in Radom, headed by a

1335 The following sources corroborate these charges: Bednarczyk, Życie codzienne warszawskiego getta, 242 (Jews built triumphal arches to greet the German invaders in Łódź, Pabianice, and elsewhere; Jewish community leaders, headed by rabbis dressed in ceremonial robes, came out to greet the Germans bearing trays with bread and salt);
rabbis and other community leaders, marched down the flower-strewn Mikołaj Rej Street on September 8, 1939 to welcome the German army.\footnote{Eugeniusz Buczyński, Smutny wrzesień: Wspomnienia (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1985), 132 (in Przemyśl, Ukrainian nationalists and Jews jointly erected a triumphal arch for the Germans and looted Polish military buildings); Elinor J. Brecher, Schindler’s Legacy: True Stories of the List Survivors (New York: Penguin, 1994), 56 (Jews greeted the Germans in Kraków); Piotrowski, Poland’s Holocaust, 315 n.167 (Jews greeted the Germans in Janów Lubelski); Mieczysław Edward Szpyra, Moja wojna z Hitlerem, Bandera i Stalinem (Lublin: Norbertinum, 2001), 40 (several Jews who rushed out to greet the German army in Tomaszów Lubelski were photographed by the soldiers but were promptly chased away by officers); Tomasz Strzembosz, “Zstąpienie szatana czy przyjazd gestapo.” Rzeczpospolita (Warsaw), May 12, 2001 (a Jewish delegation headed by a rabbi greeted the Germans in Zareby Kościelne near Ostrów Mazowiecka). Confirmation of these events can also be found in the report of a left-leaning Italian diplomat who stationed in Poland: “in the first days of the conflict, numerous Jews greeted the entrance of the German armies into Polish cities with cries of joy.” See Eugenio Reale, Raporty: Polska 1945–1946 (Paris: Institut Littéraire, 1968), 204. The motivation behind these actions is somewhat baffling because German designs, albeit not yet a full-blown Holocaust, were patently apparent from their widespread public mistreatment of Jews as soon as they entered Poland. Was it merely a matter of opportunism? Some behaviour may have been simply attributable to initial naïveté. A Jewish girl recalls the day that the German army marched into Kraków: “My father and I were among the silent crowds in the street. Their soldiers certainly looked young, handsome and impressive in their well-cut green-grey uniforms. My father said to me, ‘They look so well-presented,’ and I heard admiration in his voice. Then an officer stepped out and called, ‘Can anyone here speak German?’ Without hesitation, my father approached him.” See Zyberman, Swimming Under Water, 17. In one case at least, it may have been a calculated course of action. In Oświęcim, on September 1, 1939, two Jews took in and cared for a wounded German, who had parachuted from a crashing plane, without informing the Polish authorities of his presence. When the Germans entered the town, the Jews led them to the wounded man who, it turned out, was an important Nazi officer. See Moshe Weiss, “To Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Liberation from Auschwitz,” The Jewish Press (Brooklyn), January 27, 1995. Henryk Schönker presents this story in a different light. He states that the German officer was a pilot whose plane had been shot down while bombing Oświęcim. Fearful of possible future retaliation by the Germans, his father, the wartime leader of the Jewish community, decided not to hand the officer over to the Polish authorities, who, in any event, had ceased to function in that town. Leon Schönker hid the officer at his factory with the assistance of a caretaker, a Christian of German origin. Later, the grateful German officer alleviated conditions for Jews in the town, at least for a time. See Henryk Schönker, Dobrzeniec anioła (Warsaw: Ośrodek Karta, 2005), 22–24. But perhaps part of the answer lies in deep-seated sentiments shared, it seems, by even the elite of the Jewish community. In his wartime diary, Chaim Kaplan, a rabbi, educator and author from Warsaw, wrote on September 1, 1939: “This war will indeed bring destruction upon human civilization. But this is a civilization which merits annihilation and destruction. … well, now the Poles themselves will receive our revenge through the hands of our cruel enemy. … My brain is full of the chatterings of the radio from both sides. The German broadcast in the Polish language prates propaganda. Each side accuses the other of every abominable act in the world. Each side considers itself to be righteous and the other murderous, destructive, and bent on plunder. This time, as an exception to the general rule, both speak the truth. Verily it is so—both sides are murderers, destroyers, and plunderers, ready to commit any abomination in the world.” See Katsh, Scroll of Agony, 19–21. Kaplan also peppered his wartime diary with anti-Christian remarks directed at Poles and gave credence to German anti-Polish propaganda. Ibid., 47, 133, 161. A similar attitude was demonstrated by Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira, a prominent Hasidic leader, who wrote in the Warsaw ghetto: “The Jewish people often had to endure calamities whose sole purpose was the destruction of wicked Gentiles. At such times, Jews are imperiled through no fault of their own.” See Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira, Sacred Fire: Torah from the Years of Fury 1939–1942 (Northvale, New Jersey and Jerusalem: Jason Aronson, 2000), 294.

All of a sudden a group of men appeared from behind a brick house. There were about six men in the group. They wore long black topcoats and black hats. One of them carried a loaf of bread on a tray and another a dish of salt, symbols of hospitality. They were representatives of the Jewish community in the city who waited to welcome the first soldiers of the Nazi army entering the city. When they heard our footsteps on the street, they thought that we were the German soldiers. After discovering their mistake, they were embarrassed and returned behind the building to wait for the Germans.\footnote{Józef Łyżwa, “Pomagałem, a potem siedziałem,” Gazeta Polska (Warsaw), February 10, 1994.

In the Volhynian town of Luboml, where the Germans entered first and then retreated a few days later in deference to their then Soviet ally, Jews came forward to collaborate with the Germans (and later with the Soviets) in rounding up Polish soldiers—the only Allied army actually engaged in fighting at the time.\(^{1338}\) In Kobryn, in Polesia, the Germans armed local Jewish Communists who then carried out diversionary assaults against the Polish army.\(^{1339}\) The last Jewish delegation to welcome the German army was probably the one sent by the Jewish community in Miedzyrzec Podlaski, on October 10, 1939, after the departure of the Red Army; its representatives symbolically carried a loaf of bread on a silver tray which they handed over to the dismissive Germans.\(^{1340}\) Israeli historian Tom Segev brought to light the fact that as late as 1941, the Zionist group LEHI, one of whose leaders was Yitzhak Shamir, approached the Nazis, using the name of its parent organization, the Irgun (NMO), with the proposal of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine bound by a treaty with the Third Reich, as a base for strengthening German power in the Near East. The NMO in Palestine offered to take an active part in the war on the side of Germany. The Nazis rejected this proposal, it is reported, because they considered LEHI’s military power “negligible.”\(^{1341}\) Curiously, the members of the Jewish Councils in occupied Poland were for the most part Zionists as well.\(^{1342}\)

Recently, American historian Bryan Mark Rigg has chronicled the hitherto silenced story of some 150,000 Germans of Jewish origin (60,000 of them half-Jewish, 90,000 one-quarter-Jewish, and 5–6,000 entirely Jewish) who served dutifully in the German war machine.\(^{1343}\) Nazi racial laws were bent to allow this widespread phenomenon to occur, and these German Jews espoused completely German war aims which called for the annihilation of Poland.\(^{1344}\) Approximately 300 Jews served in the Finnish army, which

\(^{1338}\) See also Piotrowski, Poland’s Holocaust, 315 n.167.
\(^{1339}\) According to Isaiah Trunk, 77 percent of the Judenrat members were Zionists. See Trunk, Judenrat, 34.
\(^{1340}\) Approximately 300 Jews served in the Finnish army, which

\(^{1341}\) See also Piotrowski, Poland’s Holocaust, 315 n.167.
\(^{1342}\) Bryan Mark Rigg, Hitler’s Jewish Soldiers: The Untold Story of Nazi Racial Laws and Men of Jewish Descent in the German Military (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002). While it is true that the majority of the German Jews and Mischlinge (those of mixed blood) interviewed by Rigg escaped persecution by concealing their background or being fortunate to serve under officers that disregarded it, there were also quite a few of them known and spared by top Nazi officials and re-labeled Aryans. Hitler did this with the stroke of a pen. In Chapter 3 of his subsequent study Lives of Hitler’s Jewish Soldiers: Untold Tales of Men of Jewish Descent Who Fought for the Third Reich (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2009), which deals with those who received the 

\(^{1343}\) Bryan Mark Rigg, Hitler’s Jewish Soldiers: The Untold Story of Nazi Racial Laws and Men of Jewish Descent in the German Military (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002). While it is true that the majority of the German Jews and Mischlinge (those of mixed blood) interviewed by Rigg escaped persecution by concealing their background or being fortunate to serve under officers that disregarded it, there were also quite a few of them known and spared by top Nazi officials and re-labeled Aryans. Hitler did this with the stroke of a pen. In Chapter 3 of his subsequent study Lives of Hitler’s Jewish Soldiers: Untold Tales of Men of Jewish Descent Who Fought for the Third Reich (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2009), which deals with those who received the 

\(^{1344}\) Ibid., 124, 207, 210. As historian Bernard Wasserstein notes, German Jews who were perfectly comfortable with the chauvinistic premises of Nazism, without of course its anti-Semitism (excepting the vehement hostility to the Ostjuden). This included Max Naumann, who argued unsuccessfully that Jews were in fact part of the German Volk.
was fighting the Soviet army alongside the German Wehrmacht. Thus the number of Jews fighting on the side of the Germans was probably greater than the number of Jews in anti-Nazi underground movements in all of Europe. Characteristically, with the notable exception of the Poles, far more numbers of the native population in nearly every German-occupied country, including Denmark, volunteered to serve in German-sponsored formations than in the anti-Nazi underground.  

No nation had a monopoly on informers or collaborators during the war, although some historians try to convince us that it was otherwise. While denying that (some) Jews collaborated with the Soviets in Soviet-occupied Eastern Poland 1939–1941, Jan T. Gross proffers a blanket condemnation of non-Jews during the German occupation: “it is manifest that the local non-Jewish population … broadly engaged in collaboration with the Germans, up to and including participation in the exterminatory war against the Jews.”1346 Eschewing such a strident and nationalistic vision of history, a compelling starting point for serious discussion of the topic of wartime collaboration are the valuable insights of British historian Norman Davies, who wrote prophetically:

The Holocaust will be seen to have been perpetrated not by the one single, supreme evil force of European History, but by one of the two great evils whose titanic contest generated a much richer range of criminals and victims of all degrees. …

… it will become impossible to use ethnic criteria to decide who in the maelstrom of war were the murderers, who were the bystanders and collaborators, and who were the victims and survivors. …

Similarly, if one looks at the total experience of each of the ethnic groups, one finds that each of them provides candidates for inclusion in all compartments of the rogues and heroes galleries. …

At all events, ethnicity offers no suitable guide to wartime conduct or misconduct. Nowhere is this truer than in the vexed question of wartime Polish-Jewish relations. 1347

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