At the Confluence of Rescuer and Perpetrator

Jewish-Polish Relations in Hiding and Portraits of Polish Aid-Providers During the Holocaust in Poland as Detailed in the Testimonies of Jews, 1942 - 1945

By: Miranda Brethour

Supervisor: Dr. Jan Grabowski

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Arts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in History

University of Ottawa

ABSTRACT

Author: Miranda Brethour Supervisor: Dr. Jan Grabowski

Submitted in: 2019

Title: At the Confluence of Rescuer and Perpetrator: Jewish-Polish Relations in Hiding and Portraits of Polish Aid-Providers During the Holocaust as Detailed in the Testimonies of Jews, 1942 - 1945

Around the time of the mass liquidations of ghettos across occupied-Poland in 1942, thousands of Polish Jews fled to the homes of former gentile neighbours, friends, colleagues, as well as strangers, in search of a precious and necessary resource: shelter. Once these liquidations were deemed complete and the majority of Polish Jews had been transported to their deaths at the extermination camps, remaining alive was itself a crime for Polish Jews. One common survival strategy was to hide in the homes of Polish gentiles, as other options, such as hiding in the open, necessitated further preparation; false documents, fluency in Polish, and connections in the gentile community, for instance. Drawing upon diaries, postwar testimonies, and oral interviews with Jews who experienced part of the occupation in hiding with Polish gentiles, this thesis highlights the multifaceted nature of relations between Jews and Poles in hiding, and argues that the behaviour of Polish aid-providers during the Holocaust in Poland unsettles distinctions between perpetrators, rescuers, and bystanders. Significantly, such categories have been rigidly maintained in much of the existing literature on Polish aid-providers. The individual chapters are devoted to the prevalence of payment for shelter, particularly in non-currency means such as

property exchanges and services, and coercive, nonconsensual sexual relations in hiding. The final chapter focuses upon the region of Sokołów County and illustrates the constitutive and contextual differences between short and long-term shelter, the denunciation and murder of Jews in hiding by their Polish helpers, and the "unrighteous" actions of those declared Righteous Among the Nations. Each chapter traces the diversity of threats faced by Jews in hiding. To date, scholars have emphasized the great threat posed by the Germans gendarmes and the Polish "blue" police to Jews in hiding, and neglected the internal threats. The testimonies discussed in this thesis expose the multiple ways in which gentile aid-providers could endanger Jews in hiding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I must extend immense gratitude towards my thesis supervisor, Dr. Jan Grabowski. I am so thankful and honoured to have had the privilege of working with such an exceptional scholar, and exceptionally kind mentor, during my time at the University of Ottawa. Dr. Grabowski gave me (much needed) initial confidence in my research during the early years of my undergraduate career, and has guided my approach to the study of the Holocaust in countless ways which will undoubtedly carry me forward in my academic career. Dr. Grabowski, I thank you warmly.

I wish to thank the two other members of my dissertation committee: Dr. Eric Allina and Dr. Heather Murray. I was lucky to take courses with both Dr. Murray and Dr. Allina at the University of Ottawa, in which I was encouraged to explore untraditional historical materials and challenged to adopt a sharper, more critical approach towards my own written work. I am greatly appreciative of their support, and the time they have dedicated to reading and providing immensely valuable feedback on my work.

Generous financial support from a number of sources facilitated the completion of this project. A Canada Graduate Scholarship awarded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, an Ontario Graduate Scholarship administered jointly by the University of Ottawa and the Province of Ontario, and an Excellence Scholarship from the University of Ottawa allowed me to focus on my research over the past two years. A Gaston Héon Scholarship in History, granted by the University of Ottawa's Department of History, enabled me to undertake research in Poland.

Many individuals supported my work with the Polish language and the translation of documents required for this dissertation, and are most deserving of my thanks. Dr. Grabowski supervised my translations of a number of the ŻIH 301 testimony files from the Polish to the English. My dear friend Martyna Weglinski devoted time to certain challenging ŻIH testimonies, and helped me generate final translations that capture the nuances of the original Polish. Agata Reibach translated many ŻIH testimonies from the Sokołów region from the Yiddish to the Polish. *Dziękuję bardzo.*

Katarzyna Markusz, a local expert on the Holocaust in the town of Sokołów Podlaski, graciously supported and facilitated my work in this area, and revised an early draft of chapter four. Additionally, Katarzyna met with me and shared her rich knowledge of contemporary traces of the past during my visit to Sokołów Podlaski. I am incredibly grateful for Katarzyna's encouragement and her tireless efforts as a custodian of the memory of Sokołów Jews.

My close friend and colleague Fiona Davidson patiently guided my work with ArcGIS and the creation of the maps for this project, and offered much personal support. Thank you to all of the members of the first-year master's cohort for our many thought-provoking and challenging discussions during weekly seminars, and my family and friends for showing interest in my work. My partner Evan has remained an unwavering support, and was an excellent travel companion during a number of my research trips to Poland.

Finally, thank you to my mother for your encouragement, love, and precise knowledge of English grammar. You remain my first, as well as one of my most devoted (and critical) readers. Words cannot adequately capture my gratitude, so I dedicate this to you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF MAPS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AK – *Armia Krajowa* (Home Army)

IPN – *Instytut Pamięci Narodowej* (Institute of National Remembrance)

PiS – *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* (Law and Justice Party)

USHMM – United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

VHA – University of Southern California's Visual History Archive

YVA – Yad Vashem Archive

ŻIH – *Żydowski Instytut Historyczny* (Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw)

INTRODUCTION

The daily life of Jews in hiding with Polish gentiles in German-occupied Poland, especially to those unacquainted with the history of the Holocaust in Poland, can be reflexively characterized by inaction and stagnancy, concealment, and total isolation from society at large. In this vein, the hiding space itself embodies both physical and metaphysical desolation; a space wherein its inhabitants delicately and precariously balanced existence and non-existence. For many years after the war, Jews who survived the Holocaust in hiding were not accepted as veritable survivors, as this title was initially reserved for those who lived through the concentration and death camps.[1] The first scholars of hiding during the Holocaust flocked to consider the perspective of Polish aid-providers and rescuers, critically examining their psychological makeup to draw conclusions on the nature of the human psyche. The implicit assumptions at work in this earlier scholarship included that Jews were acted upon by their rescuers, passive and listless, devoid of agency, and ultimately helpless to direct their own lives. While Jews in hiding were indeed extremely vulnerable to the momentary whims of their gentile helpers and subject to circumstances anathema to their lives, I am strongly opposed to the characterization of Jews in hiding as passive and inactive, which so often implicitly or explicitly accompanies the topic of hiding.

This thesis illustrates that by exploring the daily lives of Jews in hiding through testimonies, oral interviews, and diaries recorded by those who hid with Polish gentiles during the Holocaust, scholars can become privy to an intimate site of interaction between Poles and Jews that can, in turn, illuminate much about Polish-Jewish relations during the Holocaust, a

[1] Zoë Waxman, *Women in the Holocaust: A Feminist History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 74.

topic which has garnered significant and increasing academic interest as of late. The regular exchanges of food, cash, conversation and the like, which these documents record in depth, may initially appear mundane; a mere specter of the quotidian. However, a close reading of these materials can shed light on how Polish-Jewish relations proceeded in an inordinately extreme context: Occupied-Poland, after 1942, when the majority of the ghettos had been liquidated, and Jewish life in Poland itself was rendered illegal by the Nazi occupiers. As this thesis will prove, the creation of the ghettos and their subsequent liquidations in no sense marked the end, or even a faltering, of meaningful interactions between Jews and Polish gentiles in occupied-Poland.

For individuals specialized in the history of the Holocaust in Poland and Polish-Jewish relations, this thesis promises a number of contributions to the field and will point to areas for future research. Those interested in new developments in the field should pay particular attention to chapter two, which discusses sexual violence and abuse as one of the many threats that faced Jews in hiding. While previous literature has explored the commonality of physical, emotional, and verbal abuse in hiding, this chapter is one of the few pieces to direct attention to the threat and perpetration of sexual abuse in the context of hiding. This thesis further reflects on the ways in which payment, particularly in the form of services, could be both a form of paid help and abuse.

Scholars of the Holocaust in Poland continue to struggle with the reality that much of our research is necessarily based on the stories and experiences of survivors. With the exception of diaries, most of the primary documents we rely upon for our studies were produced in the immediate postwar era (for instance, the 301 testimonies files at the Jewish Historical Institute [ŻIH], which have been the foundation of many studies on the Holocaust in Poland). Attuned to this methodological (and moral) issue, many have turned to alternate forms of historical documentation, such as court files, which tell the stories of the victims. In this thesis, I build on

this methodological trend by paying focus to the individuals at the "margins" of survivor testimonies. In their accounts, many survivors briefly narrate, or at the very least mention, the murder of their family, friends, and neighbours.

For the general public, this thesis conveys much about the significance of hiding with gentiles with regard to historical knowledge of the Holocaust in Poland, and illustrates the diversity of this experience by drawing upon over ninety primary accounts of Jews in hiding. This will add complexity to the portrayal and experiences of the Holocaust recorded in diaries and memoirs well-known to the public, such as *The Diary of a Young Girl, Night, Survival in Auschwitz,* and *Scroll of Agony,* and illuminate particulars pertaining to the geographic context of occupied-Poland.[2] Taken together, the testimonies of Jews presented in the body of this thesis narrate the precarious nature of hiding, and attempts by those in hiding to negotiate new realities and build relationships with the gentiles to which their lives were now tied. They further show the considerable power of greed, a desire for wealth**,** and the influence of fear in the context of wartime Poland. Many of these documents recount the fate of those in hiding who did not survive to liberation, once again, a part of the story inherently absent from many materials. Essentially, hiding was in no sense a uniform experience, and the documents presented below will illustrate its variants, contradictions, and struggles.

The subject of this thesis touches upon a number of universal themes, applicable and relevant to scholars of different backgrounds and fields, and to those outside of the academe altogether. It wrestles with the universal temptation to label historical actors as "good," "evil," "moral," and "immoral," especially when studying the history of the Holocaust. As an

[2] Chaim A. Kaplan, *Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993); Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (New York: Vintage International, 1989); Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Touchstone, 1986); Elie Weisel, *Night* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012).

overarching argument, I stress that, since human existence cannot be simply qualified as such and the context of wartime is especially resistant to behavioural categorization, the tendency to draw moral boundaries in this way (as prevalent in the literature) is a stopgap and ultimately impedes the identification of meaningful historical themes. Many of the documents presented in this thesis expose how individuals could oscillate and simultaneously occupy both ends of the spectrum of good and evil, compounding and complicating this dichotomy.

It is imperative to briefly describe the political context in which this thesis was produced, and by which its contents have been inevitably affected. In writing this monograph, I engage in an intense and growing public and scholarly conversation concerning a politicization of the Righteous Among the Nations in Poland under the current leadership of the Law and Justice (PiS) party. Since the election of this party in Poland in the fall of 2015, there has been a palpable, controlled shift in the national conversation on Polish collaboration with the Nazi-occupiers and gentile aid, which is now heavily directed by the government. The national government has taken charge of many institutions of Holocaust memory and has instituted a memory law in an attempt to restrict public and academic discussions, suppress conversation of Polish collaboration with the Nazis, and shift the focus towards their noble compatriots of the wartime years - the Polish Righteous Among the Nations.

Under this new memory regime, there is no place for ambiguity - for documents that expose the intense abuse faced by many Jews in hiding at the hands of their gentile helpers, and the denunciation of those in hiding. I argue that the above experiences truly characterize hiding during the Holocaust, and that only a modicum of Polish rescuers were “purely” righteous, despite what the current government wishes their citizens and international allies to believe. As Holocaust rescuers are deeply embedded in the historical policy of the current government, and are often abused to gain international esteem and subdue other, less pleasant and morally

palatable topics, I believe this thesis to be critical. While the main body of the thesis will not consider the memory of Holocaust rescuers at length, I will pay due diligence to this important and pressing issue in the epilogue.

This thesis is organized as follows: In the first half of chapter one, I survey the existing historiography and other literature in this field, emphasizing my own contribution to this body of research. Two divergent movements in the literature are foregrounded: An earlier, widespread literature on Polish rescuers and Righteous Among the Nations (most of which was written from a psychological or sociological perspective) and recent work on Jewish-gentile relations that explores the "gray zone" of rescue activities. The methodology is summarized in the following section of this chapter, which discusses the main primary sources mobilized, and my approach in distinguishing between terms such as "helper" and "rescuer." The conclusion of chapter one features the historical context of hiding during the Holocaust in Poland, to introduce the subsequent chapters of analysis.

Chapter two addresses the topic of paid help, circumstances wherein Jews bequeathed money, gold, valuables, or services to Polish gentiles in order to secure shelter. Although many contemporary scholars of the Holocaust in Poland have likewise argued that paid help was a central component of the hiding relationship and that it was inordinately rare to receive shelter from a Polish gentile without any payment whatsoever, I build on the existing work in this field in a number of ways. The central purpose of this chapter is to offer a wide-lensed approach to the topic of paid help; not only do I suggest the centrality of paid help, I demonstrate that paid help was not limited to payments in currency, and could commonly include exchanges of property, valuables, various other goods and, most importantly, services. The final section of this chapter considers sex as payment for shelter, and the challenge of divorcing sex as a form of payment from sexual violence, in this context.

Furthering this discussion of sexual relations in hiding, the third chapter concerns sexual violence in the context of hiding perpetrated by various individuals, from the gentile helpers to their family and friends. After a brief summary of the literature on sex and the Holocaust, I present and analyze oral testimonies of Jewish girls and women who were raped, molested, or otherwise sexually violated in hiding. In addition to the analysis of the oral testimonies, I consider methodological intricacies unique to oral sources, for example, the interpretation of body language and how the interviewers shape survivors' testimonies of sexual violence. The concluding sections of this chapter consider the ways in which survivors of sexual violence and the Holocaust remember their gentile helpers and rescuers.

Although the geographical limit of this thesis is the territory of occupied-Poland in its entirety, chapter four is uniquely dedicated to one region: The area of Sokołów County, in Eastern Poland. In this final chapter, I employ micro-history as a methodology in order to consider and concisely illustrate many elements of the hiding relationship. This chapter follows the occupation, the liquidation of the three ghettos of Sokołów County, and the post-liquidation search for shelter on the Aryan side. A number of themes are presented: The prevalence of short-term shelter and how various fears perceivably influenced Polish behaviour towards Jews in hiding, long-term shelter and abuse in hiding, the denunciation and murder of Jews in hiding by their Polish helpers, and the righteous gentiles of Sokołów County.

After a brief conclusion, I turn my attention towards the Righteous Among the Nations and their symbolic currency in present-day Poland. This epilogue considers the memory of Polish rescuers in light of the political shift that took place after the election of PiS in 2015. In this section, I pose and attempt to respond to two questions: What is the relationship between witness accounts of the hiding experience and representations of the hiding experience in Polish museums and memorials? What can these representations tell us about the role of Holocaust

memory in contemporary Poland? To respond to these questions, I analyze a number of prominent spaces of memory around Poland, including the new Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk, the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, Survivors' Park in Łódź, and the Ulma Family Musuem of Poles Saving Jews During World War II in Markowa.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORIOGRAPHY, METHODOLOGY, AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

1.1 Historiography

As there is no established body of work on relations between Jews and gentiles in hiding during the Holocaust in Poland to date, it is necessary to cast the historiographical net further to include related areas of study. This includes an established field of English-language research on gentile rescuers of Jews in Nazi Germany and the German-occupied territories, which began in the 1970s. Following a period of relative silence surrounding this topic in the immediate postwar era, the late twentieth century witnessed a surge of scholarly interest in gentile rescuers during the Holocaust across the German-occupied territories, a trend that continued into the twenty-first century. This body of literature is united by several common characteristics; mainly, a focus on the figure of the gentile rescuer with little attention given to the Jewish perspective or the relationship between gentile rescuers and Jews in hiding.

Most publications from this body of literature emanate from the disciplines of psychology and sociology, and employ gentile Holocaust rescuers to access traits in human psychology that produce such "positive" responses to humanitarian need. The main question posed in the relevant monographs and articles is as follows: Why did certain individuals become rescuers, while others ignored or directly refused pleas for help?[3] The exact phrasing of this question varies from piece

[3] Eva Fogelman, *Conscience & Courage: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust* (New York: Random House, 1994), xvii.

to piece, however its essence remains the same. For instance, in Nechama Tec's short chapter on rescuers of Jews, she asks: "Concentrating on altruistic rescuers, what characteristics did they share? Who among the non-Jews was likely to try to overcome the many barriers and rescue Jews?"[4] Kristen Renwick Monroe's book poses a number of similar questions such as, "What drove these particular individuals [rescuers]? What caused them to engage in their moral acts? And what insight can this empirical examination shed on broader questions of ethics and morality?"[5]

The authors overwhelmingly concur that the impetus to rescue Jews during the Holocaust was rooted in the established identity of the rescuer. Eva Fogelman calls this "the rescuer self"; a facet of identity that developed during childhood but only emerged during the Holocaust, when it was required.[6] Kristen Renwick Monroe and Samuel P. Oliner expand on Fogelman's "rescuer self," claiming that the decision to rescue was not a decision as such, since the source of this act was a deeply engrained part of the rescuer's identity.[7]

As these questions and conclusions suggest, this literature is focused on the notion of righteous, altruistic rescuers and is admittedly more interested in explaining facets of human psychology than uncovering historical knowledge. In some books, such as Samuel P. Oliner's *Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe,* the history of the Holocaust is applied by the author as a case study to better understand what "altruistic personalities" consist of.[8]

---

[4] Nechama Tec, "A Glimmer of Light," in *The Holocaust and the Christian World: Reflections on the Past, Challenges for the Future,* edited by Carol Rittner, Stephen D. Smith and Irena Steinfeldt (New York: Beth Shalom Holocaust Memorial Centre, 2000), 151.
[5] Kristen Renwick Monroe, *The Hand of Compassion: Portraits of Moral Choice during the Holocaust* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), x.
[6] Fogelman, *Conscience & Courage,* xviii.
[7] Monroe, *The Hand of Compassion,* xi; Samuel P. Oliner, *Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 222.
[8] Oliner, *Altruistic Personality*, 1.

These studies further employ methodologies that give unremitting focus to the figure of the rescuer. Interviews were the most popular method of research, sometimes supplemented by written testimony. Oliner, for example, conducted interviews of rescuers, non rescuers,[9] and survivors. A considerable number of rescuers were interviewed, 406, compared to 126 nonrescuers and only 150 survivors. Often, the testimonies of Jews were included for the express purpose of gaining access to the personality of the rescuer, as is the case in Monroe's book. Certain authors filtered and selected their gentile rescuers based on the documents and criteria established by Yad Vashem's files of the righteous, others by their own criteria entirely.

As the rescuer occupies the foreground of this historiography, a few pages or sentences are necessarily dedicated to a reflection on the semantics of "rescue" and how the authors are uniquely applying it in their respective works. With few exceptions, the gentile rescuer is defined as a righteous, moral figure, and the authors usually assert that the presence of morally upstanding behaviour was the selection criteria when searching for testimonies or interview participants. Some adhere to the regulations established by Yad Vashem, whose Righteous Among the Nations medals are awarded to gentile rescuers that satisfy all criteria, which encompasses: "Active involvement of the rescuer in saving one or several Jews from the threat of death or deportation to death camps"; "Risk to the rescuer's life, liberty or position"; "The initial motivation being the intention to help persecuted Jews: i.e. not for payment or any other reward such as religious conversion of the saved person, adoption of a child, etc." and "The existence of

[9] Nonrescuer is a term used by Oliner. He defines a nonrescuer as an individual who declined to provide help when asked. This category is further divided into bystanders, who "had done nothing out of the ordinary during the war either to help other people or resist the Nazis." See Oliner, *Altruistic Personality,* 4.

testimony of those who were helped or at least unequivocal documentation establishing the nature of the rescue and its circumstances."[10]

Nevertheless, certain authors push aside Yad Vashem's program of the righteous, and lay their own grounds of righteousness criteria. What, then, does "rescue" and "righteous" mean to these authors, in the context of the Holocaust, and which specific activities are qualified as rescuing? Samuel P. Oliner defines a rescuer as someone "motivated by humanitarian considerations only, risked his or her own life, and received no remuneration of any kind for his or her act."[11] Some books, such as Mordecai Paldiel's *The Path of the Righteous: Gentile Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust,* employ a wider definition of rescuer. For instance, Paldiel cites the case of a Polish woman who used the money of the seven Jews she was hiding in her Lwów apartment to provide for all individuals in the household.[12] This does qualify as receiving remuneration however, Paldiel justifies its inclusion under the umbrella of rescue, as the woman could not afford to feed the seven Jews as well as herself - such funds were necessary. In some pieces, clear definitions of what constitutes a gentile rescuer and righteous activities are never provided.

Although hiding does not appear in the titles, in this body of literature the activity of rescuing is usually illustrated by examples wherein gentiles hid Jews in their homes. Other acts, such as accumulating forged papers for Jews to use to survive on the Aryan side or the provision of food, are included however, the act of hiding is most frequently cited.

While the subject of these books is the gentile rescuer, certain authors also consider activities that they do not qualify as righteous, such as paid help. Fogelman, for instance, admits

---

[10] "The Righteous Among the Nations," *Yad Vashem*, accessed September 22, 2018, http://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/faq.html.
[11] Oliner, *Altruistic Personality,* 2.
[12] Mordecai Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous: Gentile Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (Hoboken: KTAV Publishing House, 1993), 187.

that motivations for rescue "were rarely straightforward," and that payment was often involved.[13] Nechama Tec includes a chapter on paid and Anti-Semitic helpers in her book, yet deems them "exceptional" and asserts that those who rescued Jews for money "made up less than 20 percent [of all rescuers]."[14] In Bill Tammeus and Jacques Cukierkorn's book on rescue in Poland, they feature an interview with a Jewish survivor who insisted that the authors of the book did not contact her rescuer and tell him that she was alive. She explained to them that if they did, the rescuer would "come after her for money."[15] This powerful anecdote appears in the book's introduction - the authors justify that it was not included in the main body of analysis as it did not illustrate a case of a righteous gentile, the subject of their analysis.

To conclude this discussion of the literature on rescue and righteous gentiles, it must be mentioned that its key feature is a clean divide between moral and immoral behavior. While some authors defend that in studying rescuers and righteous behavior they are not searching for a "silver lining to the Holocaust," many of the books are written in morally-saturated language that suggests otherwise.[16] For instance, Fogelman writes that, "While most people saw Jews as pariahs, rescuers saw them as human beings" and that "The theme of the rescuing relationship was altruism; its product, the creation of a safe harbor in a hostile world."[17] Rescuers are potent moral antidotes; they provide relief to the pessimism brought on by the occupation as proof that, even in the darkest chapters of human history, human goodness was not entirely absent. According to Władyslaw Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewinówna*:* "This gloomy truth [of human killing humans], however, is not the whole truth about the occupation. There is also the truth of

[13] Fogelman, *Conscience & Courage*, 136.
[14] Nechama Tec, *When the Light Pierced the Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 12; Tec, "A Glimmer of Light," 151.
[15] Bill Tammeus and Jacques Cukierkorn, *They Were Just People: Stories of Rescue in Poland During the Holocaust* (University of Missouri Press, 2009), 5.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Fogelman, *Conscience & Courage*, 6; 21.

the heroic, unflinching struggle and there is the truth of the helping hand and open heart offered to those who were dying."[18] In this literature, rescuers appear as one-dimensional actors of moral good, devoid of any faults and immune from the influence of the occupation.

In the final decades of the twentieth century and continuing into the twenty-first, a new body of literature began to develop on Polish-Jewish relations during the Holocaust in Poland that concerns relationships between Jews in hiding and Polish rescuers. This literature charges that parts of the Polish population were entirely ambivalent about the fate of their Jewish neighbours and others collaborated with the occupiers and participated in the "Final Solution." Topics of relevance include the institutional collaboration of the Polish "blue" police (the prewar police force which had been purged and remobilized by the German occupiers), the activities of Polish blackmailers (*szmalcowniks*), and spontaneous mass violence towards Polish Jews. Help provided towards Jews is a part of this literature however, many authors actively contest the notion that rescue activities were necessarily of righteous classification. The relationship between Jews and gentiles in hiding appears often as a theme yet, it is generally subsumed within the larger topic of Jewish-gentile relations.

The inaugural moment of this literature can be traced back to 1978, when Polish writer Jan Błoński published an article in the newspaper *Tygodnik Powszechny* entitled "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto."[19] Błoński criticized the response of Polish society towards the Jews, accusing Poles of showing "insufficient concern" for the fate of Jews during the war. He specifically recognized Polish self-perception as victims as a major impediment against the discussion of Polish collaboration. Although similar ideas had been raised in previous works,

[18] Władyslaw Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewinówna, *Righteous Among Nations: How Poles helped the Jews, 1939-1945* (London: Earlscourt Publications Limited, 1969), ix.
[19] Jan Błoński, "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto," in '*My brother's keeper?': Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust,* edited by Antony Polonsky (London: Routledge, 1990).

such as Raul Hilberg's *Perpetrators, Victims*, *Bystanders*, Błoński's article marked a watershed moment wherein Polish-Jewish relations began to receive public attention and debate in Poland.

The most well-known piece to follow Bloński's article was Jan Gross' book *Neighbours,* published first in Polish as *Sąsiedzi: Historia Zagłady Żydowskiego Miasteczka* in 2000. This book recounted that in the summer of 1941, before transports to the death camps had begun, the Polish community of the small town of Jedwabne unleashed a violent pogrom on the Jewish population, forcing the Jews of Jedwabne into a barn and lighting it on fire. Gross' research exposed that this mass murder was committed by the Polish community with no immediate assistance from the German occupiers. His findings engendered a fierce response in Poland and many accused Gross of vilifying the good name of Poland and Poles. Subsequent state investigations did not find evidence to challenge Gross' research, and further research has only confirmed his reconstruction of the events of July 10th, 1941.[20] One legacy of Gross' book has been an increased and growing interest in a critical approach towards Jewish-gentile relations during the Holocaust in Poland.

As aforementioned, the relationship between Jews in hiding and Polish helpers appears often as a chapter in this larger field of Polish-Jewish relations. Even in Barbara Engelking's book, which specifically examines the experiences of Jews searching for shelter and help in rural Poland, she outlines that "Relations between Poles and the Jews they were hiding is a fascinating topic, which calls for a separate study."[21] Bob Moore, a historian of gentile rescue in Western Europe, traces the "urgent need for reappraisal, both of "rescue" as part of the history of the Holocaust, and also as a facet of the civilian responses to Nazi rule in occupied Western Europe,"

[20] For an interesting journalistic approach to the memory of the Jedwabne massacre, see Anna Bikont, *The Crime and the Silence: Confronting the Massacre of the Jews in Wartime Jedwabne* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004).
[21] Barbara Engelking, *Such a Beautiful Sunny Day…Jews Seeking Refuge in the Polish Countryside, 1942-1945* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem: 2016), 123.

since, "the focus on rescuers as a few righteous and well-motivated individuals who helped, when others were indifferent or positively hostile, has served to create a rather skewed historiography".[22]

In the form of chapters and articles, authors have considered the experiences of Jews in hiding and relations with their Polish helpers and rescuers. The methodological approach of this more recent literature shifts considerably from that on Polish rescuers, which relies mainly upon interviews with rescuers as the source basis. This body of literature emphasizes the perspective of Jews, through mainly survivor testimonies, which are mined for the stories of the victims, as well.[23] This source basis is derived from a number of archives, including the 301 and 302 files at ŻIH in Warsaw, Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, and the various city archives of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN).[24] Instead of relying upon the Righteous files at Yad Vashem, as the bulk of the literature on Polish rescuers does, the material left out of the process of selection is considered instead. Zuzanna Schnepf-Kołacz well articulates the issues that arise when solely the Righteous files are used as primary evidence, and the benefits of turning to other materials available at Yad Vashem:

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

[22] Bob Moore, "The Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Belgium, France and the Netherlands," *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 50, no. 3 (2004): 386.
[23] One significant exception to this focus on Jewish testimony in this literature on Polish-Jewish relations and the lives of Jews in hiding is a book by Gunnar S. Paulsson. He relies excessively upon statistics to outline the experiences of Jews on the Aryan side of Warsaw and their interactions with Poles however, these statistics do not usually prove illuminating and are difficult to read for valuable historical knowledge. See Gunnar S. Paulsson, *Secret City: The Hidden Jews of Warsaw 1940-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 129-131.
[24] This source basis is used in pieces such as Jan Grabowski, *Hunt For the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, "The Unrighteous Righteous and the Righteous Unrighteous," *Dapim: Studies on the Shoah* 24 (2010): 11-63.

white picture presented in the files of noble helpers.[25]

This deeper layer can include the experiences of Jews who did not survive the Holocaust but were hidden for a period of time, voices that are absent from the oral testimonies of rescuers.[26]

This recent body of literature further adopts a critical perspective to terminology in the context of Jewish-gentile relations. In contrast to the literature on Polish rescuers, which tends to apply simplistic definitions of "righteous," "rescuer," and "bystander," this literature has critically revisited these terms to consider how or if they are useful to the study of the Holocaust in Poland. Many authors have concluded that the term "bystander," a staple feature of Holocaust historiography during the twentieth century, cannot do justice to the complexity of the historical evidence on the Holocaust in Poland.[27] For instance, Agnieszka Wierzcholska prefaces her micro-analysis of Jewish-gentile relations in Tarnów by asserting that, "When taking a close look at Jewish-Gentile relations in one Polish town, categories such as "bystander," "rescuer," or even "altruistic personality" fail to explain individual trajectories and only marginally take into account the dynamic of war. After all, one person could assume different roles in the course of the war: helpers could become murderers, exploiters could become rescuers, and antisemites could provide help to the Jews."[28]

Omer Bartov reiterates Wierzcholska's assertion, yet moves even further by suggesting that seemingly dichotomous actions like rescue and denunciation were often part of the same process: "I suggest that the distinction between rescue and denunciation was often blurred and at times nonexistent, as was the distinction between perpetrators and victims; and that the category

[25] Grabowski, *Hunt For the Jews*, 137.
[26] Barbara Engelking, for instance, makes it her intent to uncover the hidden voices of the victims. See Engelking, *Such a Beautiful Sunny Day,* 16.
[27] Raul Hilberg's perpetrator, bystander, victim triad, which revolutionized the study of the Holocaust and was applied by much earlier historiography, is no longer widely accepted as fitting. See Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).
[28] Agnieszka Wierzcholska, "Helping, denouncing, and profiteering: a process-oriented approach to Jewish-Gentile relations in occupied Poland from a micro-historical perspective," *Holocaust Studies* 23, no. 1-2 (2017): 35.

of bystander in these areas was largely meaningless, since everyone took part in the events, whether he or she suffered or profited from them."[29] Many other scholars concur that there was no place for bystanders in this context.[30]

In regards to terminology such as "righteous" and "rescuer," scholars argue that they are similarly not as clear-cut as they have been used in the past and immediately appear to be. When examining relations between Poles and Jews in the context of hiding or the provision of other forms of help, scholars have chosen to diverge from previous historiography on rescuers by avoiding a focus on righteous behavior alone, and considering how "rescue" and "help" differed. For instance, Wierzcholska uses the term "help" to categorize activities of aid-provision generally without giving attention to the outcome. "Rescue," she claims, too easily implies that help was successful while the broader tem "help" is inclusive of a wide variety of activities.[31] Joanna Michlic reacts against the past literature on rescuers by choosing not to distinguish between different motivations for help as well as between the categories of "rescuer," "protector," and "helpers" thus, she argues, avoiding conclusions that are based solely on the actions of righteous helpers.[32]

The critical approach to terminology that is characteristic of recent historiography on Polish-Jewish relations during the Holocaust in Poland is further indicative of its main conclusions: Mainly, that the motivations of gentile helpers were complex, and situations of unpaid help were far less common than the rescue literature of the twentieth century presents. This thesis advances this research on the moral "grey zone" of rescue activities, using similar

[29] Omer Bartov, "Wartime Lies and Other Testimonies: Jewish-Christian Relations in Buczacz, 1939-1944," *East European Politics and Societies* 25, no. 3 (2011): 491.
[30] Natalia Aleksiun, "Neighbours in Borysław: Jewish Perceptions of Collaboration and Rescue in Eastern Galicia," in *The Holocaust and European Societies: Social Processes and Social Dynamics*, edited by Andrea Löw and Frank Bajohr (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 244.
[31] Wierzcholska, "Helping, denouncing, and profiteering," 45.
[32] J. Michlic, '"I will never forget what you did for me during the war': Rescuer- rescue relationships in the light of postwar correspondence in Poland, 1945-1949," *Yad Vashem Studies* 39, no. 2 (2011): 169-170.

sources as the authors above to investigate dynamics between Polish rescuers and Jews in hiding.[33] In the vein of Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, this project is interested in what initially appears to be a fluidity between categories of "righteous" and "unrighteous."[34]

There are a number of gaps in this existing research that this project wishes to fulfill. Primarily, the majority of pieces on relations between Poles and Jews in hiding address this topic in an article or a chapter placed within a larger analysis of Jewish-gentile relations during the war. By dedicating more than an article's length of space to specifically relations in hiding, this thesis has uncovered elements of this relationship not previously discussed in the historiography: Mainly, sexual violence as a facet of the relationship between Poles and Jews in hiding, and the prevalence of unorthodox forms of paid help, such as services.

1.2 Methodology

The research process was initiated and guided by the following two questions: In personal testimonies, how did Jews characterize their relationships with Polish helpers and rescuers? What did they perceive as the main forces (social, economic, personal, historical, political) that influenced their experiences and relationships with these gentiles?

The central type of primary source drawn upon in this thesis is personal testimony, those of Jews who spent part of the occupation in hiding with Polish gentiles. This includes published diaries and memoirs, archival materials, and recorded oral interviews. I consciously chose to use only the testimonies of Jews in response to the over-reliance on Polish rescuer and helper testimonies in the earlier literature. Furthermore, the aim of this research was to examine Jewish

[33] Ibid., 4.
[34] Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, "The Unrighteous Righteous and the Righteous Unrighteous," *Dapim: Studies on the Shoah* 24 (2010): 19.

experiences in hiding and their perspectives of Polish helpers. Inevitably, without the relevant evidence, the thoughts, goals, and motivations of Polish rescuers can only be surmised.

The main archival sources were the 301 testimonial files now contained at ŻIH in Warsaw. These files include mostly testimonies of Jews (but some Polish gentiles involved in efforts to help Jews, as well) recorded between 1945 and 1948 and then filed to a local office of the Central Committee of Polish Jews. These documents are central and invaluable records of the history of the Holocaust in Poland as, "[they] were created without ulterior motives, and their only goal was to preserve the historical evidence and to bear witness to the tragedy of the Shoah. People emerging from the Holocaust, painfully aware that they were the only survivors of the murdered nation of Polish Jews, knew that their duty was to leave an exact, credible, and accurate historical record."[35] Typically, each file contains a handwritten testimony, and then is followed by a typographic copy. The length of testimonies range wildly from one page to hundreds of pages. The legibility of these documents was a significant impediment to this research; certain materials could not be included due to the severity of typographic distortions and, in other documents, certain words and phrases had to be inferred based on the readable content.

[35] Grabowski, *Hunt For the Jews*, 12.

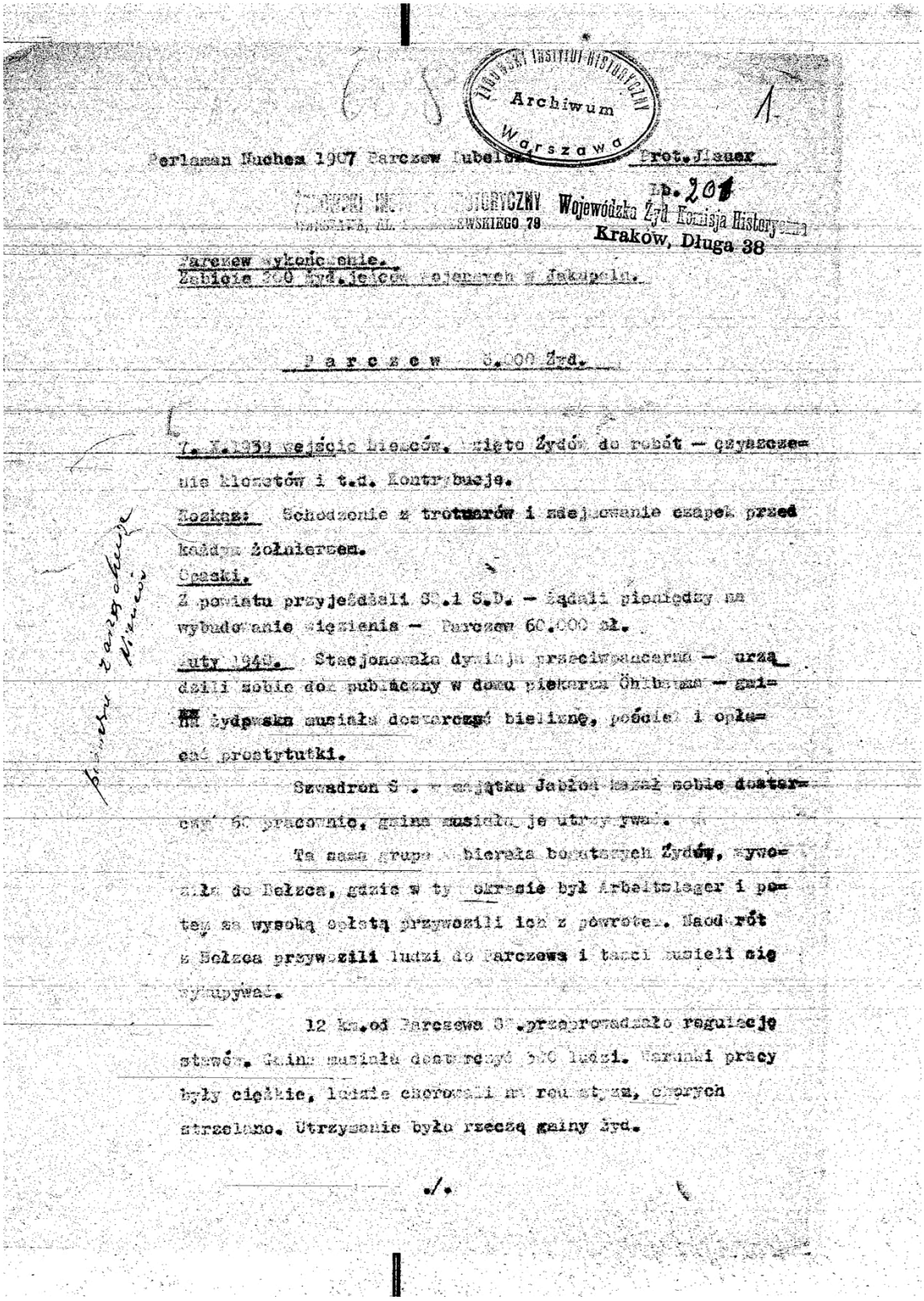


Image 1. Example of a ŻIH 301 testimony.
Source: AŻIH 301/608. Testimony of Nuchem Perlman from Barczew Lubelski.

Relevant oral interviews for this project were mined from University of Southern California's Visual History Archive (VHA). The VHA was particularly helpful due to its accessibility and immense scope; this digital archive of oral testimony now contains more than 50,000 interviews with Jewish survivors. These interviews were mainly recorded in the 1990s, and vary in length from approximately three to seven hours. The majority of the interviews with survivors from Poland are recorded in English, with some in Hebrew, Polish, and Russian. Only the English-language interviews from the VHA database were considered.

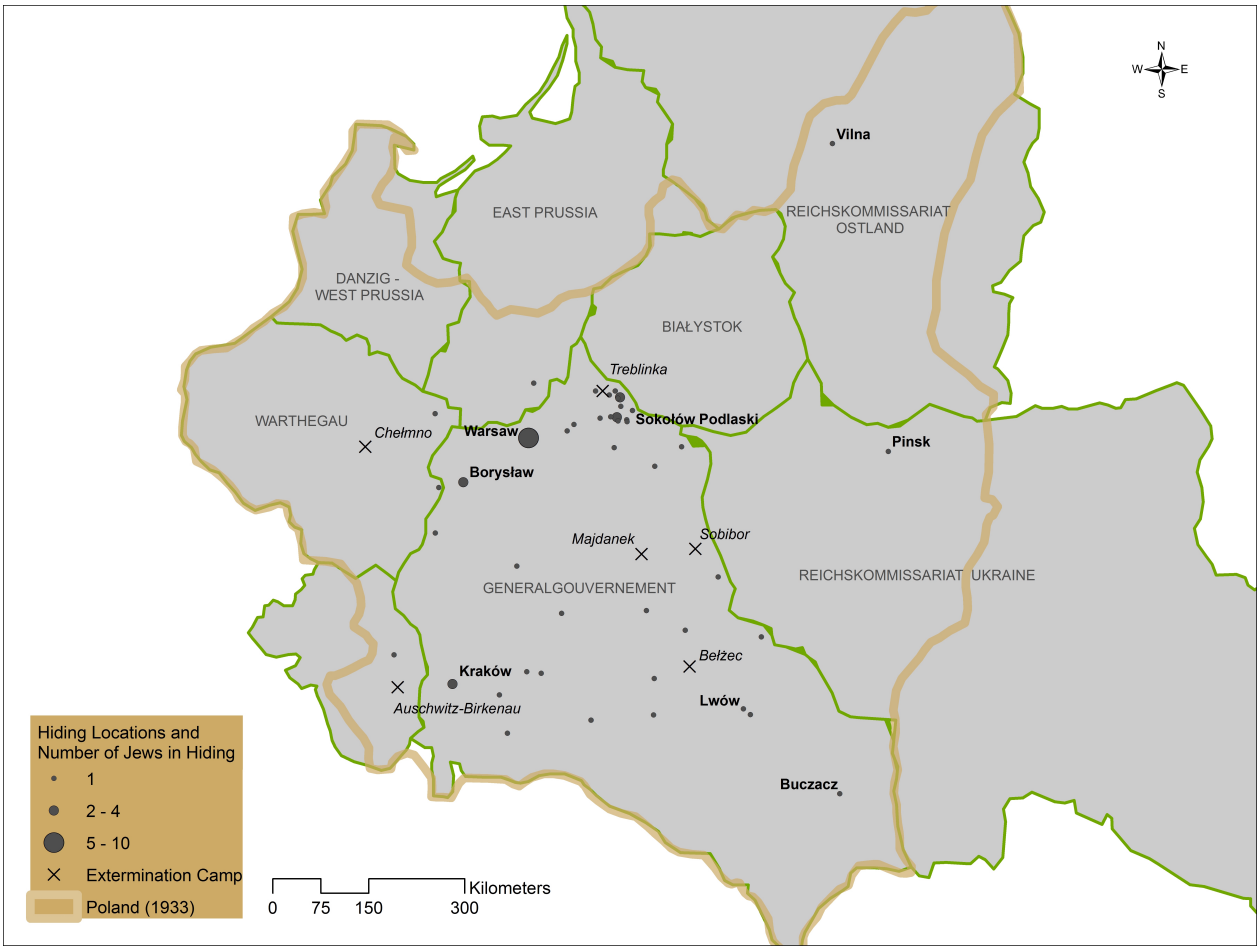
Oral testimonies are powerful as a primary source but require the adoption of a different methodological approach. While viewing and listening to these interviews, I attempted to consider not only the words of the survivor, but what could be conveyed by physical cues, as the body language of survivors is often quite telling of the emotional and psychological impact of different parts of their experience. As best stated by Lawrence Langer, "the distance between what has been witnessed and what can be committed to testimony - what was seen and what can be said - is often wide and always palpable: not only in the witness's statements but in the shrugged shoulders, the winces, the tears, and the silences that punctuate the oral testimonies and that are aestheticized but not domesticated in the written language of figure."[36]

Of course, the content and scope of these interviews were affected by the context in which they were produced and shaped by the interviewer's line of questioning. Each interview featured in this thesis involved a different interviewer and thus varying styles and methods of interview techniques. In most cases, the interviewer adopts what could be called a "holistic" or "emotive" approach, asking very few questions and adapting their questions according to the narrative path chartered by the survivors. In other interviews, the interviewer takes a much more active role in

[36] Michael Bernard-Donals, *Forgetful Memory: Representation and Remembrance in the Wake of the Holocaust* (Albany: University of New York Press, 2009), 11.

shaping the testimony; through their questions they encourage the survivor, often quite forcibly, to shift between disparate topics and events.

The process of selection for these sources differed from chapter to chapter. Initially, I chose a random selection of around fifty testimonies (a mix of oral and written materials) that contained details on hiding with Polish gentiles, due to the index terms provided by the VHA and the published inventory of 301 files. After pursuing these testimonies, paid help and sexual violence were selected as key themes, and thus I turned specifically towards primary and secondary sources that could illuminate these topics further. For these two chapters, no attention was given to location within occupied-Poland. For the chapter on hiding in Sokołów County, I studied all available materials pertaining to this locale.



Map 1. The dispersion of hiding places discussed in this thesis.
Source: Author. Boundaries derived from "German Administration of Poland, 1942." Holocaust Encyclopedia. USHMM. https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/map/german-administration-of-poland-1942.

For the chapter on Sokołów County, I was able to inclusively address materials recorded in Yiddish, English, and Polish with the assistance of translators, while for the remainder of the thesis only Polish and English testimonies were included due to time and language constraints.

As outlined above, a critical approach to the terminology of gentile aid has been a hallmark of the recent historiography on Jewish-gentile relations. Many scholars have drawn a clear distinction between "help" and "rescue," as while both signify assistance given, "rescue" is problematic as it "implies a more sustainable act of deliverance and implies that this act was successful."[37] Thus, it is now common in the literature to avoid using rescue as a generalizing term to characterize gentile assistance towards Jews, or to exclude it altogether.

To ease comprehension, the verb "to hide" will be used whenever possible to denote the initial nature of the relationship between Jews and gentiles in the context of this thesis. Since this project is focused on dynamics in hiding, not help in its many expressions, this is often possible. When speaking generally of assistance provided from Poles to Jews during the war, the words "help," "helper," "aid-provision," and "aid-provider," will be used interchangeably.

Beyond this, the language used in the testimonies will be the language used to discuss and analyze testimonies. Despite recent scholarly opposition to the term "rescue," this is the term many survivors, especially those interviewed in the 1990s, use to characterize their experience of the Holocaust and life in hiding with Polish gentiles. Thus, as a methodological contribution, this thesis proposes that the term "rescue" should not be immediately thrown out, and that scholars need to evaluate carefully that "rescue" cannot be understood by its popular meaning alone, but what it signifies in the context of the Holocaust. Survivors in the 1990s apply the words "rescue" and "rescuer" to qualify situations where they were abused by the Polish gentile who kept them until the end of the war. Although it is now saturated with moral connotations, particularly since

[37] Wierzcholska, "Helping, denouncing, and profiteering," 45.

"rescue" is the term consistently used by academics or state actors looking only at the righteous activities of gentiles during the war, survivors do not use it as such.

A brief overview of the language featured in the Polish-language documents is necessary as well. In the ŻIH postwar testimonies, survivors most commonly use the following three terms to detail their experience in hiding: *Schron* (which refers to a shelter, usually located underground), *kryjówka* (a hideout), and the verb *ukrywać/ukryć* (to hide). Certain words, although very relevant to the subject, did not appear frequently in these postwar documents: *Pomoc* (help), *uratowanie* (saving), and *ratować/uratować* (to save). It is interesting to note that the use of the word saving, in both Polish and English testimonies, becomes far more common in documents and interviews from the later twentieth and early twenty-first century. It can be hypothesized that the language used by survivors in the 1990s and later has been strongly directed by cultural representations of the Holocaust in literature and film (as well as historical writing) that tend to emphasize this narrative as one of "saving" and "rescuing" and rely heavily upon such terminology.

1.3 Historical Context

The dual German and Soviet invasion of Poland in September 1939 cleaved the country into two occupation zones; the Germans controlled the Western areas of the country, while the Soviets told hold over the East. The German occupation zone was further divided into territories directly annexed to the Reich, including the areas of Wrocław [Breslau] and Gdańsk [Danzig], and a colony structure called the *Generalgouvernment*, which encompassed the former capital, Warsaw. As part of Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, the Reich annexed further territory in the former Białystok district, Lublin,

Ukraine, and the Baltic region. Jews were singled out for persecution immediately upon the German invasion and creation of the *Generalgouvernment*. In addition to strict curfews, limits on valuables, and physical abuse, the creation of "Jewish residential quarters", ghettos, the most well-known part of Nazi *Judenpolitik* in this region, was soon initiated.

As accurately stated by Helen Sinnreich, "It is […] not possible to speak of a typical Holocaust-era ghetto."[38] The size, administration, and physical structure (i.e. open, closed, or temporary) of the ghettos in occupied-Poland were extremely variant. In most of the ghettos, the Germans forcibly mobilized the local community to implement their regulations; two main bodies, a *Judenräte* (Jewish Council) and *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst* (Jewish Ghetto Police), were thus created. In the largest ghetto in occupied-Poland, Warsaw, these two administrative bodies were immense in size and complex in structure, while in smaller ghettos this local administration was limited and could involve only a few individuals. In the ghettos, the *Judenräte* was charged with organizing ratios, forced labour, collecting forbidden goods, and eventually, facilitating deportations to the extermination camps.

The conditions in the ghettos in occupied-Poland were similarly arduous: Due to limited living space (which was only relieved by periodic deportations, after which the space of the ghetto was usually condensed), disease and hunger were rampant. Smuggling became widespread and was punished severely by the Polish "blue" police and German authorities. In the Warsaw ghetto, typhus spread quickly and decimated a significant portion of the ghetto population. Especially in the larger ghettos, Warsaw and Łódź, the community mobilized to provide education (both secular and religious) for the youth, and cultural activities (orchestra concerts, poetry readings, theatre) persisted.

[38] Helen Sinnreich, "Victim and Perpetrator Perspectives of World War II-Era Ghettos" in *The Routledge History of the Holocaust*, edited by Jonathan C. Friedman (New York: Routledge, 2011), 115.

During the German invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, *Einsatzgruppen* squads, mobile killing units, trailed the German army into Soviet territory and began to murder Jews indiscriminately in great number. Around this time, on July 31st, 1941, Reinhard Heydrich sought Göring's signature on a document "that authorized Heydrich to make 'all necessary preparations' for a 'total solution' to the Jewish question in Europe, to coordinate the participation of those agencies whose jurisdictions were involved, and to report back on the plan for this 'final solution' as soon as possible."[39] The Wannsee Conference, organized by Heydrich to discuss the "overall solution of the Jewish question in Europe" and held on January 20th, 1942, planned for the murder of eleven million Jews, in both Nazi-occupied and unoccupied territories.[40]

In 1942, the ghettos in Poland began to be systematically liquidated by German commandos, often with the help of the local Polish "blue" police and Ukrainian auxiliary forces. Although the events of these days varied slightly depending on the size and location of the ghetto, in most cases Jews were brutally taken from their homes in the ghetto to the nearest train station, where they would be sent to a death camp. In larger ghettos such as Warsaw, which was part of *Aktion* Reinhardt (the murder of Jews in the *Generalgouvernment*) it would take numerous rounds of such liquidations for the Germans to declare the city *Judenrein*. The first deportation to the Treblinka death camp began in Warsaw in July 1942. Between July and September 1942, around 150,000 Jews were transferred from the Warsaw ghetto, through the *Umschlagplatz*, to their deaths at Treblinka.[41] On May 16th, 1943, after finally suppressing the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and ten months after the first liquidation had taken place, SS general Jürgen Stoop

[39] Christopher Browning, "The Origins of the Final Solution" in *The Routledge History of the Holocaust*, 159.
[40] Peter Longerich, *Holocaust: The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 305.
[41] Ibid., 335.

wrote, "The Jewish quarter in Warsaw exists no more."[42] In smaller areas such as the Węgrów ghetto, this process would only take only a day's work starting in the early hours of the morning. In Węgrów, many Jews were killed in the main town square or the local Jewish cemetery; the rest were transferred to the Treblinka death camp through the Sokołów Podlaski Train Station.[43] Known as the *Aktion* period, these days of incomprehensible violence left the majority of Polish Jews dead.

Those who survived the *Aktionen* undertook a variety of survival strategies. In certain cases, sensing the danger ahead or as a result of deteriorating conditions in the ghetto, Jews escaped the ghetto before the liquidations, either living on forged papers under the auspices of an Aryan identity or hiding with former gentile neighbours or friends. The process of escaping the ghetto was extraordinarily difficult and dangerous. Besides the possibility of being shot by the guards while crossing the ghetto boundaries, there were a multitude of threats on the Aryan side. In his memoir, Henry Borenstein recalled his successful escape from the Warsaw ghetto: "I had only walked a distance of about ten metres on the Aryan side when I was suddenly surrounded by five or six Polish teenagers asking me for money. I knew who these kids were; we called them *szchmalcowniks* – people who hung around outside the ghetto for the express purpose of blackmailing escapees."[44] Others, such as Shraga Feivel Bielawksi and his family, survived the *Aktion* period undetected by hiding in their attic behind a false wall, and then hid around Węgrów County receiving food and shelter from various Polish gentiles.[45] In some cases, groups of Jews

[42] Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945: The Years of Extermination* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), 524.
[43] Jan Grabowski, "The Polish Police: Collaboration in the Holocaust," Lecture, Ina Levine Annual Lecture, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington D.C., November 17th 2016, 8-9.
[44] Henry Borenstein, *All Alone: A Young Boy Hiding in Wartime Poland* (Victoria: Makor Jewish Community Library, 2008), 35-36.
[45] Shraga Feivel Bielawski, *The Last Jew From Węgrow: The Memoirs of a Survivor of the Step-by-Step Genocide in Poland* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991).

lived in bunkers in the forest or on the property of local Poles, and would spend the rest of the war underground in grave-like confines.[46]

After 1942, once the ghettos by and large no longer existed, Jewish life itself became illegal in Poland. Thus, for the remaining Polish Jews, surviving became an everyday struggle to find food and shelter that almost always resulted in fatality. In rural areas, the German occupiers instituted a manhunt system that mobilized prewar segments of Polish society (firefighters, local village leaders, and the police) to hunt down surviving Jews.[47] Once found, they were killed immediately or delivered to the Polish or German police to be shot. Due to these local systems, wandering on the Aryan side or in rural areas after the liquidation of the ghettos was increasingly dangerous.

Hence, finding sustenance as well as shelter with Polish gentiles was a common survival strategy and key to the survival of thousands of Jews in occupied-Poland. Shelter could be prearranged through connections with gentile friends, colleagues, and neighbours, or established spontaneously by wandering from home to home, knocking on doors, and relying on the goodwill of strangers. Once in hiding, Jews were entirely reliant on Polish gentiles for their lives; since there was no legal system of protection, if a Polish gentile lost the means or disposition to help, Jews could simply be denounced to the police or thrown out to fend for themselves. Furthermore, from the perspective of gentile Poles, offering shelter was incredibly dangerous: On October 15th, 1941 *Generalgouvernor* Hans Frank officially declared that the penalty for *Judenbegunstigung* (sheltering a Jew) was death.[48] This law remained in effect until liberation. The primary evidence is filled with examples of the Germans discovering a Jew hidden at the home of a gentile Pole, and then subsequently murdering all individuals involved: The Polish helper, their family, all

[46] Molly Applebaum, *Buried Words: The Diary of Molly Applebaum* (Toronto: The Azrieli Foundation, 2017).
[47] Grabowski, *Hunt For the Jews.*
[48] Ibid., 55.

Jews in hiding, and often destroying their property as a powerful warning to others who were hiding, or considering hiding, Jews. Relationships between Jews in hiding and their Polish helpers evolved in a context of material scarcity and extreme fear and, as such, these interactions provide a rich lens by which historians can better comprehend Jewish-gentile relations during the Holocaust.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MANY DIMENSIONS OF PAID HELP

2.1 Introduction

Payment, whether in Polish *złoty*[49], foreign currency, services, valuables, or property, was often required to receive shelter and sustenance from Polish gentiles; it is thus critical to understanding Jewish experiences in hiding with Polish aid-providers. As briefly discussed in chapter one, the majority of previous monographs concerning Polish-Jewish relations in hiding and Polish rescuers deal with the topic of paid help partially and inconsistently. That is, while certain authors devote no attention to paid help, asserting that the exchange of money for shelter cannot whatsoever qualify as receiving help or simply providing no justification, others are inclusive of both paid and unpaid help, often without delineating between the two. Many of these historians and other scholars of the late twentieth century assert that financial agreements for shelter during the Holocaust in Poland were "marginal", compared to instances wherein gentiles saved Jews for no profit.[50] Revisiting this earlier literature, recent publications illustrate that such claims are in direct contradiction of the primary evidence. Emmanuel Ringelblum, for instance, wrote in his wartime study of Polish-Jewish relations (written while he himself was in hiding in a bunker on the Aryan side of Warsaw) that, "Money undoubtedly plays an important role in the hiding of Jews."[51]

---

[49] Occupation *złoty* were called *mlynarki,* but will be referred to as *złoty* in this thesis.
[50] Tec, *When the Light Pierced the Darkness,* 12.
[51] Emmanuel Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1976), 226.

A number of recent publications, including Jan Grabowski's book *Rescue for Money: Paid Helpers in Poland, 1939-1945* and Barbara Engelking's book *Such a Beautiful Sunny Day… Jews Seeking Refuge in the Polish Countryside, 1942-1945,* emphasize the centrality of payment to hiding arrangements.[52] Economic inflation and material scarcities fostered by the war pushed many gentile families into poverty and exacerbated the existing economic struggles of others. Hence, few could afford to house and feed additional individuals without some form of compensation. Emmanuel Ringelblum wrote that there were "poor [gentile] families who base their subsistence on the funds paid daily by the Jews to their Aryan landlords.[53] That being said, the nature of these financial arrangements varied significantly: The historical evidence shows that, while in some cases shelter agreements were based on a reasonable monetary exchange that benefited both parties, circumstances could quickly shift into extortion, driven by unrelenting greed and the enduring stress of the wartime context.

This chapter will analyze testimonies and diaries recounting paid help, offering a number of conclusions concerning the significance of payment in hiding arrangements and how such exchanges of payment for shelter shaped Jewish experiences in hiding and their relations with gentile aid-providers. I aim to add a new dimension to the existing historiography by adopting a wide-lensed approach to paid help: While historians have generally focused their discussions of paid help on the exchange of hard currency or gold, I wish to consider disparate methods of payment, in particular the performance of services by Jews in hiding for their aid-providers.

In most areas, the amounts requested by prospective gentile landlords did not conform to laws of supply and demand, with one exception. As Grabowski argues, in Warsaw there was a "rescue market", wherein prices for hiding increased significantly after the deportations of July

[52] Moore, "The Rescue of Jews," 392-393.
[53] Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War,* 226.

and August 1942, and those tenants who could not meet the average price were unable to secure a hiding place or were kicked out of hiding.[54] The value of the currency and average prices were as follows: In the second half of 1943, a Polish gentile could rent a room in Warsaw for around 250 to 400 *złoty* per month, while a Jew was charged around 2,000 to 4,000 *złoty* for a room in hiding.[55]

In other urban centres and rural locales, paid help constituted an individual agreement between prospective Polish helpers and Jews in search of hiding, largely impervious to external factors. Bereft of such a "rescue market," distinctions between reasonable and unreasonable payments were inconsequential, and therefore, feasibly any sum could be demanded of Jews searching for shelter. The same individuals were often charged disparate amounts by different helpers: Two brothers paid 4,000 *złoty* for one month of shelter in Wiązownica, and later they exchanged 3,000 *złoty* in material goods to secure shelter for an indeterminate period of time with a gentile in Goźlice.[56] To characterize the value of this currency, in mid-1942, when inflation began to increase significantly, a good quality winter coat could be purchased for around 2,000 *złoty*.[57]

Since the amount charged for shelter could vary considerably, "drawing a line between rescuers who requested a 'fair' price for shelter, those who asked for more, and those whose expectations and demands were much higher is not an easy task."[58] Therefore, rather than attempt to draw facile distinctions between "fair" and "unfair" prices, this chapter will more broadly consider the influence of payments on the day-to-day lives of Jews in hiding and on relations between Poles and Jews in this context.

---

[54] Jan Grabowski, *Rescue for Money: Paid Helpers in Poland, 1939-1945* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008), 27-29.
[55] Ibid., 27.
[56] Engelking, *Such a Beautiful Sunny Day*, 114.
[57] Grabowski, *Rescue for Money,* 25-26.
[58] Ibid., 8.

2.2 Escape into Hiding

By the beginning of 1942, the vast majority of Jews in the *Generalgouvernment* had been segregated from the gentile populations of Polish towns and cities into hundreds of ghettos. Various regulations instituted by the German-occupiers strictly controlled the lives of Jews in the ghetto, including their social life and mobility. Any attempt to exit the "Jewish residential quarter" was perilous; often guards were stationed at the perimetre trained to shoot anyone attempting escape, and on the Aryan side threats abounded from the German police and Polish "blue" police to the notorious gentile blackmailers. Although means of communication such as telephones and mail were available in the ghettos, they required a fee and were censored heavily.[59]

This is to underline that initiating contact and establishing shelter with gentile neighbours while in the ghetto was by no means a straightforward task; thus, an agreement of remuneration between parties could insure that any offer of help would remain. Testimonies and diaries written by Jews in hiding convey that payment was integral at each stage of the hiding process, beginning with the escape from the ghetto and identification of willing gentile helpers. For example, to execute their plan to flee the Warsaw ghetto and immediately enter into hiding on the Aryan side, Michał Głowiński's family was required to pay the Polish man who facilitated their escape from the ghetto in addition to the family who had agreed to conceal them once they reached the Aryan side.[60]

---

[59] The telephone service in the Warsaw ghetto was also known to be of poor quality. Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished* City (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 189, 372-373.

[60] Michał Głowiński, *The Black Seasons* (Evanston: Northeastern University Press, 2005), 41-43.

A desire for increased wealth or simple greed regularly dictated shelter negotiations between those in the ghetto and gentiles on the Aryan side. Perhaps short on cash or wishing to heighten their financial status and material comforts, Polish gentiles themselves were known to initiate contact with Jews in the ghetto and begin arrangements for paid shelter. For instance, in the Brzezany ghetto, Rena Stolarsky's father was contacted by a gentile friend who enquired if the family still had money. When Stolarsky answered in the affirmative, the two men began financial negotiations for the entire family to hide with this gentile's mother.[61]

2.3 Financial Agreements

As stated in the above example, after a willing aid-provider was located, Jews and Poles would engage in negotiations. The power balance during such negotiations was largely in favour of the prospective Polish aid-provider: Especially if gentile Poles were aware of the crude wealth held by the Jews requesting shelter, they could wisely demand a great portion of their worth, measuring that the desperate circumstances would facilitate increased financial generosity. Shraga Feivel Bielawski, who hid in the homes of various Polish gentiles during the Holocaust in the area of Węgrów County, recalled the nature of these negotiations in his diary. In one case, their gentile helper requested that Shraga and his family pay him a month of rent as a deposit before he began constructing the shelter.[62] Such agreements could be re-negotiated during the time in hiding, and were known to change at a moment's notice.

However, Jews could also claim a degree of agency and control through these negotiations. In Barbara Engelking's study of the diary of Fela Fischbein, she traces Fela's

[61] Rena Stolarsky, interview 25673, interviewed by Harriet Zucker, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, February 2, 1997, New York, NY, audio: 2:18:22, segment 14.
[62] Bielawski, *The Last Jew from Węgrów*, 93.

attempts to manipulate her Polish landlady into providing her services for varying costs. For instance, while in hiding Fela wished to convey news to her child (who was hiding elsewhere), and claim valuables left with a Polish neighbour. After the liquidation of the nearby ghetto, Fela would have been placing herself at risk by exiting the hideout herself. Therefore, she engaged in a series of financial negotiations, essentially bribery, with her Polish host, to mobilize her assistance. In her diary, Fela refers to these negotiations with her Polish landlady as "her way of doing things".[63] For instance, when the Polish host refused to visit Fela's child, Fela made her a more temping financial offer: "[U]sing my way of doing things, I will give you 40 zlotys instead of 20 zlotys".[64] As perceptively noted by Engelking, "Fela quickly learns (or had she always known?) that appealing to greed is more effective than appealing to decency."[65]

Fela Fischbein's attempts to barter with her Polish rescuer for extra services indicates that the agreements forged between Jews in hiding and Polish helpers were often more complex than a one-time exchange of money or goods for a designated, concrete period of shelter. In many cases, these agreements involved periodic exchanges of cash, valuables, and the like for varying temporal commitments of shelter. In this regard, the postwar testimony of Józef Kornbluth from Buczacz, which was recorded and submitted to the Jewish Historical Commission in 1948, deserves our close attention. During the war, Józef was sheltered at many different gentile homes, arranged through financial negotiations with a web of individuals. In his nine-page account, Józef traces in great detail the financial exchanges that were forged between him, his siblings, and their gentile helpers, highlighting disparities concerning the amount and means of payment between various shelter locations.

[63] Barbara Engelking, "…we are entirely at their mercy…" The Everyday Experience of Hiding and Relations with Landlords on the Basis of Fela Fischbein's Diary," *Holocaust: Studies and Materials* (2010): 148.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.

This valuable information is often missing from witness accounts, especially the diaries and testimonies of children. Many Jewish children were placed by their parents with Polish gentiles, who were well-paid for their assistance. Yet, as the financial arrangements were largely forged by the parents, the specifics of such exchanges are absent from the children's testimonies. Lili Szynowłogi, born in 1934, was placed with a Polish friend by her mother. In her postwar testimony, Lili wrote that her mother "gave me there [to a Polish women] and paid for me", yet, no further detail is provided. It is very likely that she was not privy to the nature of this financial arrangement, too young to recall the details after the war, or, perhaps since paid help was quite common at the time, it could be perceived as adding little to the historical record.[66] A similar case is the video testimony of Ann Shore, who was likewise a child while she was in hiding. Ann, along with her mother and sister, lived in the attic of a Polish woman who was Anti-Semitic, but was convinced to provide them shelter by Ann's mother's promise of money. Her mother established a "business deal" with this woman, which was, in its essence, "money, in exchange for life."[67] Ann did not elaborate on this financial agreement further, but recalled that her mother gave this woman "everything," and they received only shelter, no food, in return.[68]

Józef Kornbluth was in his 60s during the war and thus forged financial agreements with various Polish helpers of his own volition. Initially, Józef (along with his siblings) established shelter with his Polish friend Pastuch. Józef recalled that each person was required to pay Pastuch 1000 *złoty* a month and in return, Pastuch constructed an elaborate bunker-like hideout (*schron*) under the floorboards of his kitchen table and sheltered them. Józef and the others remained with Pastuch for only twenty days until they were asked to leave due to German investigations of

[66] AŻIH 301/5521, testimony of Lili Szynowłogi.
[67] Ann Shore, interview 39906, interviewed by Hilary Helstein, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, Great Neck, NY, audio: 3:07:38, segment 16-17.
[68] Ibid.

homes formerly owned by Jews ("*domu pożydowskim*") in Buczacz, one of which was the home of Pastuch.[69] Pastuch accompanied the group to a field, stated that he would return and in a few days they could resume hiding in his home. Although Pastuch returned once to deliver food, he did not invite them to reenter his home and when they knocked on Pastuch's door, he did not answer.[70]

During their subsequent search for shelter, the group met a Polish man, Fijałkowski, who acted as their "hiding agent," of sorts, during the remainder of the war. Initially, the group stayed with "old Fijałkowski," the man's father, for one night, but he only agreed to keep one woman (who he had known before the war) after this night. They then travelled with Fijałkowski to other potential gentile hosts, who were similarly reluctant to hiding an entire group. Despite their initial resistance, Józef and the others engaged these gentiles in a series of financial negotiations and eventually secured a place to hide. The Poles first proposed that they would hide only Józef for 3000 *złoty* a month. In his testimony, Józef reflected on the difficulty of this situation, as he had little cash (*gotówka*) on his person. Eventually, the group agreed that they would pay 2000 *złoty* each for shelter alone, and extra for any food provided by the hosts. Nevertheless, this hiding place had to be soon vacated, as the gentile hosts continued to extort more funds, and would periodically cut off food supplies.

With the assistance of Fijałkowski, Józef next went to the home of a Polish woman, Kaczmarska, who kept him in a barn for three months. The arrangement was for Fijałkowski to pay Kaczmarska a monthly rent of 3000 *złoty*, with revenue gained from the sale of Józef's two golden watches. However, Fijałkowski began to fall short of his informal duties as a hiding agent, creating a dangerous situation from Józef:

[69] AŻIH 301/3283, testimony of Józef Kornbluth from Buczacz.
[70] Ibid.

> Fijałkowski paid her irregularly, and eventually he owed her a month of payment. Kaczmarska banished me when Fijałkowski did not come to pay her, as she did not want to shelter me for any longer. I left from Kaczmarska's barn and hid in the forest. It was November. I did not know where else I could go. I tried to return to Kaczmarska's but she threatened to set her dog on me.[71]

Józef Kornbluth did survive the war, duly with great credit to these gentiles who sheltered him for various sums of money and valuables. Near the end of the testimony, he reflected on the time a Polish woman gave him food and coffee while he was hiding in the forests at no charge, his first and only experience of unpaid help. Shocked by this act, Józef remarked his surprising in realizing that "there are still good people, who are willing to offer selfless help."[72]

2.4 (Dis)Honouring Agreements

To reiterate, although it is nearly impossible to differentiate between what constituted as fair and unfair prices for shelter, the issue remains, for survivor Antek Cukierman, whether "they were ready to respect and honor their 'contractual' commitment to their charges."[73] Naomi Samson's memoir *Hide: A Child's View of the Holocaust,* recounts her family's time in hiding with *pani* (Ms.) Kowalik in Goray, and is evidence as to how often gentile helpers could waver and suddenly rescind their previous offers and agreements of paid help. Nearly every morning during the war, *pani* Kowalik entered their hideout (*kryjówka*) and threatened Naomi's mother that the family must leave immediately. In response, Naomi recalled that "the begging began again."[74] Her mother gave *pani* Kowalik extra money, and promised that there would be more

[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Grabowski, *Rescue for Money*, 8-9.
[74] Naomi Samson, *Hide: A Child's View of the Holocaust* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 14.

money and valuables to come if she allowed them to stay.[75] The family's Polish friend, *pan* (Mr.) Zlomainsky, periodically transferred *pani* Kowalik valuables and money in church, to ensure she would not kick them out without notice. Nevertheless, numerous times throughout the occupation *pani* Kowalik forced the family to leave, and then eventually allowed them to reenter their hideout under her barn after receiving more valuables. Although the family lived with this woman until liberation, they constantly feared that her disposition would change: "October came, and with it came the rains. We were still in hiding – Mrs. Kowalik and her children had not killed us."[76]

Other times, financial contracts for shelter were entirely broken by Polish hosts. In one case, a Jewish family arranged and paid for the youngest boy in the family to hide with a Polish farmer. When circumstances in the ghetto deteriorated, the family then decided that it was prudent to attempt to persuade this farmer to keep the entire family - in exchange for extra funds, of course. Pilarski, the Polish farmer, agreed, demanding an additional 3000 *złoty*. Scarcely a few hours after this deal was made, Pilarski chased them off his property.[77]

Other documents expose how Polish helpers cut corners, so to speak, fulfilling parts, but not the entirety, of their financial agreements with the Jews they had committed to hiding. This could include demanding more funds than initially agreed upon, forcing their charges to leave regardless if shelter had been promised for a longer period, or withholding food and other life-sustaining services. In hiding with a Polish woman, Leyb Rochman noted in his diary that he went "weeks without any food"; although he would give his Polish hostess money for food and drink, "she takes the money and 'forgets' about us."[78]

---

[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., 105.
[77] Ella Burakowski, *Hidden Gold: A True Story of the Holocaust* (Toronto: Second Story Press, 2015), 58-61.
[78] Leyb Rochman, *The Pit and the Trap* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1983), 112.

Shraga Feivel Bielawski and his family made a six-month payment advance for shelter to one woman, who quickly became fearful and asked them to leave much before the end of the six months.[79] Similar events were recounted by Szyja Szteinwurcel in her postwar testimony. Szyja and her family were sheltered by a Polish host, who was paid 1000 *złoty* per month.[80] Although the payments were regular and consistent, at a certain point, his wife attempted to convince the Jewish family to vacate their home: "After a few months, when the host already had a bit of money, he thought and decided he didn't want to keep us anymore. His wife came to us and said that the neighbours heard our voices behind the barn," a claim which Szyja suspected to be false.[81]

One Polish man, Pudelko, attempted to liberate himself of the Jewish family he was committed and paid to shelter by capitalizing on the upcoming ghetto liquidation in Zabno. Ann Shore and her family went into hiding with Pudelko after they received news that a ghetto would be soon created in Zabno. They remained with Pudelko for four weeks. After this period, Pudelko suggested to the family that they return to the ghetto for one week to allow him to prepare more permanent arrangements for their keep. The family left, did not return to the ghetto, and searched for another place to hide. They learned later that Pudelko had known that a complete liquidation of the Zabno ghetto was planned for that same week he had encouraged them to return.[82]

Paid help could shift into extortion when, for a variety of reasons, Polish helpers began to demand greater and greater sums of money, far beyond any financial agreements settled earlier. For example, Oskar Pinkus' host in Koszelówska wildly increased the required payment for

[79] Bielawski, *The Last Jew from Węgrów*, 101.
[80] AŻIH 301/2292, testimony of Szyja Szteinwurcel from Zmudzi.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ann Shore, interview 39906, segment 16.

shelter over time. This host, according to Oskar, "was motivated by money, and money alone. Once we showed up, he understood that there was a unique possibility to make some money."[83]

In certain cases wherein money was transferred to hosts in advance as a guarantor, or to cover to labour and material costs associated with building the physical hideout, gentiles were known to pocket this initial sum and then categorically refuse to offer shelter. In Polinów, a man requested of Eddie Weinstein and those with him 1,800 *złoty* monthly for shelter, and an additional fifteen gold rubels for the materials and labour required to build the hideout. When they returned to claim shelter, they were beaten and chased away.[84]

In her study of rescuer-rescuee relations, based on postwar testimonies written by hidden Jews and the Poles who sheltered them, Joanna Tokarska-Bakir found that "time and again the same scenario appears: Poles grant sanctuary to Jews and conceal them; then rob and murder them."[85] Similarly, it was common for Poles to promise to shelter Jews, receive payment for said shelter, and then betray or murder them. One Moszek Merin was a victim of such deceit. A Polish friend reluctantly agreed to shelter Moszek and six other Jews in her shed. For half a year, this woman adhered to her promise, bringing the group food and other necessities in exchange for cash.[86] Circumstances became suddenly dire for this group in hiding, however, when this woman was arrested after the German police discovered that her son was profiting from selling items from the liquidated ghetto. The group was left to their own devices for a long time, until the woman's daughter-in-law took over the deliveries of food. On March 17th, 1944, this group was betrayed by the daughter-in-law: "a band of local peasants, to whom she had betrayed our location, attacked us cruelly, beat us with iron and pipes, and took everything away from us,

[83] Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews*, 140.
[84] Weinstein, *17 Days in Treblinka*, 100.
[85] Tokarska-Bakir, "The Unrighteous Righteous and the Righteous Unrighteous," 49.
[86] AŻIH 301/119, testimony of Moszek Merin, from Będzin.

underwear and food, we had to leave with nothing but what was on our backs."[87]

Of course, it is also necessary to mention cases wherein helpers honoured their agreements with their Jewish tenants. Yet, it must be emphasized that the term "honour," when applied in this context of hiding during the Holocaust, has different, morally ambiguous connotations. For instance, if helpers allowed the Jews to stay in hiding as per an agreed upon financial agreement, and then kicked them out once they could no longer foot the monthly bill, gentile helpers would nevertheless be honouring their previous agreement.

Many gentile hosts did waver, but ultimately upheld their initial agreements. Irena Pertiz and her immediate family were sheltered with a Polish family in Borysław, where they fled in mid-1943 following news of deportations to a local work camp. Both the gentile couple and the Jewish family in hiding lived in restrictive conditions: One room, a bedroom, acted as both the permanent living space for the Jewish family and the sleeping quarters for the Polish couple.[88] In her wartime diary, particularly during their first year in hiding, Irena reflected fondly on the attitudes of her gentile host. On April 2nd, 1944 she wrote: "I look for something to do to pass the time. I read a little, write a little, sleep and eat. We waited for our landlady to bring us something hot to eat. Finally, she did. I think our landlords are decent people."[89] Later that week, Irena emphasized that "She [the landlady] is a decent, honest person with a good head on her shoulders."[90]

However, later that year, in the summer of 1944, the tone of Irena's writing changes considerably. Similar to the plight of Józef Kornbluth, the family's hiding agent, responsible for transferring funds to the Polish couple, frequently forgot to pay the hosts, arrived late, or with

[87] Ibid.
[88] Irena Peritz, "Each Day Could Be Our Last: Irena's Wartime Diary," in *Before All Memory Is Lost: Women's Voices from the Holocaust*, edited by Myrna Goldenberg (Toronto: The Azrieli Foundation, 2017), 18.
[89] Ibid., 19.
[90] Ibid., 21.

smaller amounts than required. Perceivably catalyzed by these irregular and diminishing payments, the attitudes and behavior of the Polish couple towards their Jewish charges shifted. In July 1944, Irena began to detail these behavioural changes:

> Nothing is happening. The hopelessness is overwhelming. Fortunately, Ewa Fedorow showed up, but she brought only 5,000 złotys instead of 10,000, claiming that the remainder was taken from her. The landlady told us three times that we will have to leave. She called Daddy into the kitchen and told him categorically that she is too nervous and too afraid of being arrested and therefore we must go.[91]

Regardless of the extra funds they earned by hiding Jews, many paid Polish helpers occasionally vacillated on their initial agreements of shelter. As seen in the above excerpt from Irena's diary, decreases in regular payments could prompt such hesitations. In other documents, the nearby arrests and murders of Poles discovered keeping Jews, or a (comparatively) benign occurrence such as the German police moving closer to their respective homes, encouraged Polish helpers to reconsider their previous agreements. In this case, Irena's family was ultimately allowed to stay with the Polish family, however, many Jews were forced out of hiding when gentile helpers changed their minds.

As mentioned above, "honouring" financial agreements could encompass a swift repeal in agreements of shelter when the payments discontinued. Shraga Feivel Bielawski wrote in his wartime diary that one Polish farmer who hid them requested an "exorbitant amount of money".[92] Appreciative of these payments, the farmer was generous towards the Jews in hiding, inviting them to share holiday meals with his family. However, Shraga was cognizant that once the money ran out, such acts of kindness were unlikely to persist: "The February payment to Bujalski had nearly exhausted our supply of gold coins. He, of course, did not know this, but despite his kindness in recent weeks, it seemed unlikely that he would continue to hide and feed us without

[91] Ibid., 32.
[92] Bielawski, *The Last Jew from Węgrów*, 123.

generous compensation."[93] Leyb Rochman also maintained such fears in hiding: "The money is running out too. The goods we left with some of our Polish acquaintances have been collected and sold. Others are refusing to hand over our things. As for the rest, who knows how long they'll continue supplying us. Each time Auntie goes to see them we worry: What if they've decided to end this business?"[94]

2.5 Hiding Jews as Employment

During the war, hiding Jews could expand into a well-oiled business, with Polish gentiles earning considerable money in this lucrative, highly precarious, "industry." More commonly, however, financed shelter arrangements were not widespread or formalized, but money nevertheless occupied a central place in the relations between Jews and gentiles in hiding, to the extent that Jews were sheltered perceivably for the purpose of earning money alone. I wish to place such exchanges under the framework of employment, even if this agreement was not a formal business arrangement as such, because the notion of employment or industry best conveys the sentiments perceived by Jews in hiding: That their helpers or rescuers were devoted to them due to the money, and that their humanitarian need was quite irrelevant.

In their postwar testimonies, many of those who had been in hiding with gentile helpers attempted to grapple with the possible reasons why their host choose to keep them, and concluded that payment was imperative to their rescue. Barbara Góra, in hiding with a former Polish "blue" policeman in Warsaw, hypothesized that "[The family] needed money badly, which my father paid them. Additionally, Barbara elaborated that, "my guardian was a person who

[93] Ibid., 137.
[94] Rochman, *The Pit and the Trap*, 112.

wanted to get along well with any authority, and having on his conscience collaboration with the Germans, he probably could defend himself based on the fact that he had saved me."[95]

In their interviews with the VHA, many survivors discuss their experiences with paid help. Interestingly, in certain recordings, the interviewer becomes visibly and audibly resistant to the notion that gentiles helped and rescued Jews for profit, and profit alone, and limits the survivor's discussion of paid help. For example, in the video testimony of Sonia Ger, after Sonia described entering into hiding with a Polish woman near Pinsk, her interviewer asked, "What made her agree to hide you?". Sonia responded simply, "Payments, money."[96] Later in the interview, seemingly unconvinced by Sonia's previous answer, the interviewer repeated the same question, altering the phrasing slightly, as though Sonia had previously misinterpreted the question. Essentially recapitulating her previous response, Sonia stated, "It suited her purpose, she needed the money."[97] Yet, this interviewer remains discomforted by the notion that finances were the sole motivator of this rescuer's actions. Later in the interview, he encouraged Sonia to speak again on this topic, pressing her to consider if the woman hid her, at least in part, for sentimental reasons: "you don't feel she did it because she felt it was wrong [what] the Germans did to the Jews?" Finally, Sonia acquiesced to these prompts, concluding that "I guess she must've felt this way too."[98]

The descriptions of her experience in hiding provided by Sonia later in the interview confirm her initial evaluation that money greatly directed her rescuer's actions. On one occasion this Polish woman locked Sonia and her family out of the house, sending them to the cornfields. When they attempted to return to their financed hiding place, she barred them from her home.

---

[95] *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak*, vol 1., edited by Wiktoria Śliwowska (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 73.
[96] Sonia Ger, interview 54116, interviewed by Avraham Fisher, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, May 5, 1994, Toronto, ON, audio: 1:48:50, segment 26.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid., segment 27.

Only when Sonia's father tempted her with more money did this woman allow them to live in her shed; she was then forthright in her comfort that if they were discovered in the shed, she could claim that she did not know they were there.[99]

Others were not satisfied with the money accumulated from housing a few people, and constructed an elaborate wartime business out of sheltering Jews. One of such cases is featured in the postwar testimony of Michał Głowiński, today a well-known Polish author. In Warsaw, Głowiński and his mother stayed in an apartment which was an organized, illegal "hotel for Jews in hiding," where a Polish couple charged lofty sums for short and long term rentals.[100] Głowiński characterized this couple as "people of business, undoubtedly faring rather well. They knew how to make a fortune from wartime."[101]

Another case of such a clandestine hiding business was described in great detail by Cela Troks in her wartime testimony. Cela's testimony, which was uniquely recorded in 1944 while she remained in hiding in Warsaw, describes her and her husband's experience with three Polish men who arranged their hiding places and those of other Jewish families. These men worked together in a business-like fashion (albeit, a very shady business) to forge various financial agreements with Jewish families, placing them in apartments with gentiles around Warsaw. Her testimony recounts her growing suspicion of these Polish men, who charged the Jewish families they sheltered massive sums of money (up to 70,000 *złoty*), running an incredibly profitable, exploitative, wartime business. Her testimony, which will be summarized below, illustrates how audacious Poles could organize themselves and take advantage of the desperation of Jews, request considerable sums of money, and, in the end, completely forsake their initial agreements.

[99] Ibid., segment 30, 32.
[100] Głowiński, *The Black Seasons*, 76.
[101] Ibid.

From the outset, Cela's relationship with these three men, Antek Szymczak, Jan Skrzeczyńkim, and Bolka Cwyla, centered around profit. Szymczak, for instance, was initially paid 1100 *złoty* for his assistance in facilitating their escape from the Warsaw ghetto.[102] Cela's suspicions of these Polish men began at this moment, when Cela and her husband retrieved their belongings from these men (presumably with whom they had been stored before the Troks' entered the Warsaw ghetto), and noticed that the most valuable items had gone missing. On the Aryan side of Warsaw, Cela and her husband Ignacy were placed with Szymczak's very close friend ("*zaufany kolega*") Bolek, for a monthly rent of 1000 *złoty*.

After this pair had successfully established themselves clandestinely at Bolek's, Jan Skrzynczyński proposed that he knew of other safe locations, and invited the Troks' to recommend their other Jewish friends. Ignacy initialized contact with the Włodawers, a wealthy Jewish family, and Skrzynczyński commenced his negotiations. Cela recited that Skrzynczyński himself received a total of 70,000 *złoty* from the Włodawers to prepare the apartment hideout, and Skrzynczyński's sister, who held the title to the apartment, was also well compensated in cash and valuables. The caretaker of this building, who was informed that Jews would be sheltered there, received 10,000 *złoty*.[103]

Later, Skrzynczyński and Szymczak organized the hiding place of a third Jewish family, the Cukiermans: "For this place at Antek Szymczak's friend Siatkowski, Szymczak received from Cukierman 5,000 złoty and Skrzynczyński received 15,000 złoty. Cukierman confided to us that the package [of his belongings] brought by Szymczak was missing the most valuables items."[104] The Cukiermans did not stay with Siatkowski for long. Szymczak confided in the Cukiermans that their host, Siatkowski, wished to poison them, so they absconded to the Warsaw

[102] AŻIH 301/4429, testimony of Cela Troks from Tomaszowie Mazowiecki.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.

ghetto. “A few weeks later,” Cela wrote, “Szymczak, his wife, and children were dressed in the Cukierman’s clothing, as well as items that we had been missing from our packages.”[105]

Around this time, life in the Troks’ hideout at Bolek’s became precarious: One day, two Polish “blue” policemen arrived and confiscated all of the items in the apartment that did not belong to Bolek. Szymczak feigned a deal with the police, where the Troks’ paid 5,000 *złoty* for the police to return their belongings. Ultimately, they only received the non-valuable items from the police, and shortly afterwards, Szymczak was spotted with their missing belongings.[106]

After this event, Cela and Ignacy decided to leave Bolek’s and search for another gentile host however, they were eventually forced to return, having been unsuccessful. At Bolek’s they were privy to a critical conversation between Bolek and Szymczak, the latter being unaware that they still remained in hiding with Bolek: “Bolek Cwyl told Szymczak, that we were no longer there […] Symczak told Bolek to get us from the field, and he will get his revolver, which he purchased with their [Cela and Ignacy’s] money, and will shoot us with this revolver and he and Bolek could share the belongings. He even mentioned which items would be his, and which would be Bolek’s. Seeing that Bolek would not agree to this plan, Szymczak said he was joking.”[107]

Following this conversation, Cela and her husband separated, believing this to be their best chance at survival. One day, when Ignacy did not meet Cela as prearranged and could not be subsequently located, Cela began to suspect that Szymczak had murdered her husband. According to Bolek, Szymczak told him, laughing, that “[Ignacy] would not come to him [Bolek], and that there are now satisfied, that they had disposed of all Jews once and for all.”[108]

---

[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.

Near the end of her twelve-page testimony, Cela Troks mourned: "The murderer of my beloved husband Ignacy was none other than Antek Szymczak, with the help of Jan Skrzeczyński."[109] She concluded her testimony with a warning that she did not expect that she herself would survive the war: "I am writing about all of this without believing that Szymczak will cease the crime [of murder] as was committed upon Ignacy, perhaps he will murder me, as he is constantly asking about me."[110] In various databases, no further information could be found concerning the fate of Cela Troks.

Gentile helpers who received money from their Jewish tenants, but especially those who ran elaborate businesses and accrued large sums, had to act cautiously to ensure that nothing appeared out of the ordinary. Paid help could become perilous to both parties involved if neighbours and friends noticed that these Poles were dressing more lavishly than before, or otherwise demonstrating signs of increased wealth. Markus Halpern, who hid on the property of Władysław Kozły for twenty-eight months in a bunker-like shelter, recalled that local gentiles eventually began to notice Kozły's increased wealth, posing great danger to Kozły and those in hiding:

> He [Kozły] was (very) poor, and now his neighbours noticed that his children who were previously naked and barefoot, were somehow clothed, and he made the beds with nicer bedding. The neighbours brought the Gestapo unexpectedly, when the host was not at home. The Gestapo came with the dogs, moved the cowshed and yelled at Kozły's wife, that she was hiding Jews. She was (very) brave and not afraid of them, and gave nothing away. They left with nothing.[111]

Yet, not all hosts would show such bravery, and many were given up to the Polish "blue" police or the German police at the sign of a threat.

---

[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] AŻIH 301/3864, testimony of Markus Halpern from Kraków. A similar case appears in the testimony of Szapse Grinberg – the house in which he was hiding was likewise searched because the Polish family's visibly increased wealth raised suspicions that they were hiding Jews ("suddenly, he had money"). One day, a group of Polish bandits arrived at the house of Szpase's helper, searched for Jews in hiding unsuccessfully, and then left. AŻIH 301/4161, testimony of Szpase Grinberg from Sokołów Podlaski.

2.6 Beyond Cash and Gold

In the slim historiography on paid help during the Holocaust in Poland, scholars have generally maintained a conservative definition of what payment could consist of; the exchange of Polish *złoty*, or other currency, as well as gold coins, remains the focus of the literature. Some scholars have broadened the boundaries of payment to include valuables. Indeed, Jews in search of shelter with Polish gentiles or hoping to extend their stays with their hosts, would often bestow upon their hosts golden watches, earrings, even wedding bands. For example, Sara Silber's family would occasionally use their jewelry to buy their way out of problematic situations with their Polish hosts.[112] Moszek Merin, whose betrayal by his Polish helper was discussed earlier in this chapter, imparted various goods, from his brother's Doxa watch to his sister's dresses, upon a Polish woman who was initially hesitant to shelter them.[113]

Far less attention has been devoted to the exchange of property and services for a place to hide. In desperate circumstances, Jews who retained the title to their homes, businesses, or apartments could either sell this property with the assistance of a gentile friend and use the money to pay for continued shelter, or offer to give their property to their rescuers after the war. Alicia Weinsberg, her parents, and sister were in hiding in a Warsaw apartment with a Polish couple. Her family was lucky, Alicia recalled, since "these people were getting paid, very well."[114] Unluckily, a neighbour became conscious of the fact that Jews were hiding in that apartment, and sent the couple a written threat. Although her parents had to leave the hiding

[112] Sara Silber, interview 55041, interviewed by Steve Lang, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, January 23, 1995, Houston, TX, audio: 31:13.
[113] AŻIH 301/119, testimony of Moszek Merin.
[114] Alicia Weinsberg, interview 7161, interviewed by Eve Orlans Mayer, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, September 22, 1995, New York, NY, audio: 2:30:13, segment 28.

place, Alicia and her sister were able to stay despite depleting cash holdings, since her parents sold a part of their property and received cash to give to the gentile couple.[115]

Moshe Maltz, who recorded a intricate diary of his time in hiding with a Polish woman, Mrs. Halamjowa, used his property as his central bartering tool when searching for shelter near Lwów. He desperately tried to exchange several acres of land and a building he owned in Sokal for shelter, but everyone refused.[116] Later, he learned that one of those who had refused him agreed to help another Jewish family: "Apparently this Gentile is willing to risk his life for Jews after all, if the price is right."[117] Eventually, Moshe's family, along with ten other Jews, found shelter in the hayloft of Mrs. Halamjowa. She agreed to keep this large group at no profit, refusing all of the gifts with the exception of one: "I promise Mrs. Halamjowa that if, with God's help (and hers), we survive this war, I will buy the other half of her house and give it to her as a gift so she will be the sole owner of the house in which she lives."[118] According to Moshe, Mrs. Halamjowa took cash from the group only to buy their food. In 1986, she was declared Righteous Among the Nations.

In hiding with the Polish couple who ran the profitable underground hotel for Jews in Warsaw, Michał Głowiński and his mother were confounded by one resident, a Polish boy who perceivably had no means of paying the couple the high fee they charged for residence. One day, however, "Pani Bobrowska, who was not one reticent to talk, admitted to my mother that she was allowing the forlorn Stefanek to stay there for only a small fee, because his family had formally committed to turning over to her an enormous estate after the war. Everything here was a

[115] Ibid.
[116] Moshe Maltz, *Year of Horror – Glimpse of Hope: The Diary of a Family in Hiding* (New York: Shengold Publishers, Inc., 1993), 64-65.
[117] Ibid., 70.
[118] Ibid., 81.

question of money – sentiments played no role, although it should be said that she treated the boy well."[119]

Finally, even if Jews in search of shelter had no valuables, money, or property to speak of, they could offer services to their aid-provider. For instance, Sonia Ger would knit sweaters for her Polish helpers in exchange for daily food.[120] Naomi Samson and her family performed sewing and knitting for *pani* Kowalik while they were in hiding; that is, until residents of Goray became suspicious: "Between our knitting and Srulki's sewing, the Kowalik family started looking well-dressed. Soon their friends and neighbours began asking questions […] Then a woman asked Mrs. Kowalik in church, 'Are you sure you are not hiding Jews somewhere?'"[121] Thus, their services quickly came to an end.

Sex was another service that could be offered in exchange for life; shelter, food, water. After escaping the Warsaw ghetto during the uprising of April 1943, Celia Cynamon hid in an apartment with a Polish couple and eleven other Jews. One of the Jewish girls in hiding, Erna, began to flirt with the Polish man.[122] Celia recalled that a pattern began a few times a week: Cesiek, the Polish man, would return to the apartment drunk, his wife would tell him to sleep with the Jews, and Cesiek would go to Erna for sex. Celia remembered that eventually Cesiek began returning home inebriated more frequently, so he could have sex with Erna. In exchange, Cesiek would bring her food, and she would eat it in the night (this way, she did not have to share it with anyone else, Celia remarked critically).[123]

Sex could be a form of payment and further offered as a last, desperate attempt to persuade rescuers to continue provisions of shelter and food. In Molly Applebaum's diary, she

[119] Głowiński, *The Black Seasons,* 76-77.
[120] Ger, interview 54116, segment 28.
[121] Samson, *Hide*, 85.
[122] Celia Cynamon, interview 14385, interviewed by Elise Arden, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, April 22, 1996, Aventura, FL, audio: 1:48:18, segment 60-61.
[123] Ibid.

details her and her cousin's experience in hiding with a Polish man, Wójcik, who Molly refers to in her diary as "*Ciuruniu*" ("uncle"), and later as "*Huncwot*," which can be loosely translated to the English "rascal." They survived from early 1943 until the end of the war living in a box buried underground, only coming out of the box and standing up in the night. Wójcik's attitude and mood vacillated frequently and intensely during their time in hiding; initially he was regular in the distribution of food and spoke with the girls frequently, later he was increasingly sparse in his visits and at one point, after being accused by neighbours of keeping Jews, he threatened that they would have to leave, before later having a change of heart. The food was often unpredictable in its delivery and quality.

During the time in hiding, Molly's teenage cousin Helena began to have sex with Wójcik, and later Molly did as well. These encounters were framed in the diary as initiated by Molly and Helena (who were around twelve and sixteen, respectively, at the time), although it is clear that the sex was an attempt to persuade him to provide continued shelter and sustenance. Hints of this can be found in the diary, where Molly writes simple entries to note their sexual relationship with Wójcik: "Sex on May 16, but out of resignation."[124]

In this diary, complemented by a recent video interview with Molly and a postwar testimony, the complex relationship between the girls and their rescuer can be dually understood as sexual violence, and sex as payment for hiding. It must also be mentioned that Molly speaks of the sex in her diary as a form of entertainment, as it provides her and Helena a topic of conversation for many days and momentarily dispels the monotony of their daily life in hiding. For instance, in December 1943 Molly wrote that: "We talk a lot about having sex and Kitten [Helena] shows me exactly how it is done. I convinced her to provoke Ciuruniu to let him know

[124] Applebaum, *Buried Words*, 25.

that she was also willing, despite the cold. She listened to me and she approached him and it happened. And we have such a pleasant topic for another couple of days."[125]

The girls were entirely dependent on Wójcik; they often begged him, in the forms of letters transcribed in Molly's diary, to let them out for more hours at a time or to bring them better food. On May 24th Molly sent a letter to Wójcik in which she wrote that, "You are our God on earth, our benefactor and savior, and we have seen proof of that on so many occasions; there were so many moments when one had to have doubts, but you have heroically adhered to your sacrifice […] We are entirely at your mercy and you can do with us whatever you will, but you are humane and you know that we are living creatures and what we need most to survive."[126] Molly also records one of Helena's letters in her diary, sent to Wójcik when he ceased to give them sufficient food: "Do not let us die of hunger. Do not refuse us your help […] I plead with you in the name of everything holy to continue saving us for our life depends on you […] I have nothing with which to pay you, so take the shoes, shirts and sweaters from us, even if it means stripping us naked, but do not let us starve […]".[127] In a relationship with such a radical power differential, sex functioned, like the letters, as a desperate plea by two completely vulnerable girls for continued protection, a vulnerability that their helper took great advantage of.

2.7 Paid Help and Murder

When the money received for hiding Jews perhaps was no longer seen as sufficient to placate the threats involved with this profession, paid gentile hosts would denounce their charges to the German or Polish police, or simply solve the problem through murder. Michał Głowiński's

[125] Ibid., 22.
[126] Ibid., 28.
[127] Ibid., 29.

father was in hiding with a Polish peasant in his cottage, who received a bit of money for keeping Michał's father. However, as time went on and the significant threats associated with hiding Jews could not be denied, this peasant developed a "rational" response, to address the problem of the Jew hiding in his home:

> After a while, the peasant became aware that, in 1943, keeping a Jew in his farmhouse exposed him to grave danger, and he demanded more money. It did not end there, though. In his mind there developed what was – one must admit objectively – an entirely rational idea. He announced to my father that, as a Jew, my father would surely be killed anyway, but it would not be good if the peasant, too, had to suffer or even die […] He informed my father that it would make no sense if my father were to perish in a simple and ordinary way, given that he had to be killed anyway. The best thing would be if the peasant himself were to take my father to the Germans, and in particular to the nearest gendarme outpost. Certainly they would murder my father, but nothing would happen to the peasant himself, and moreover he would even earn some money, because the Germans would give me a reward.[128]

Despite the threatening ramblings of this peasant, Michał's father had no other option but to remain in this home. Yet, he was soon forced to flee without further plans for shelter, as it became increasingly clear that these were not simply drunken musings, and the peasant was preparing to put this plan into action.

Many Jews were killed indirectly by their gentile helpers in hiding due to prevalent mistreatment and abuse. Two sisters, Krystyna and Róża Gold, and their brother, were placed by their parents with a pair of Polish farmers, who received payment. The three siblings lived in a bunker for a year and a half. They remembered that "The farmer's wife kept complaining about having to hide us; we gave her everything and we had nothing left […] In the end the farmer's wife would not even bring us water."[129] Desperately thirsty, their brother exited the bunker in the night to drink water from a puddle, became ill as a result, and died.

[128] Głowiński, *The Black Seasons,* 69-70.
[129] Maria Hochberg-Mariańska and Noe Grüss, ed., *The Children Accuse* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1996), 120.

Around the time of a deportation *Aktion* in the Krasnobrody ghetto, Maria Kopel's parents placed her three-year old sister with a local gentile, for a payment of 500 *złoty*. Later, when this Polish woman learned that the girl's parents were dead, she threw the child out of her home in the rain. The ultimate fate of her sister is unknown to the author.[130] Maria and her other siblings were placed with a farmer, who forced one of the siblings out of hiding in the winter, and he froze to death. In the end, Maria witnessed the police forcing her siblings out of hiding, and presumed that they were denounced.[131]

Tired of providing for extra people, and perhaps feeling as though the payment was insufficient, gentile helpers could eventually decide to deal with this problem by murdering those they had in hiding themselves. Pola Elbinger, with her mother and two siblings, barely escaped such a fate: "After a year's time, he [the Polish peasant] had enough of us. We had not placed all our possessions with him as he had envisioned. He decided to kill us. They were already sharpening their knives, had stopped bringing us food so that we would get weaker […] and, at the same time, they were keeping an eye on us so we would not escape."[132]

In certain cases, Polish helpers took as much money as possible from Jews in hiding, essentially robbing them, before murdering them. In his postwar testimony to the Central Committee of Polish Jews, Icek Lerner described the fate of his family, who were sheltered, charged massive sums of *złoty*, and eventually murdered by a Polish man along with other gentiles in Brzeziny. *Pan* Mazurek, who purchased the family's bakery at the beginning of the war and periodically transferred the money to them throughout the war in order to pay for hiding, described the following events to Icek.[133]

---

[130] Ibid., 120-121.
[131] Ibid., 121.
[132] *The Last Eyewitnesses,* 38.
[133] AŻIH 301/2803, testimony of Icek Lerner from Komarówce.

In 1942, after the majority of the Jews of Brzeziny had been deported, Jan Sadowski, who worked at the Lerner family's bakery, suggested that he could, for payment, build a hideout for the Lerners in which they could conceal themselves at a moment's notice, in the case of another deportation *Aktion.* The deal struck between the Lerner family and Sadowski was as follows: The family agreed to pay Sadowski the full cost of building the hideout (*kryjówka)*, in addition to a monthly rent of 10,000 *złoty* and extra for food.[134]

The family was transferred to another ghetto, and then escaped a transport and entered the hideout at Sadowski's. The monthly rent and extra cash for food was given to Sadowski through Mazurek, who would occasionally visit. Lerner emphasized that Sadowski's suspicious behavior began when he started to arrange meetings between Mazurek and himself: "several times and in short intervals Sadowski went to Mazurek, who requested certain things for hiding the family, including 100 kg. of sugar, 100 kg. of flour and around 4,000 cigarettes. In my family, no one smoked, next Sadowski took from Mazurek a large sum of cash, materials, clothes, linen, new sewing machine".[135]

His family remained with Sadowski for six months until their brutal murder perpetrated by Sadowski and other Polish men:

> On 30/10/43 during the night the following men, armed with guns, grenades, automatic weapons, came to the hideout: 1/. Sadowski Jan, 2/. Stelmoszuk Wacław, 3/ Uzdowski Franciszek, 4./ Radczuk Józef i 5/. Bożyk Deniek […] Sadowski and Stelmaszukiem called my family to immediately hand over all cash and jewelry, when my sister replied that everything they possessed they had already given them, Sadowski replied to show them where or with whom they had placed money, materials, or gold. To this, my sister told them that Sadowski already had everything. After this Sadowski and Stelmaszukiem replied that soon he will force them to tell everything, and ordered my brother Dawid and one boy from Międzyrzec from the hideout – they told them to lie on the ground, and they started to sadistically beat them. They beat them in front of my whole family, asking constantly where they had hidden gold and valuables, when they realized

[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid.

> that this was not giving them the expected result, they shot them through their hands and feet and eventually beat them to death."[136]

Paid help could be for all purposes a precursor to murder; devoid of the intention to help whatsoever.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter illustrated that payment played a significant role in exchanges between potential Polish helpers and Jews during the Holocaust in Poland. In many cases, the exchange of money, and other valuable items or services greatly influenced the relationships between Polish helpers and Jews in hiding, as many of those in hiding outlined in their diaries and testimonies that the attitudes of their aid-providers suddenly changed given a reduction in profit, and hypothesized that profit was the only reason gentiles had agreed to hide them. The section on (dis)honouring agreements traced how the attitudes and behaviours of Polish helpers towards the Jews they kept in their homes or on their property could shift considerably with such fluctuations in payment. This chapter further demonstrated that paid help did not only include exchange of hard currency and gold, as its title may immediately connote. Rather, complex agreements including property and valuables were extremely common as forms of paid help, as was the exchange of various services. I built on the literature by suggesting that services, including sex, were a widespread expression of paid help as, even those without financial assets, could offer their bodies.

A last idea to consider, is whether payment exchanged between rescuers and Jews after the war should be conceptualized as a form of paid help. In this regard, documents that outline

[136] Ibid.

the circumstances of postwar exchanges (i.e. if such agreements were forged after the war, or during the time in hiding) could be most illuminating. One relevant document is the testimony of a Polish aid-provider, Ewa Mognielnicka. In response to a newspaper ad released in January 1947 asking for more information on Jews who received Aryan papers during the war, she requested "where she could turn to in regards to compensation for hiding many Jews during the war."[137] She elaborates that "[providing] shelter was much more dangerous than dispersing Aryan papers," and that although those she had hidden for eighteen months "promised that they would return her favour and pay her, so far [in 1947] they have not given me anything."[138] By categorizing promises of postwar property exchanges as a form of paid help I briefly consider this topic; however, it most definitely deserves greater attention.

I wish to conclude this chapter by drawing attention to a prevalent theme in testimonies of paid help: Many Jews viewed money as their true saviours, rather than their gentile helpers or rescuers. Certain documents, in which Jews emphasize that receiving continued shelter from gentiles was entirely dependent upon the availability of funds, implicitly convey this theme. For instance, after entering a new hiding place just outside of Warsaw, Janina Bauman wrote in her diary that "I would enjoy myself and breathe fresh air till the end of September - my stay had been paid for in advance up to this date. Later we would see."[139] Other times, survivors address this topic quite directly. In her interview, Dora Cohn recalled her time in hiding in the attic of a Polish woman in Wola Komborska. To pay for shelter, her father would regularly go dig up gold

[137] AŻIH 301/5396, testimony of Ewa Mogielnicka from Sokołów Podlaski.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Janina Bauman, *Winter in the Morning: A Young Girl's Life in the Warsaw Ghetto and Beyond, 1939-1945* (London: Virago Press, 1986), 133.

coins they had buried before the war. To her interviewer, Dora stressed, "the gold coins were the ones that saved us"[140]

[140] Dora Cohn, interview 52546, interviewed by, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation,* August 7, 1996, Portola Valley, CA, audio: 2:15:57, segment 39.

CHAPTER THREE

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN HIDING

3.1 Introduction

The notion that gender shaped experiences of the Holocaust remains by no means fully accepted in academic circles of Holocaust studies. In the 1970s, a handful of publications constituted the still nascent field of gender and the Holocaust. Despite its humble beginnings, this field of inquiry quickly began to garner increased academic interest following a conference held in New York City in 1983 organized by Esther Katz and Joan Ringelheim.[141] This conference and related publications argued that women's experiences had been uncritically absorbed into a paradigmatic narrative of men, which in turn sparked waves of critique against a gendered approach to the Holocaust.[142] Critiques included that, since the "essence" of the Holocaust was the persecution and murder of Jews, "transcend[ing] the notion of gender", any attempt to include gender in the analysis was at best a puerile diversion from, and at worst a demonstration of utter ignorance of, the Anti-Semitism that guided the Nazis' genocidal plan.[143] In sum, these critiques demand: Since Jews were targeted and murdered regardless if they were men or women, why is gender relevant to the Holocaust?

[141] Katarzyna Person, "Sexual Violence during the Holocaust – The Case of Forced Prostitution in the Warsaw Ghetto," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 33, no. 2 (2015): 106.
[142] Joan Ringelheim, "The Holocaust: Taking Women into Account," *Jewish Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (1992): 19-23; Joan Ringelheim, "Women and the Holocaust: A Reconsideration of Research," *Signs* 10, no. 4 (1985): 741-761.
[143] Person, "Sexual Violence during the Holocaust, 106.

Rebuking these critiques, scholars of gender and the Holocaust have reiterated that while testimonies of women exposed different experiences, they were not further explored in scholarly publications or were removed from published testimonies.[144] As most earlier scholarship ignored gender, and the ways in which the Holocaust shattered the ability to sustain and perform prewar gender roles, women appear in the literature solely as mothers and wives dedicated to the preservation of their family. Zoë Waxman aptly suggests that this focus on women as mothers and caregivers aims to implicitly "rescue the study of the Holocaust from a place of unremitting despair."[145] Although this was one element of female experience of the Holocaust, it by no means tells the whole story. One of the many deleterious impacts of this myopic focus on male experiences and narratives of female caregivers is the marginalization (if not complete erasure) of sexual violence against Jewish women.

The relationship between sexual violence and genocide, and gender and genocide, is extremely complex and varies considerably depending on the genocidal context. Sexual violence has been a widely used tool of genocide, one of the "deliberately gendered genocidal strategies and processes" undertaken by the perpetrators which "have then produced gender-specific traumas or 'gendered harms.'"[146] Although evidence of sexual violence was documented during the Nuremberg trials, it was not prosecuted: Rape was formally included under the definition of genocide during the prosecution of the Rwandan genocide.[147]

---

[144] Pascale Rachel Bos, "Women and the Holocaust: Analyzing Gender Difference," in *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis, and the Holocaust, Women in the Holocaust,* edited by E. Baer and M. Goldenberg (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 24. Cited in Person, "Sexual Violence during the Holocaust."
[145] Zoë Waxman, "Unheard Testimony, Untold Stories: the representation of women's Holocaust experiences," *Women's History Review* 12, no. 4 (2003): 665.
[146] Amy E. Randall, "Introduction: Gendering Genocide Studies," in *Genocide and Gender in the Twentieth Century: A Comparative Survey,* edited by Amy E. Randall (London: Bloomsburg Academic, 2015), 2.
[147] Carol Rittner and John K. Roth, Introduction to *Rape: Weapon of War and Genocide,* edited by Carol Rittner and John K. Roth (St. Paul: Paragon House, 2012), xxvii.

Myrna Goldenberg best summarizes the relationship between rape and genocide in the context of the Holocaust in her analysis of Nazi racial theory. Goldenberg writes that, while sexual contact between Germans and Jews was entirely forbidden in the Third Reich in fear that it would "contaminate the German bloodline and subvert racial purity," the rape of Jewish women by Germans nevertheless occurred in a plethora of different contexts. However, Jews were murdered indiscriminately of their gender. Thus, she concludes, "rape of Jewish women, unlike rape in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Darfur, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, was not an instrument of genocide or ethnic cleansing. During the Holocaust, rape *was eclipsed by the 'Final Solution,'* the state-sponsored plan to annihilate all European Jews, which was the Nazi instrument of choice by which to achieve its genocidal goal. In the face of systematic total elimination of Jews, rape and other forms of sexual violence were redundant but still very real tools of terror and racial dominance."[148]

In studies of sexual violence and the Holocaust, scholars have emphasized the particular vulnerability of Jewish women and girls to rape, molestation, and other forms of sexual violence in the concentration camps, ghettos, and on the Eastern Front during the summer of 1941.[149] Testimonies indicate that sexual violence was perpetrated by the Germans as a precursor to murder, claiming power over the bodies and lives of Jewish women and demonstrating a disturbing tendency towards such acts of "redundant" violence. In Brzozów, when a seventeen year-old Jewish girl was discovered in hiding with a Polish woman, German soldiers sexually violated her multiple times before murdering her as well as the Polish gentile woman who had

[148] Eva Fogelman, "Rape during the Nazi Holocaust: Vulnerabilities and Motivations," in *Rape: Weapon of War and Genocide,* 16-17.
[149] Person, "Sexual Violence during the Holocaust"; Regina Mühlhäuser, "The Historicity of Denial: Sexual Violence against Jewish Women during the War of Annihilation, 1941-1945," in *Gendered Wars, Gendered Memories: Feminist Conversation on War, Genocide and Political Violence*, edited by Aye Gül Altinay and Andrea Pet (Routledge, 2016); Na'ama Shik, "Sexual Abuse of Jewish Women in Auschwitz-Birkenau," in *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century*, edited by Dagmar Herzog (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

given her shelter.[150] While historians irreparably lack evidence from inside the extermination camps, diaries and memoirs convey that sexual violence occurred in this context as well. Szynom Grinszpan, taken from his hometown of Sokołów Podlaski to perform forced labour at Treblinka I, describes in his postwar testimony the communal acts of sexual violence perpetrated against Jewish women after their deportation to Treblinka:

> Every two months a new transport came to Treblinka […] The SS men and Ukrainians came to us and said: 'choose your women!' Allegedly they choose pretty women for us. They selected 10-15 women. On Sunday in the afternoon they got drunk and ordered us to go to sleep. When it was dark, they brought the women to the barracks, SS commanders Von Hoffen and Hoggen took two, three women and took them to each other. At eight in the morning, he awakened me and ordered me to get the horses, to take away the murdered, raped women on a cart to the forest.[151]

These horrific descriptions of sexual violence in the death camps are rare evidence of the ubiquity of sexual violence during the Holocaust: At every stage of the Final Solution, even once women reached the extermination camp and were moments from death, sexual violence remained a threat.

In the historiography on Jewish-gentile relations during the Holocaust in Poland, scholars have traced the frequency of verbal, emotional, and physical assaults committed against Jews in hiding by gentile helpers. Yet, sexual abuse in the context of hiding is neglected in existing scholarship – very rarely, a few examples testify to the threat of sexual violence in hiding. In Jan Grabowski's book *Hunt for the Jews*, he describes the relationship between a Polish gentile, Wolański, and a Jewish woman, Estera, who was hiding in Wolański's home. Noting that one witness characterized the relationship as one wherein Wolański "used Estera a lot," Grabowski adds that, "This expression might describe the paid helper's financial gains but more likely referred to rape and other forms of sexual abuse that happened often, but that are most of the time

[150] Engelking, *Such a Beautiful Sunny Day*, 119.
[151] AŻIH 301/1185, testimony of Grinszpan Szynom from Sokołów Podlaski.

hidden between the lines of the preserved historical evidence."[152] Joanna Michlic mentions in her article on rescuer-rescuee relationships that two of the survivors she interviewed suffered sexual and physical abuse in hiding, yet does not develop these ideas further.[153] Zoë Waxman remains the only scholar who has dedicated whole articles and chapters to the sexual abuse of Jewish women in hiding; in her numerous publications, Waxman charges that scholars of hiding during the Holocaust have ignored the "gendered nature of lived experience" and neglected sexual violence.[154]

This chapter will relate oral interviews with female Holocaust survivors who were victims of sexual violence in hiding during the Holocaust in Poland, and thereby offer a number of conclusions concerning the experiences of Jewish women and girls in hiding, and revisit the notion of "the gentile rescuer" in light of these testimonies.[155] The term sexual violence, as it is employed in this chapter, encompasses rape, molestation, genital mutilation, forced impregnation and abortion, as well as any threat to perpetrate such acts. Scholars of sexual violence during the Holocaust and the Second World War similarly apply sexual violence as "an all-encompassing term, using it to describe unwanted sexualized acts forced upon victims that include, but are not limited to, rape."[156]

---

[152] Grabowski, *Hunt For the Jews*, 146.
[153] Michlic, "I will never forget what you did for me during the war," 38.
[154] Zoë Waxman, "Rape and Sexual Abuse in Hiding," in *Sexual Violence Against Jewish Women During the Holocaust,* edited by Sonja M. Hedgepeth and Rochelle G. Saidel (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2010), 131.
[155] For this chapter, the methodological approach involved an index search of the oral testimonies located in the University of Southern California's Visual History Archive (VHA). The main index terms applied were "hiding-related sexual assaults," which the VHA defines as "Any sexual contact or act of sexual penetration forced upon a person while in hiding" and "aid giver sexual assaults," defined as "Any sexual contact or act of sexual penetration forced upon a person by aid givers." To insure that all relevant testimonies were located, other index terms were used including "sexual assault", "sexual assault fears", and "hiding-related sexual activities".
[156] Michelle Kelso, "Romani Women and the Holocaust: Testimonies of Sexual Violence in Romanian-Controlled Transnistria," in *Women and Genocide: Gendered Experiences of Violence, Survival, and Resistance,* edited by JoAnn DiGeorgio-Lutz and Donna Gosbee (Toronto: Women's Press, 2016), 40.

3.2 Sexual Violence Perpetrated by Friends and Family of Aid-Providers

Oftentimes, the perpetrator of sexual violence was an individual "external" to the hiding place, most commonly the aid-provider's friend, family member, or neighbour. These individuals were often aware that the host was sheltering a Jew, but were not directly responsible for their keep.[157] One example appears in the testimony of Sophie Bleiweiss, who briefly hid in the field of a Polish farm. On one occasion the son of the gentile family brought Sophie food. During this exchange, he attempted to rape her while she begged him not to, stressing that she had lice to try to dissuade him. It seems that the son eventually left, and Sophie was soon transferred to another hiding place.[158]

This option to switch to a different hiding place was not always available. Particularly in circumstances wherein young girls were placed in hiding by parents or other guardians, those in hiding expressly felt they must stay to respect the authority of the adult who had placed them there. Additionally, many children in hiding lacked the social and economic resources required to search out alternate locations for shelter, which those older would be more likely to possess. For example, Janina Galloway and her aunt were sheltered by a Polish man in a countryside village outside of Lwów, where they hid in the family's stables. A man came, most likely the husband, and tried to rape Janina's aunt. Janina recounted that her aunt "begged him to leave her alone" and kneeled in front of him, "kissing his hands and begging him not to rape her."[159] Her aunt managed to escape while Janina, around ten or twelve at the time, remained with the Polish family. After her aunt left, the Polish family forced Janina to share a bed with their son, who was

[157] There are many examples of this in the interviews. For instance, Lynn Naparsted was hidden with other Jews by a Polish woman in a church, who was paid a healthy sum of money for their upkeep. Lynn was raped repeatedly by the boyfriend of this woman, who would request that she help him retrieve something from the church's basement. Lynn Naparsted, interview 15332, interviewed by Ann Page, Visual History Archive*, University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, May 21, 1996, Aventura, FL, audio: 1:54:30, segment 61.
[158] Sophie Bleiweiss, interview 55127, segment 55.
[159] Janine Galloway, interview 28452, interviewed by Carol Hurst, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, February 24, 1997, Slough, UK, audio: 2:20:37, segment 61.

a few years older than Janina. Janina felt "instinctively that he was going to touch [her]" and she took a stick to bed to protect herself.[160]

A number of women reported in their VHA interviews that the individuals who had chosen to hide them could have potentially stopped the abuse. However, the complex and intense psychological impacts of rape, and all forms of sexual violence, facilitated their silence. Of the detrimental psychological ramifications of rape, Zoë Waxman writes that: "Arguably, rape – the violation of one's body at the hands of someone seeking to cause both physical and mental pain – is one of the loneliest and most alienating of things that can happen to a person. As the rapist is usually all too aware it silences the victim and leaves them alone in a world they can no longer recognize. Sex is transformed from an act of intimacy into a tool of violence."[161]

As these testimonies suggest, all forms of sexual violence can bring about similar psychological consequences to those described by Waxman. As a five year-old girl, Joan DaSilva hid with a Polish woman named Marysia and her family in Przemyśl, and accompanied the family to their summerhouse. Marysia's ten year-old nephew, Kuboś would sexually "torment" her in the bushes near the family summerhouse. "Everyday became like a living hell," Joan remembered, and she was too humiliated to tell her Polish caregiver, Marysia, as the assault shattered her self-esteem, and left her "disgusted" with herself.[162]

Rachel Garfunkel recalled how hiding places marked by a continuous threat of sexual violence, left essentially 'choiceless choices': Since outside of the rescuer's doors the German police, Polish "blue" police, and local gentiles regularly searched for surviving Jews, remaining in the hiding place felt like perhaps the best guarantee of survival. However, in hiding, women

[160] Ibid., segment 12.
[161] Waxman, "Testimony and Silence," 122.
[162] Joan DaSilva, interview 49009, interviewed by Ileane Kenney, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, December 12, 1998, Alexandria VA, audio: 3:17:23, segment 78-81.

were trapped in situations of abuse – some for years until the end of the war. While she was in hiding as a child, Rachel was forced to withstand sexual abuse from her host's brother as, "you can't cry, you can't complain or else you get thrown out into the street."[163]

Threats of death, physical and emotional abuse, or slander, often accompanied acts of sexual violence. Kuboś, the young Polish boy who abused Joan DaSilva, punctuated his actions with verbal torture. He would molest her in the bushes, and while they were walking back to the country house he would point to a young daughter of one of the neighbours, and say: "I don't think I could do that [molest] to her, she's not the type, and besides, she has her parents there."[164] Joan, a young girl of around five at the time, who had been without her parents in numerous hiding places since the liquidation of the ghetto in Przemyśl, was tormented by these words.

Esther Mark, in hiding with a Polish family on a farm with her mother, was briefly left alone on the farm when her mother was captured and interrogated by the Gestapo. Taking advantage of her mother's absence, the son of her gentile hosts forced Esther into the cellar and raped her multiple times. Afterwards, the son threatened that if Esther "opened her mouth", disclosed the rape, he would bury her under the coal and no one would know she was dead.[165] Joan DaSilva's sense of self-worth diminished grievously after suffering sexual abuse in hiding, she remembered feeling "like a whore," "disgusted" with her herself, and that she could never tell her parents. Her abuser took advantage of these emotions to ensure her discretion, as he threatened to tell everyone "what she let him do to her" if she confided in Marysia, her Polish aid-provider.[166]

---

[163] Rachel Garfunkel, interview 55341, Visual History Archive*, University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, January 1, 2007, Edmonton, AB, audio: 2:09:48, segment 86.
[164] DaSilva, interview 49009, segment 79.
[165] Esther Mark, interview 24771, interviewed by Meryl Loonin, Visual History Archive*, University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, January 15, 1997, Newton, MA, audio: 2:44:33, segment 3.
[166] DaSilva, interview 49009, segment 80.

3.3 Aid-Providers, Rescuers, and Perpetrators

The perpetrators of sexual violence were often the aid-providers themselves. Although this occurrence cannot be readily quantified, witness testimonies suggest that the threat of being sexually abused by their aid-provider was a significant and ongoing concern for Jewish women and girls in hiding: Fay Kief, hiding with her brother and his girlfriend on the farm of a Polish gentile in the area of Sokołów County, remarked her surprise that, although she and her brother's girlfriend were two young girls, this man did not touch them.[167]

In almost all cases, the person who perpetrated sexual violence was the oldest man in the house, but in some cases the wife participated as well. Tema Ratafia recalled her time in hiding with Jozef R., around sixty years of age, whom she believed sheltered Jewish women with the sole intention of sexually abusing them: "He just wanted young women."[168] The behavior of Jozef R. highlights a potential new direction of scholarly inquiry concerning gentile motivations for hiding Jews during the Holocaust in Poland. To date, scholars have concluded that factors such as accumulating wealth were key reasons for why help was offered; Tema's testimony offers one of the first pieces of evidence that suggests the possibility of sex could prompt gentile Poles to offer shelter.[169]

Historians of the Holocaust in Poland have largely concurred that one of the greatest threats, if not the most considerable threat, facing Jews in hiding was that of being discovered by the Germans or Polish "blue" police. However, these interviews suggest that the fear of being sexually violated by gentile aid-providers was also significant, and, in some cases, perceivably

---

[167] Fay Kief, interview 10131, interviewed by Ruth Resnikoff, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation,* December 15, 1995, Delray Beach, FL, audio: 1:57:59, segment 47.
[168] Tema Ratafia, interview 26360, interviewed by Marvin Greenberg, Visual History Archive*, University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, February 19, 1997, Palm Beach, FL, audio: 1:51:58, segment 16.
[169] Another key document is the diary of Molly Applebaum.

greater than the fear of being discovered and ultimately murdered. In her interview with Joan Ringelheim, one survivor recalled that the Polish men who molested her in hiding were sometimes "equally as frightening as the Germans."[170] Other survivors expressed this sentiment, explicitly or implicitly, in their interviews. Leah Stein's interview traces her life in hiding with a Polish couple near Żelków where, unbeknownst to Leah, this couple had formulated a plan to rape Leah so she would provide them with a child. One day, after the wife left for the market, the husband entered the attic where Leah was hiding. He began molesting her and when she begged him to leave her alone, he implied that to secure her life, she must bear his child. As he was attempting to rape her, Leah grabbed a nearby pair of scissors and threatened to kill him if he did not leave. When he continued to molest her, she warned that she would yell out the window that he was hiding a Jew: Leah knew that if a Jew was discovered in hiding at a Polish gentile's home, they would kill the Polish family as well as the Jew in hiding. This threat struck a chord with the man, and he left. Leah fled the hiding place that night.[171]

Many women, including Leah, chose to leave the home of their aid-provider due to the threat of sexual violence; implying that the risk of being caught in the open and delivered to the Germans was thought to be more manageable than their former lives in hiding. Charlotte Hacker Elmowitz hid in the home of a Ukrainian couple in Borysław.[172] The wife was very kind to her, she remarked in her interview, but once the wife left the house, circumstances quickly deteriorated: "In the meantime I was left with this man, and he was fondling me […] I really didn't even know what he was doing, until it started to hurt terribly and I started crying, and he

[170] Joan Ringelheim, "The Split between Gender and the Holocaust," in *Women in the Holocaust*, edited by Dalia Ofer and Lenore J. Weitzman (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1998), 343.
[171] Leah Stein, interview 41850, interviewed by Rosalyn Livshin, Visual History Archive*, University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, May 24, 1998, Manchester, UK, audio: 5:03:59, segment 109-111.
[172] Although this thesis is focused on relations with Polish aid-providers, this chapter includes two examples of hiding with Ukrainians. Charlotte Hacker-Elmowitz, interview 3296, interviewed by Phyllis Lee, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, June 19, 1995, audio, 2:12:56, segment 13-14.

says to me 'if you're going to tell your father, I'm going to kill him and you' and he says 'if you don't like it just leave, and never come back here.'"[173] Heeding his warning, Charlotte left that night, and never told her father.

Fears of sexual violence and of being denounced and murdered were not always distinct in this context – many of these women in hiding lived in constant anxiety that, once their aid-providers and rescuers "had their fill," they would be simply handed over to the Germans or Polish "blue" police. During the war, Lillian Boraks-Nemetz and her grandmother lived with one of her grandmother's Polish friends near Warsaw. On one occasion the husband, Jozef, climbed onto the chair where Lillian was sleeping, took away her books, and claimed that if she "played" with him, he would return them. He took off his pants, and ordered her to take hers off. Lillian, who was around ten years old at the time, threatened that she would tell her grandmother, and Jozef left. They remained in hiding with Jozef and his wife; Jozef would repeatedly get drunk and Lillian would be afraid that he would denounce them.[174]

3.4 Legacies of Sexual Violence

Zoë Waxman argues that the scarcity of testimonies recounting sexual violence is in part due to the absence of sexual violence from mainstream narratives of the Holocaust: "Women who experienced sexual violence during the Holocaust are faced with the dilemma of attempting to relate their experiences in a context that insists that rape and sexual abuse do not belong to the history of the Holocaust, or remaining imprisoned by memories they cannot share. They may feel obliged to stay silent about certain aspects of their experiences for fear that they do not belong to

[173] Ibid., segment 39-40.
[174] Lillian Boraks-Nemetz, interview 40074, interviewed by Irene Dodek, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, April 14, 1998, Vancouver, BC, audio: 2:49:36, segment 16.

the history of the Holocaust."[175] In interviews, survivors often speak of sexual violence as distinct from their experience of the Holocaust; narratives of sexual violence are not woven throughout the interview, but rather appear as a chasm in the middle. Joan Ringelheim likewise notes that the memories of Holocaust survivors who were victims of sexual violence are "split between traditional versions of Holocaust history and [their] own experience."[176]

In their interviews for the VHA, many women affirmed that being raped or sexually assaulted remained one of their most painful memories of the wartime years. For example, Lillian Rubel outlined that, "When I heard I was going to be interviewed I wasn't sure whether to talk about it … because it hurts. I'm happy I'm talking about it but it still hurts, a lot. I don't think it'll ever go away … that time [the post-war era] was worse because you weren't allowed to talk about it, you weren't allowed to go anyplace about it … I went through a lot of bad things, but I think this was the worst."[177]

In many oral testimonies, survivors of sexual violence became visibly upset when speaking of this part of their life in hiding. For example, Lillian maintained neutral body language throughout her interview until she began speaking of the time she was raped by her aid-provider, which she struggled to discuss with her interviewer.[178] This body language adds another layer of significance to these testimonies, and can convey how certain experiences impacted, and continue to mark, the lives of survivors.

One way in which being sexually assaulted impacted the lives of survivors after the war was in the development of their relationships with parents, husbands, and children. With such topics being taboo in postwar society, and dealing with guilt and humiliation from their wartime

[175] Waxman, "Rape and Sexual Abuse in Hiding," 128.
[176] Waxman, "Testimony and Silence," 123.
[177] Lillian Rubel, interview 5990, interviewed by Florence Shuster, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation,* August 24, 1995, Brooklyn, NY, audio: 1:40:02, segment 1.
[178] Ibid.

experiences, many survivors only first opened up about being the victims of sexual violence to their interviewers in the 1990s. After the war, Lynn Naparsted's mother asked her about what happened to her in hiding, but Lynn did not tell her, as she did not see a reason for why she should know.[179] Notably, for many women, including Lynn, their interviewer was the first person they spoke with about their rape or sexual assault. When asked why they did not speak about it earlier, survivors often cited that everyone had suffered, and their suffering was no different than anyone else's.

In Esther's case, she survived the Holocaust with her mother, who was being questioned by the Gestapo when Esther was raped in hiding. When the interviewer asked why she did not tell her mother about this, Esther replied, "I knew that she suffered a lot and I didn't want her to suffer more than she suffered … and I said to myself, what would it help me?"[180] Esther's mother passed away in 1988 without knowing that Esther was raped while she was away being questioned by the Gestapo. At the time of her interview, Esther remained troubled that she never confided in her mother.

Those who did confide in their family after the war often faced suspicion and disbelief. Esther Mark told her husband that she was raped during the war a year and a half before her interview with the VHA; however, she felt that he did not believe her.[181] Lillian Rubel also told her husband, who she said did not support her afterwards.[182] Lynn Naparsted did not tell her daughter but nevertheless, this event impacted their relationship; Lynn was afraid of allowing her

[179] Naparsted, interview 15332, segment 3.
[180] Mark, interview 24771, segment 3.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Rubel, interview 5990, segment 1.

daughter to spend time with men as she did not think that the "relationship [between men and women] could be different."[183]

3.5 The Role of the Interviewer

The position of being "the first one told" creates a distinct bond between the interviewer and the survivor, and places further responsibility upon the interviewer. When listening to the survivor recount sexual abuse and violence in hiding, the interviewer most often remained silent and refrained from asking questions at that time. Partially, this is a testament to the silence surrounding sexual violence in the context of the Holocaust, and the lack of a place for this part of history.[184] The interviewers did not shy away from asking questions in regard to other painful topics, such as how the survivor's family and friends died. Another possibility is that the interviewer's silence during these moments is a response to the shame and guilt expressed by survivors, and the unwillingness of the interviewer to push for more details on a subject that is evidently painful for survivors to recall.

At other points in the testimony, a sort of therapeutic relationship between the survivor and interviewer developed. Reacting to the survivor's body language, their strained voices and cries, the interviewer often ceased questioning the survivor and instead consoled them. During one interview, after the survivor described being raped in the basement of a church by the boyfriend of her Polish helper, the interviewer interjected, affirming that "[this man] took advantage of you."[185] Earlier in the interview, the survivor told the interviewer that she was the first person to hear about her rape. Perhaps in response to this confession, the interviewer adopted

[183] Naparsted, interview 15332, segment 3.
[184] Ringelheim, "The Split between Gender and the Holocaust," 342.
[185] Naparsted, interview 15332, segment 3.

different strategies at this part of the interview, simply confirming the validity of the survivor's experiences and feelings, and refraining from coaxing more detail from her memory.

Sometimes, however, the interviewers facilitate this chasm between the Holocaust and sexual violence, perhaps in part because they are not adequately trained to deal with this subject. Helen Fixler recounted being raped by a Ukrainian man who sheltered her for the night when she was travelling back to Czechoslovakia, which "[tore her] apart in pieces".[186] After the war, Helen only confided in her granddaughter the day before her interview, who convinced her to put this part of her story on tape. At this point of the testimony, when Helen was recalling this recent emotional conversation with her granddaughter, the interviewer suddenly cuts her off and changes the subject, as they want to know more about what happened "after this incident [her rape]."[187] To this interviewer, Helen's rape was perceivably distinct from her experience of the Holocaust, and not as relevant as other parts of her testimony.

3.6 Conclusion

In line with the findings of Rachel Lev-Wiesel and Marianne Amir in their article, a number of these survivors express continuing gratitude to their rescuers.[188] They seem to have balanced their overall life saving act with the abuses that took place in hiding, however, the fact that they saved the survivor's life takes precedence. Reflecting on her aid provider, Jozef P., Lillian Boraks-Nemetz expressed that he "turned out to be not a very nice man" but "nice in

[186] Helen Fixler, interview 49493, interviewed by Renée Firestone, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, August 30, 1998, Beverly Hills, CA, audio: 2:01:56, segment 46-47.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Lev-Wiesel and Amir, "Holocaust Child Survivors and Child Sexual Abuse."

terms of he kept us alive."[189] At the time of her interview, Rachel Garfunkel still sent money to the family, as she stated that "I don't care what they made me do, they risked their life."[190] The act of savings one's life perhaps cognitively balanced any wrongdoings of their gentile rescuers and thus, survivors may marginalize or leave out such parts of their testimonies and frame the rescuing narrative in a positive light.

Others struggled to negotiate the life-saving actions of their aid-providers and rescuers with the sexual abuse. One survivor reflected that, "regardless of what he [the rescuer] had done to me, I can't hate him … I wonder if he ever loved me … after all, he saved my life."[191] During her interview, Pauline remained torn between the role of the Polish men in ensuring her survival, with the abuse: "[But] I have nobody to complain to. Everything has to be wonderful, because that's what they want to hear […] I am happy, everything is fine, I'm alive. They took me from hell. Have to be grateful."[192]

In a study conducted of victims of sexual violence, some of whom were abused by their former gentile rescuers, the authors found that survivors "expressed ambivalent feelings such as hate and love, resentment and longing, gratefulness and anger toward perpetrators who were Christians."[193] Faced with such essentially incongruous behaviors, certain survivors chose to omit sexual violence from their personal narratives of the Holocaust. A woman from Łódź, Tova, published an autobiography and did not include the sexual abuse in her book. "I was afraid that my children would read it," she explained, "and I did not want them to know. The men who raped me were also the ones who helped keep me alive."[194]

---

[189] Boraks-Nemetz, interview 40074, segment 16.
[190] Garfunkel, interview 55341, segment 2.
[191] Wiesel and Amir, "Holocaust Child Survivors and Child Sexual Abuse," 78.
[192] Ringelheim, "The Split between Gender and the Holocaust," 343.
[193] Lev-Wiesel and Amir, "Holocaust Child Survivors and Child Sexual Abuse," 77-78.
[194] Rachel Lev-Wiesel and Susan Weinger, *Hell Within Hell: Sexually Abused Child Holocaust Survivors, The Comorbidity of the Traumata* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2011), 69.

As these testimonies make clear, the term "rescuer" in the context of the Holocaust is not as morally consonant as its normative meaning implies. In some cases these Polish helpers do satisfy the basic criteria for Righteous Among the Nations, as established by Yad Vashem.[195] Should they be awarded the title of Righteous? As outlined in the latter part of this chapter, each survivor could respond differently to such a question. However, in a Polish political climate wherein Poles declared righteous and narratives of Polish rescuers are repeatedly mobilized to eschew the history of Polish collaboration and abuse of Jews, these questions are of utmost importance. A remaining question to consider is: How do we conceptualize these gentile rescuers and aid-providers within a framework of bystanders, rescuers, perpetrators, and victims? It is difficult to do so; their actions were both abusive and life-sustaining and thus altogether challenge the suitability of this framework. Lives were indeed saved, however, the altruistic connotations associated with "rescuers" (and arguably, "aid-providers" and "helpers," as well) do not adequately reflect the experiences of hiding during the war recounted in this chapter. While some survivors expressed that the life-saving role of their rescuer takes precedent over any of their other actions, others remained tormented by their experience in hiding, having been raped and molested by individuals who had, apparently, sought to protect them.

[195] To reiterate, this criteria includes "Active involvement of the rescuer in saving one or several Jews from the threat of death or deportation to death camps"; "Risk to the rescuer's life, liberty or position"; "The initial motivation being the intention to help persecuted Jews: i.e. not for payment or any other reward such as religious conversion of the saved person, adoption of a child, etc." and "The existence of testimony of those who were helped or at least unequivocal documentation establishing the nature of the rescue and its circumstances." "The Righteous Among the Nations," *Yad Vashem,* accessed September 22, 2018, http://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/faq.html.

CHAPTER 4

HIDING IN SOKOŁÓW COUNTY

4.1 Introduction and Historical Context

The history of the Holocaust in major Polish cities, such as Łódź, Warsaw, and Kraków, has been extensively researched and features as the subject of many monographs and articles, while considerably less attention has been devoted to the destruction of Jewish communities in rural Poland.[196] In many rural towns and villages, Poles and Jews lived side-by-side, as neighbours, until the height of *Aktion* Reinhardt in 1942 or, in some cases, even later. Unlike the closed, imposing brick walls and barbed wire of the Warsaw ghetto, for instance, the designated "Jewish residential quarters" in rural Poland were usually open; their boundaries defined by a wire, if anything at all. Here, in many instances, the face of death was familiar; neighbours, friends, and local members of revitalized prewar institutions such as the Polish "blue" police and fire brigades participated in the "Final Solution."

In the past fifteen years, a number of historians of the Holocaust in Poland have begun to shift the geographical scope of their research to focus on a single region, county, or even town in rural Poland, arguing that such a micro-historical approach can illuminate intimate facets of Jewish-gentile relations during the Holocaust in Poland lost in the anonymity of the urban

[196] Engelking and Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto*; Israel Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw, 1939-1943: Ghetto, Underground, Revolt* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); Isaiah Trunk, *Lodz Ghetto: A History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).

sphere.[197] As outlined by Agnieszka Wierzcholska, "[A] micro-historical outlook allows us to follow diverse trajectories, to see contradictions within human behavior, to carve out dilemmas faced by individuals and the manifold pressures under which they had to act during a brutal occupation."[198] A wealth of personal documents recorded by Jewish residents of these smaller towns and villages render micro-history a viable, and very promising, method of studying Jewish-gentile relations in hiding. Many of these files feature intricate details on life in hiding and enduring impressions of Polish aid-providers and rescuers in the postwar era.

This chapter will undertake a micro-historical study of relationships between Jews and gentiles in hiding in one locale: Sokołów County, Poland. Sokołów County was at the time of German invasion in 1939 (and remains so today), a rural county around eighty kilometres east of Warsaw. It was part of the Lublin Voivodeship, bordering Węgrów County in the west, Bielsk Podlaski County in the east, Ostrów Mazowiecka County and Wysokie Mazowieckie County in the north, and Siedlce County in the south.[199] In the prewar period, Sokołów County was further divided into twelve administrative *gminy* (communes): Korczew, Kosów, Repki, Jabłonna, Sterdyń, Sabnie, Wyrozęby, Kowiesy, Grochów, Kudelczyn, Chruszczewka, and Olszew.[200] Within these communes were many towns and villages, with the largest populace concentrated in the towns of Sokołów Podlaski and Kosów Lacki.

---

[197] Natalia Aleksiun, "Neighbours in Borysław. Jewish Perceptions of Collaboration and Rescue in Eastern Galicia," in *The Holocaust and European Societies: Social Processes and Social Dynamics,* edited by Andrea Löw and Frank Bajohr (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Bartov, "Wartime Lies and Other Testimonies"; Grabowski, *Hunt For the Jews.*

[198] Wierzcholska, "Helping, denouncing, and profiteering," 35.

[199] Jan Grabowski has undertaken detailed work on the history of the Holocaust in Węgrów County. See Jan Grabowski, "Powiat Węgrowski," in *Dalej jest noc: Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*, vol. 1 (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagłada, 2018).

[200] The prewar *gmina* structure was derived from a 1938 map. *Mapa Gmin Rzeczyposplitej Polskiej: Podział Administracyjny Według Stanu z Dnia 1.IV 1938 Roku*, 1938, 1:100,000, Głownego Urzędu Statystycznego w Warszawie. In contemporary Sokołów County, six of these communes no longer exist (Wyrozęby, Kowiesy, Olszew, Kudelczyn, Grochów, Chruszczewka) and *gminy* Ceranów and Bielany have been added.

Map 2. The communes and major towns of Sokołów County.
Source: Author. Gmina boundaries derived from: Mapa Gmin Rzeczyposplitej Polskiej: Podział Administracyjny Według Stanu z Dnia 1.IV 1938 Roku. 1938. 1:100,000. Głownego Urzędu Statystycznego w Warszawie.

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, Sokołów Podlaski, the largest town in Sokołów County, was home to 6,000 Jews. In September 1939, the Red Army briefly took control of Sokołów; when their ephemeral reign ended, around 1,000 Jews followed them eastwards.[201] The German occupation of Sokołów County began on September 20th, 1939. Frieda Altman Felman recalled the day of the German invasion of Sokołów Podlaski in her testimony to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: "German troops entered our town on September 20, 1939. I was huddling, frightened, with family and friends in a shelter when three soldiers came in and forced me and two girlfriends to go out to the back of the building. There they raped me at gunpoint."[202] Numerous other witnesses corroborate Frieda's account and similarly recall the unconstrained brutality of the German invaders in the early days of the occupation.

After September 20th, the German occupying authorities began the process of restructuring the administration of Sokołów County and ensuring that local institutions (notably, the Polish police, later reorganized as the Polish "blue" police) were purged and mobilized to assist them at will. Around one month later, in mid-October 1939, the boundaries of the individual Polish counties were expanded and consolidated into larger administrative territories: The former Sokołów and Węgrów Counties would now form a single administrative unit known as the *Kreishauptmannschaft Sokolow-Wengrow.*

[201] Martin Dean, ed., *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945,* vol. 2: Ghettos in German Occupied Eastern Europe (Washington: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2012), 442.
[202] "Frieda Altman Felman," Holocaust Encyclopedia, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, accessed October 21, 2018, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/id-card/frieda-altman-felman.

Map 3. Kreishauptmannschaft Sokolow-Wengrow.
Source: Author. Boundaries derived from Generalgouvernment Distrikt Warschau Kreishauptmannschaft Sokolow. c. 1939-1944. 1:500,000 scale. Archiwum Państwowe w Warszawie.

Layers of local government monitored and controlled this region, including detachments of the German Order Police and Security Police (Gestapo) in Sokołów Podlaski. The latter was responsible for the implementation of policy regarding Sokołów Jews and the coordination of the ghettos, including their later liquidations. The Security Police detachment in Sokołów was directed by *SS-Sturmscharführer* and *Kriminalsekretär* Friedrich Schröder, succeeded by SS-*Obersturmführer* Rudolf Weber in 1943.[203]

Owing to the paucity of personal testimony recorded by local Poles, it is difficult to evaluate the sentiments of the local population towards the occupiers. One local Polish landowner, who did record such a document, reflected in his diary on certain, what he perceived as admirable, changes brought about by the new administration: "Kreishauptmann [Ernst] Gramms has done more for the town of Sokołów than the Polish district governors for 20 years. The stinking stream flowing through Sokołów was straightened, regulated and edged, some kind of embankment was built, while the Jewish cemetery was changed into a park."[204]

Indeed, the administration was quick to establish new policies concerning the lives of Sokołów Jews. One of the first main orders of *Judenpolitik* was the creation of open ghettos in the towns of Sokołów Podlaski, Kosów Lacki and Sterdyń. In Sokołów Podlaski, a ghetto was created in mid-1940; it was an open ghetto, mostly surrounded by a wire, as recalled by former residents of this "Jewish quarter."[205] Around this time, many Jews (around 1,500 in total) were resettled in Sokołów Podlaski from outlying areas of the county, and towns and cities such as faraway Kalisz, Pułtusk, Kałuszyn and Aleksandrów Łódzki.[206]

---

[203] Jan Grabowski, "A Study in the Microhistory of the Holocaust: The *Liquidierungsaktion* in Węgrów Ghetto," in *Lessons and Legacies Volume XIII: New Approaches to an Integrated History of the Holocaust: Social History, Representation, Theory,* edited by Alexandra Garbarini and Paul B. Jaskot (Northwestern University Press, 2018).
[204] Józef Górski, "At the Turn of History," *Holocaust: Studies and Materials* (2008): 304.
[205] AŻIH 301/3979, testimony of Szepsel Grynberg from Sokołów Podlaski.
[206] *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos,* 443.

This marked increase in population had a detrimental impact on already worsening living and material conditions in the Sokołów Podlaski ghetto. After the war, Szepsel Grynberg recalled that, on average, six to seven people would inhabit a single room, and the German authorities would periodically compress the boundaries of the ghetto further.[207] In mid-1942, as conditions in the ghetto deteriorated, rumours of a deportation began to circulate, which encouraged some Jews, including Golda Ryba and her family, to leave the ghetto and seek shelter on the Aryan side. Her family hid in the village of Kozierady (today Konstantynów), but after a few days, with no further signs of an imminent deportation, they returned to the ghetto. Still uncertain of the future, Golda's grandfather built a hideout behind a double wall in their home.[208]

The ghettos in Kosów Lacki and Sterdyń, though considerably smaller than that of Sokołów Podlaski, followed a similar historical trajectory. Kosów Lacki had a Jewish population of 1,400 before the war, in total, 85 percent of the town's population.[209] This population likewise expanded when Jews were forcibly resettled in the town between 1939 and 1941, and upon the return of those who had been unsuccessful in their attempts to flee across the Bug River to the Soviet Union.[210] As the majority of the town's residents were Jewish, when the Kosów Lacki ghetto was created in 1941 the boundaries of the town itself were translated into those for the ghetto. As in the case of the Sokołów Podlaski ghetto, Germans transported Jews from the Kalisz area: Miriam Young remembers being sent on wagons to the Kosów Lacki ghetto, where Kosów Jews arranged room in their homes for the new arrivals.[211] A number of Jews would later arrive in the Kosów Lacki ghetto after escaping abhorrent, and worsening, conditions in the larger

[207] AŻIH 301/3979, testimony of Szepsel Grynberg.
[208] YVA 03/2734, testimony of Golda Ryba.
[209] *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos,* 389.
[210] *Kosow Lacki* (San Francisco: Holocaust Center of Northern California, 1992), 23.
[211] Miriam Young, interview 33788, interviewed by Martha Frazer, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation,* September 29, 1997, Bronx, NY, audio: 1:21:16, segment 18-19.

ghettos in Poland, such as Warsaw.[212] From the beginning of the occupation, Kosów Jews were mobilized for forced labour - one of their main tasks was the construction of Treblinka I, a forced labour camp directly adjacent to Treblinka II, the death camp, which were both located at the northern end of Sokołów County.[213]

An open ghetto was established in the town of Sterdyń in June 1940. Situated ten kilometers east of Kosów Lacki, Sterdyń was home to approximately 686 Jews, which, as in Kosów Lacki, made up the majority, 87 percent, of the total population. According to survivor Abraham Sukno, adherence to various regulations in the Sterdyń ghetto was monitored by the Polish "blue" police; Germans gendarmes had no permanent presence in the town.[214] Unfortunately, little more can be said about life in the Sterdyń ghetto, as so few of its inhabitants survived the occupation and left a written record.

Due to the proximity of Sokołów County to the Treblinka death camp, ominous news filtered around the town beginning in mid-1942 of the purposes of this camp. One testimony recorded that on the date of a major liquidation *Aktion* in the Warsaw ghetto (July 22nd, 1942), "a delegation from the Jewish Council in Kosów Lacki came to Sokołów and gave secret information that the cries of Jews from Treblinka, which is a few kilometres from Kosów, reach them. They claim that these were the cries of people being lead to death. Local Poles also informed us, that Jews were being murdered at Treblinka."[215]

In the early hours of September 22nd, 1942, German gendarmes and SS, members of the Polish "blue" police, and Ukrainian auxiliaries surrounded the ghetto of Sokołów Podlaski. To narrate this day of mass murder, one must rely on the testimonies of the, around ten, individuals

[212] AŻIH 301/3534, testimony of Heniek Ostrowicz from Warsaw.
[213] Shirley Yedwab, interview 25616, interviewed by Patricia Stein, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation,* January 24, 1997, Coconut Creek, FL, audio: 1:48:33, segment 7. Details on this forced labour can be found in *Kosow Lacki*, 33-35.
[214] AŻIH 301/4174, testimony of Abraham Sukno from Sterdyń.
[215] AŻIH 301/4161, testimony of Szapse Grinberg from Sokołów Podlaski.

who survived until liberation and recorded such documents. A number of Sokołów Jews, including Józef Kopyto, had travelled into the town the previous evening in order to participate in Yom Kippur prayers, and found themselves trapped. Kopyto wrote in his postwar testimony that, "[A]t 4 o'clock in the morning, a massacre began in Sokołów, and I could not leave the city. The town was surrounded from every side by armed Germans."[216]

Since the boundaries of the ghetto were now impenetrable, Jews in the Sokołów Podlaski ghetto desperately sought safety by hiding in their houses and apartments. Golda Ryba hid with her family behind a false wall in their home, yet they were soon discovered: "the Germans raided our home. Hearing their footsteps, we held our breath. We also heard them ransack the entire apartment, attic, basement. They finally started banging on the walls and in this way they found us. Immediately after, they moved the closet, which concealed the entrance to our hideout, and with shouting and yelling told us to get out of the hiding place".[217] "[W]ith beatings and shouting," the Germans brought Golda and her family to the meeting point at the *mały rynek* (small town square), near the old synagogue.[218]

Aaron Elster and his family, along with thirty to forty others, cordoned themselves within their apartment building in the ghetto. The screaming and shooting were audible from this hideout; near the apartment there was a field where many Jews were shot into a mass grave.[219] This group was shortly exposed and pulled out of their hiding place: "Shoved from the hallway of our building, we are pushed into the street filled with chaotic screaming and cries of pain. I survey the ghetto that was once our home. The dead lay on the cobbled street as Ukrainian

[216] AŻIH 301/2505, testimony of Józef Kopyto from Sokołów Podlaski.
[217] YVA 03/2734, testimony of Golda Ryba.
[218] Ibid.
[219] Aaron Elster, interview 8527, interviewed by Susan London, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, November 10, 1995, Lincolnshire, IL, audio: 1:52:37, segment 28-29.

soldiers, police and the Gestapo orchestrate our march towards the Market Place in the middle of town."[220]

While the Germans, along with their Polish and Ukrainian collaborators, located the majority of hiding places, a few remained undetected. Alex Hamburger and his family hid at a neighbour's home in the ghetto, where they heard the incessant shooting and Jews getting taken from their hideouts and killed, or forced to the *mały rynek*. After the *Aktion* was complete, this group of twelve sustained many days without food or water.[221]

The Jews of Sokołów Podlaski were brutally cordoned into the *mały rynek*. Once Golda Ryba reached the square, it was already incredibly crowded, with "no place to turn around" and "children crying, begging for water."[222] Due to the mass of people, it was difficult even to breathe. Many Jews had been killed on the path to the meeting place, or in the square itself. Theodor van Eupen, the commander of Treblinka I, was placed in charge of the liquidation of the Sokołów Podlaski ghetto. Witnesses state that Van Eupen was uninhibitedly brutal, as he tortured and murdered Jews in the streets of the town.[223] After the roundups were complete, the Jews of Sokołów Podlaski were transferred through the Sokołów railway station to Treblinka and murdered. Jews from the ghetto in Węgrów, which was liquidated on the same day as the Sokołów Podlaski ghetto, were also sent through the Sokołów railway station to their deaths at Treblinka.[224]

[220] Aaron Elster and Joy Erlichman Miller, *I Still See Her Haunting Eyes: The Holocaust and a Hidden Child Named Aaron* (Peoria: BF Press, 2008), 19.
[221] AŻIH 301/4507, testimony of Alex Hamburger.
[222] YVA 03/2734, testimony of Golda Ryba.
[223] Grabowski, "Powiat Węgrowski," 421.
[224] Grabowski, "A Study in the Microhistory of the Holocaust," 157.

On the train, many attempted to escape.[225] Romek Międzyrecki, a Jew from Węgrów in hiding with a Polish farmer named Antoni Bieliński in Księżopole-Budki, wrote in his diary about the *Aktion* in Sokołów Podlaski: "In the morning Mr. Bieliński went to Węgrów. He came back late in the evening and told us about the liquidation of Sokołów. About people who jumped from the trains headed for Treblinka. Masses of killed and wounded. There was a wounded woman lying next to the tracks. Christian hooligans cut off her fingers and ears because she had golden rings and earrings."[226]

Events proceeded similarly in the Sterdyń ghetto on September 22nd, 1942.[227] Regina Rosenberg, a Jewish woman from Wyszków who had moved with her family to Sterdyń in the early years of the occupation, witnessed the *Aktion* from small gaps in the wooden attic of their family home in Sterdyń. In her oral interview for the VHA, Regina recalled that many Jews were shot in the town, and the survivors were marched to their deaths at Treblinka.[228] The next day, a search was conducted for Jews in hiding: In Sterdyń, the Germans ultimately discovered and shot between 270 and 300 Jews, who were then buried in a mass grave.[229]

A book of remembrance of the Kosów Lacki Jewish community suggests that the liquidation of the Kosów Lacki ghetto took place one day later, on September 23rd, 1942:

> A day after Yom Kippur [September 22nd, 1942] a man from the nearby town of Sokolow turned up badly bruised in Kosow, where he was well known. The man said that he had just jumped from a train that he thought was taking all the Sokolow Jews to Treblinka to be gassed. Kosow, it seemed, was now the only town with Jews left in that region, and people suddenly felt that its turn would

[225] This was extremely common on the train route from Warsaw to Treblinka, as well. See Miranda Brethour and Fiona Davidson, "Marginalized Geographies of the Holocaust: A Spatial Analysis of Węgrów County, Poland (1942-1944)," unpublished article.
[226] Grabowski, "Powiat Węgrowski," 473.
[227] AŻIH 301/4771, testimony of Pinchas Lerman from Zaręby Kościelne. "September 22nd, I sensed that something terrible would happen in the town." […] "This same evening in the city [Sterdyń] there was an *Aktion*."
[228] Regina Rosenberg, interview 41841, interviewed by Lorrie Fein, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, May 20, 1998, Brooklyn, NY, audio: 1:55:48, segment 13.
[229] *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*, 446-447.

> come soon […] The younger and stronger began to prepare hiding places […] The older and weaker could only leave their destiny to God.[230]

On September 23rd, the SS and Ukrainian collaborators surrounded the town of Kosów Lacki. Jerzy Himmelbrau remembers the involvement of a Polish fire brigade, which caught Jews attempting the escape the town and handed them over to the Germans.[231] After the *Aktion*, the Jews of Kosów were marched on foot to the Treblinka death camp and murdered.[232]

The USHMM estimates that no more than fifty inhabitants of the Sokołów Podlaski ghetto survived the *Aktion*, and fewer survived the liquidations in Kosów Lacki and Sterdyń.[233] This chapter follows the trajectory and experiences of those who survived the liquidation of the ghettos in Sokołów County, to analyze their experiences in hiding with gentile Poles in the post-*Aktion* period. Those who survived the *Aktion* and returned to the former Sokołów Podlaski ghetto soon after found themselves in a town entirely bereft of Jews. Golda Ryba returned a few days after the *Aktion*, unable to secure a hiding place: "I returned to Sammelplatz through the gate of the ghetto. There were corpses everywhere. I recognized many [of the dead]."[234] She visited the old synagogue, which was filled the clothing and belongings of murdered Jews. In this pile, she recognized the clothing of her mother.[235]

---

[230] *Kosow Lacki*, 36.
[231] AŻIH 301/3073, testimony of Jerzy Himmelbrau.
[232] AŻIH 301/688, testimony of Aron Czechowicz from Warsaw.
[233] *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos,* 444.
[234] YVA 03/2734, testimony of Golda Ryba.
[235] Ibid.

Image 2. A plaque featured in the floor of a former synagogue in Sokołów Podlaski. Its text reads: "Before the war a synagogue was located here, which was burned and destroyed by the Germans in 1939." According to written evidence, the synagogue was destroyed after the ghetto liquidation in 1942.
Source: Photo by author, March 30, 2019.

4.2 Searching for Shelter after the *Aktionen*

After the liquidation of the three ghettos in Sokołów County, those who survived took a number of different paths: Many sought shelter on the Aryan side with Polish gentiles, hid in the nearby forests, or moved to larger urban centres such as Warsaw. Unless long-term shelter was agreed upon before the liquidation of the ghettos, the remaining option was to visit friends and neighbours, as well as strangers, and wager one's life on their kindness, or, more often, their desire for wealth. Golda Ryba first approached her old neighbours from Sokołów Podlaski, who did not let her in the door, and pleaded with her to run away from their home. "Therefore," she wrote, "it was necessary to go from the city [Sokołów Podlaski], to the countryside. From that time on, I started to wander from town to village, from village to town."[236] After failing to secure shelter for more than one night, she returned to the outskirts of Sokołów Podlaski. Here, one of her parents' good friends offered to only provide her food – not shelter – in exchange for pillaging the belongings of murdered Jews from the synagogue in the ghetto. She refused to return to the ghetto, left their home, and continued to roam the countryside for food and shelter.

Aaron Elster, with his mother and her friend, also left the town of Sokołów Podlaski after the *Aktion,* hiding in the forests by day, and begging for food from farmers at night. Shelter, Aaron recalled, was rare to secure: "Sometimes we are lucky, and the Poles offer us some food or a safe haven for the night in their barn […] Other times, the Poles chase us away and threaten they will turn us over to the Germans if we remain."[237]

[236] Ibid.
[237] Aaron and Miller, *I Still See Her Haunting Eyes,* 67.

4.3 Short-Term Shelter and the Influence of Fear

As the experiences of Golda Ryba and Aaron Elster suggest, interactions between Poles and Jews in the aftermath of the liquidation of the ghettos in Sokołów County were mainly limited to a brief exchange of food, or a night or two of shelter. Short-term shelter with Polish gentiles, which I define as lasting from a night to a month, was the most common hiding arrangement. In the context of short-term shelter, the relationship between Polish gentiles and Jews in hiding was in many ways driven by fear. That is, due to the persistent fear of the Germans discovering the Jews in hiding and murdering all parties involved, local Poles would only agree to shelter for a few days, or would become more fearful over time and ask the Jews in hiding to leave, even if shelter was originally agreed upon for a longer period.

Throughout the *Generalgouvernment*, the Germans employed a system of threats and rewards to dissuade the gentile population from concealing Jews and encourage neighbours to remain vigilant of each other's activities. On October 15th, 1941, *Generalgouvernor* Hans Frank issued an order that the penalty for *Judenbegunstigung*, sheltering a Jew, was death.[238] In neighbouring Węgrów County, local authorities emphasized that even a single resident found to be hiding Jews would result in consequences for the whole town.[239] Thus, particularly in towns and villages, residents were highly motivated to inform on their neighbours, as the entire population was perceived to be in great danger by a single person's indiscretion.[240]

Furthermore, the Germans instituted systems of bribery that offered material and monetary rewards to those who denounced Jews in hiding. In Węgrow, for instance, Germans gifted two pounds of sugar and the clothing of the Jew to the individual who brought the Jew to

[238] Grabowski, *Hunt For the Jews*, 55.
[239] Bielawski, *The Last Jew from Węgrów*.
[240] Jan Gross, *Neighbours* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 107.

the Germans.[241] Sometimes these rewards were even more lavish: In the village of Piaski Lubelskie, a peasant denounced multiple Jews to the Germans and was rewarded graciously with foodstuffs including eggs, butter, and bread, as well as clothes.[242]

In Sokołów, the Germans conducted frequent searches of the villages for any illegal activities, including hiding Jews. Zila Fuks, hiding with her family near Sterdyń with a Polish farmer, remembers the strain these searches exerted on Razek, the man hiding them, and her family in hiding:

> Anxiety keeps seeping back into our minds as we worry about the Germans' frequent searches for Jews, and illegally hidden pigs. The German Gestapo, and their Polish and Ukrainian assistants arrive unpredictably wearing civilian clothes and riding bicycles. They descend on the village at once and begin searching. When searches are on we hold our breath. It is impossible to cough or sneeze, or make any noise that may give us away. We were afraid that our heart beats should be overheard.[243]

Razek, their Polish helper, would have extreme panic attacks from these searches, at one point stabbing himself out of fear. Other times, he would come to "the grave," their hiding place, and beg them to seek shelter elsewhere: "You must leave. At least for twenty four hours, until things calm down again. Searches are scheduled for tomorrow. Perhaps you can hide out in the forest for a while. I cannot take this any longer. Do you have any idea what is awaiting me and my daughter? They will hang us in public, they will set the entire neighbourhood on fire."[244]

The experience of Esther Dobrofsky Hollander in hiding around Sokołów County is illustrative of the commonality of short-term shelter: Over the course of twenty-two months, she was hidden in at least six different locations, for periods ranging from a few days to a few months. Most often, she was forced to leave a hiding place because there were rumors that they

[241] Bielawski, *The Last Jew from Węgrow*, 67.
[242] Barbara Engelking, "Murdering and Denouncing Jews in the Polish Countryside, 1942-1945," *East European Politics and Societies 25*, no. 3 (2011): 443.
[243] Zila Fuks, "Life in Hiding: Razek's Barn: An Excerpt from *Silent Screams*," in *Women and the Holocaust: Narrative and Representation,* edited by Esther Fuchs (Lanham: University Press of America, 1999), 127.
[244] Ibid., 128.

would kill the Polish people if they discovered Jews living with them, or due to a lack of funds.[245] Rozalia Kożuchowicz was also sent from village to village in Sokołów and Węgrów, every individual too afraid to keep her for any significant period of time.[246]

Even the promise of wealth was sometimes outweighed by the risks associated with hiding Jews. Aaron Elster secured shelter for an originally undefined period of time with a farmer, who he had given jewelry as payment in advance. Aaron stayed with this farmer for only one night, before the fear of German discovery became too great for him to bear: "the next morning the farmer slowly comes down the cellar steps […] He compassionately looks into my eyes and tells me that it's too risky for them to hide me […] he wants to help, but he can't risk being discovered by the Nazis, who would most surely kill them for hiding a Jew."[247] The farmer returned Aaron's valuables and he was sent to search elsewhere for shelter.

4.4 Long-Term Shelter

Aaron eventually secured long-term shelter with the Polish couple in Sokołów Podlaski with whom his sister Irena had been placed before the liquidation of the ghetto. Although he suspected that his sister was living there once he arrived at the Górski's home, *pan* and *pani* Górski categorically denied it until much later. They placed Aaron in the attic, which was poorly insulated for protection from the Polish winters and summers, while his sister lived in the main house. On a number of occasions, the Górskis emphasized to Aaron their vehement opposition to providing for him and sister. For instance, almost immediately after he arrived at the house, *pani*

[245] Esther Dobrofsky Hollander, interview 847, interviewed by Faye Levinson, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation,* February 10, 1995, Glenview IL, audio: 1:31:37, segment 18, 21.
[246] AŻIH 301/2732, testimony of Rozalia Kożuchowicz from Ostrów Mazowiecki.
[247] Aaron and Miller, *I Still See Her Haunting Eyes,* 71.

Górski berated Aaron and his family for the danger they posed: "Your mother is a shrew, a Jew shrew who talked me into taking in your sister and jeopardizing my safety as well as my husband's. You two are a curse to me. This war is never going to be over. The Germans are going to conquer the whole world, and I'll never be rid of you."[248]

This was in no way an isolated incident. Months later, *pan* Górski entered Aaron's attic to store that year's crop of apples. After placing each apple carefully in a pile, *pan* Górski threatened Aaron not to touch even one apple. As weeks went on, unable to cope with his incessant hunger, Aaron took a few apples, carefully rearranging them to hide the transgression. Yet, *pan* Górski noticed the missing apples, and confronted Aaron:

> [Mr. Górski] stands over me as he holds his fist near my face and screams at me. He calls me every ugly name that he knows, and reminds me over and over that he and his wife are good people. He tells me that if it was not for him, I would not be alive. I know he is right, but how can he understand what it is like living in this prison attic starving? I try to apologize and look down as I keep saying over and over that I am sorry. Mr. Gorski continues to call me names. I retreat into my straw bed and pull my knees into my chest and begin rocking. Mr. Gorski walks to the attic door and slams it, but not before he calls me a dirty Jew.[249]

Aaron's experience in hiding with this couple is emblematic of the oftentimes dichotomous nature of the relationship between Poles and Jews in hiding. *Pan* and *pani* Górski sheltered Aaron and Irena for nearly two years, until liberation, without forcing or evidently threatening them to leave. Irena did not record a testimony however, Aaron's book and interview documents that she was given adequate food and shelter. It seems that the Górski's actions were based on obligation, a promise to Irena and Aaron's parents, rather than simply goodwill. There is further evidence in Aaron's writing that the Górskis did not feel a great amount of sympathy towards the fate of the Jews: During Russian bombings in 1944, for instance, the Górskis did not allow Aaron and Irena

[248] Ibid., 76.
[249] Ibid., 91.

to hide with them in the cellar as they, according to Aaron, "did not want to die with Jews in their midst."[250]

Image 3. The house in which Aaron Elster and his sister Irena hid with the Górskis. While the structure stands in its original form, the roof was reconstructed after it was destroyed by Russian bombings in 1944.
Source: Photo by author, March 30, 2019.

[250] Ibid., 98.

4.5 Paid Help

In Sokołów County, payment, to which an entire chapter of this thesis is dedicated, was used to persuade initially hesitant or wavering hosts to keep Jews in hiding for longer periods. Alex Hamburger hid with various Polish and Jewish friends, but ultimately realized that, "Without money, I could not go anywhere [for shelter]."[251] Fay Kief, her brother, and his girlfriend were in the village of Sabnie, where they asked a Polish man for a piece of bread. Fay's brother tempted him further by saying that he had a lot of money, and would give it to him if he agreed to hide them. He was a poor man, Fay recalled, and agreed to keep them in the barn. The attitude of this rural peasant towards the Jews in his barn was perceivably ambiguous: Fay believed that he did not want to help them, but he was too afraid to toss them out, as then they could tell the Germans who had provided them with shelter. The group remained in this barn, lying in the dark, for two years until liberation.[252] In this case, it is clear that payment was truly the driving motivation for this peasant to provide the group with shelter.

Esther Dobrofsky Hollander and her grandmother paid for nearly all of their six hiding places during the war, leaving them drained of all money and possessions by liberation. For their final hiding place, Esther's grandmother paid their Polish aid-provider with her last possession, her wedding band.[253] At an earlier point in the war, Esther and her family were sheltered with a Polish woman in the county. They stayed for three months in the loft of a stable, only exiting in the night to retrieve food. Even though no food was provided, they were charged a considerable

[251] AŻIH 301/4507, testimony of Alex Hamburger.
[252] Fay Kief, interview 10131, interviewed by Ruth Resnikoff, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*, December 15, 1995, Delray Beach, FL, audio: 1:57:59, segment 43-47.
[253] Hollander, interview 847, segment 19.

sum, 1000 Polish *złoty* per person. Although this helper was well paid, she became too afraid and asked the group to leave.[254]

At the same time, carrying a significant amount of money or valuables presented its own set of risks. When in hiding with an elderly Polish woman who lived around two or three kilometres from Sokołów Podlaski, Golda Ryba was initially tempted to offer her some of the money sewn into her coat to possibly secure shelter for longer than a few nights. She was afraid, however, that if this woman realized she had significant wealth on her person, she would kill her to claim her money. Golda recalled that in the ghetto her mother had prepared to send her to a Polish friend's for shelter. This friend, Iwańska, demanded a great amount of valuables and money, and Golda began to suspect that she desired only the wealth, and would denounce Golda to the Germans after receiving the payment.[255]

As detailed in chapter two, money or valuables could only placate Polish helpers for a limited period, and once they ran out, attitudes were often swift to reverse. Szynom Grinszpan was sent from his hometown of Sokołów Podlaski to Treblinka I in the early years of the war for work. He later escaped the camp, and went into hiding with a Polish man in a village near Kosów Lacki. In this home, there were already eight Jews in hiding for no cost whatsoever. Since these eight individuals were not paying their host, Szynom recalled that "[the host] did not know what to do with them."[256] To ensure that this man would provide him, as well as the other eight Jews, continued shelter and food, Szynom paid him in advance for all individuals. Nevertheless, near the end of the war Szynom explained that, "the man wanted to kill all of us, because he sensed

[254] Hollander, interview 847, segment 12-13; Grabowski, *Rescue for Money*, 29.
[255] YVA 03/2734, testimony of Golda Ryba.
[256] AŻIH 301/1185, testimony of Grinszpan Szynom from Sokołów Podlaski.

that we did not have any more money. We made a wooden weapon and demonstrated it to him so he got scared."[257]

4.6 Denunciation and Murder

Denunciation of those in hiding, either by members of the local Polish community or, in some cases, by gentile helpers themselves, was common, likely far more common than historians can estimate, as there were rarely survivors to recount such events. Aaron Elster learned after the war that his mother and her friend were denounced by an unknown party and then murdered by a Polish man, Uziębło. In his 1995 interview with the VHA, Aaron summarizes the court records against this man:

> He [Uziębło] found her in a barn and he tied her to a wagon and he tied the other man to a wagon, and he called his neighbours. And they called the police. And the police didn't come fast enough for him, so he dragged them to town in the wagon. My mother had a ring, a wedding ring, and he couldn't get it off, so he chopped her finger off […] She was marched to the cemetery […] they laid them down on the floor and they shot them.[258]

Irena and Aaron planned to testify against this man at his trial after the war, but his family threatened to kill them if they did so.[259]

Aid-providers were also known to denounce the Jews they had in their homes. Many did so in fear of the punishments if they were discovered by the Germans or Polish "blue" police (to reiterate, the sentence for the crime of sheltering Jews was death), or to obtain the rewards of foodstuffs, money, clothing and other goods the Germans regularly promised to those who betrayed the location of a surviving Jew to the authorities. Other factors, including familial

[257] Ibid.
[258] Elster, interview 8527, segment 54-56.
[259] Ibid., segment 56.

conflicts, Anti-Semitism, or a change in financial circumstances, could motivate aid-providers to denounce the Jews in their care.

After the liquidation of the Sterdyń ghetto, Regina Rosenberg and her family went into hiding with a nearby Polish farmer, whom they paid. In January 1944, after more than one year in hiding, this farmer went to a bar in the town, became inebriated, and revealed that he was hiding Jews. That same night, a group of armed Poles arrived at the stable in which Regina and her family were hiding. They killed Regina's entire family, while she survived by hiding behind the hay. "Maybe he had enough of us," Regina suggested to her interviewer.[260] Regina escaped to the forest with one other survivor of the barn massacre, a young refugee from Treblinka. Yet, soon after, this farmer welcomed them back in to the hiding place (perhaps out of guilt, Regina surmised) where they remained until liberation. After the arrival of Russian troops, Regina and the Polish farmer exhumed the bodies of her family, which he had buried under the stable after the massacre, and reburied them in the Jewish cemetery in Sterdyń.[261]

Image 4. A memorial and broken headstones in the former Jewish cemetery in Sterdyń. The memorial was erected by the Jewish community after the war.
Source: Photo by author, March 30, 2019.

[260] Rosenberg, interview 41841, segment 15-16.
[261] Ibid, segment 16.

From the testimonies of local Poles and some Jewish survivors, we know that certain Polish gentiles who had provided help to the Jews were known to later personally murder those they had in hiding. These stories filtered around the towns and villages during and after the war, emanating from the few witnesses. For instance, Józef Górski from Ceranów outlined that, "Some peasants hid Jews and were paid large sums of money. Later on, when the constant danger they were exposed to became too much of a burden for them, they cut the Jews' heads off with an axe."[262]

Józef Kopyto had suspicions his sister-in-law, cousin, and their children had met such a fate. Aleksander Lisowski, a Pole from Repki, was given a large sum of money in exchange for providing shelter to these seven people: Józef outlined in his testimony that he had personally given Lisowski and his wife 1750 American dollars, 2000 cigarettes, 200 dollars in gold, and 300 rubles. In exchange, the Polish couple assured Józef that his family would be hidden from the Germans in a "specially prepared hideout."[263] In his testimony, Józef recounted his fruitless search for his family after liberation, and growing suspicions about their fate:

> After the arrival of the Red Army, Lisowski disappeared from Repki and no one knew where he was. It became clear to me that he is the murderer of the hidden Jews, and that's why he is hiding from me. By chance, in the summer of 1946, I met Lisowski in the streets of Bydgoszcz. Lisowski was frightened by me. I asked about the fate of the 7 Jews, and Lisowski could not give me a clear answer. Stuttering, he said that they were supposed to be hidden by another local, but he could not provide me the surname of this person and the location of this hideout.[264]

After this meeting, Józef affirmed that he was now certain "the blood of my relatives are on the hands of Aleksander Lisowski, and that he is their murderer."[265]

[262] Górski, "At the Turn of History," 306.
[263] AŻIH 301/2505, testimony of Józef Kopyto.
[264] Ibid.
[265] Ibid.

Szapse Grinberg, along with his wife, son and another Jewish family (the Czarnickis) were hidden in Kosów Lacki with Stanisław Marcinak. Money dictated the shelter negotiations between from the outset, as Szpase recalled that Stanisław's wife took "double money" for hiding these six people, perhaps referencing the rates charged for shelter nearby.[266] Szpase's wife had to regularly exit the hideout and locate food around the town, as food at the Marcinak's was extremely scarce. In his postwar testimony, Szpase emphasized their daily vulnerability to the whims of Stanisław and his wife: "Marcinak came every day and shouted that his was afraid. He wanted us to go away. They played with our lives. His wife said that they would be killed for helping Jews. We looked carefully into his eyes. Does he have a calm or sad face? In that way he tortured us until the 18th of May 1943."[267]

On this date, Grinberg and his family left this hiding place, and found shelter with another local Polish woman until liberation. In hiding with this woman, they learned that at the end of 1943, sixty Germans surrounded the home of Stanisław and interrogated him about sheltering Jews. However, no one was discovered during their subsequent search. After this event, the Czarnickis fled to the house in which Szpase and his family were hiding. The Polish woman refused to house an additional family and accompanied them back to Stanisław, who acquiesced to continued shelter. Three weeks before liberation, Szpase witnessed Stanisław Marcinak "dismantling the barn [in which the Czarnickis had been hiding]. What happened to the Czarnicki's, I don't know. It is very possible that Marcinak is responsible for their deaths."[268]

Details of the murder of Jews by their Polish helpers are fundamentally partial accounts, recounted by family members, friends, and neighbours, who in many cases, learned about these events from someone else. A number of such accounts circulated around the towns and villages

[266] AŻIH 301/4161, testimony of Szapse Grinberg.
[267] Ibid.
[268] Ibid.

of Sokołów County during and following the war. For instance, Regina Rosenberg heard from the farmer who was hiding her and her family that, in the summer of 1943, the Polish peasant who was hiding her sister, uncle, and aunt nearby had asked them to exit the barn, and then killed them one by one. Regina stated that all residents of Sterdyń knew that this farmer had murdered three Jews.[269]

Golda Ryba nearly met the same fate. In a moment of desperation, after many unsuccessful attempts to find food and shelter, she approached the Kozakiewiczes, her Polish neighbours from Sokołów Podlaski who she knew to be Anti-Semites. The couple took her to the city, told her to go into an attic and left her for the night without any food. In the attic, Golda overheard a critical conversation between the Kozakiewicze's: "I heard them talking about a cottage, where the next day they will take me and then set it on fire. In this way, there will be one less Jewish girl and no one will know."[270] Golda snuck out of the house in the morning, and left the city.

These narratives once again highlight the fluidity of the boundaries between helpers, and perpetrators. An undefined, but likely significant, number of Jews were murdered in hiding by their helper, while an even greater number were killed indirectly by their helper after being denounced to the Polish or German authorities. The murders of Aaron Elster's mother and the family of Regina Rosenberg prove that the German authorities were not always involved in the murder of Jews: Members of small communities, like Sterdyń, could take on this responsibility autonomously.[271]

[269] Rosenberg, interview 41841, segment 15.
[270] YVA 03/2734, testimony of Golda Ryba.
[271] Gross, *Neighbours*.

4.7 The Righteous of Sokołów County

Yad Vashem's database of the righteous features numerous entries pertaining to Sokołów County. Golda Ryba, after travelling around the county searching for help, arrived at the door of *pan* and *pani* Borychowski in the village of Borychów. According to the entry by Yad Vashem, Golda "quickly adapted to her new home and family, where she was treated with love and affection." Later, when local authorities became suspicious of the Borychowski family, they sent her to other relatives in the village of Niemirki, where she lived until the end of war.[272] Golda dedicates little space in her testimony to Yad Vashem on her relationship with the Borychowski family; mainly, she stressed the threat posed by their neighbours who increasingly suspected she was Jewish.

The Pietraszek family, who hid five families of Jews during the war near Sterdyń, rescued Józef Kopyto and his family, who stayed in hiding with the Pietraszeks for nearly two years, until liberation. In his postwar testimony to the Central Jewish Committee of Łódź, Józef testified that, "Pietraszek and his wife made an unparalleled sacrifice by hiding 17 Jews until the liberation by the Red Army in June 1944."[273] Szmul Miedziński, along with his elderly father, six siblings, child, and two brothers-in-law were another one of the five families who hid with Pietraszek. In his testimony of their life in hiding, Miedziński outlined that "Every week [Pietraszek] baked for us 25 kg. of bread, we received coffee twice per day, and more food for dinner. Everyone in hiding survived."[274] After the war, in fear of the retribution of Polish nationalists, the Pietraszeks asked those they had hidden to remain silent. Unfortunately, this request proved very much warranted: Due to widespread suspicion that the Pietraszeks had helped Jews, a grenade was

[272] "Dobrowolski Family," Database of Righteous Among the Nations, *Yad Vashem*, http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=4034522.
[273] AŻIH 301/2505, testimony of Józef Kopyto.
[274] AŻIH 301/1186, testimony of Szmul Miedziński from Sokołów Podlaski.

thrown into their home (most likely by the Home Army [AK], as suggested in the testimony of another individual sheltered by the Pietraszeks), injuring Bolesław Pietraszek.[275] In Kosów Lacki, Poles who were known to have sheltered Jews during the war were killed by the AK.[276]

There are many other stories of the righteous from Sokołów County, around fifteen in total, according to Yad Vashem's online database. Zofia Roman and Stanisława Kasprzak rescued Ruth Skowrońska from the Sokołów Podlaski ghetto in 1941. When they received an anonymous note accusing them of hiding Jews at their home in rural Sokołów, they moved with Ruth to Warasw.[277] Erazm Augustyniak, a resident of the village of Mursy Nowe, offered to hide the family of his Jewish acquaintance, who had fled from the Kosów Lacki ghetto after the liquidation. The Rozenbaums and their three children survived the war in Augustyniak's cowshed.[278]

The ŻIH postwar testimonies often paint a far more complex picture of the righteous, which does not always align with the Yad Vashem database. *Pan* and *pani* Górski, who rescued Aaron Elster, are recognized as Righteous Among the Nations. In his letter to have the couple awarded the honour, Aaron wrote that, "It was a matter of their kindness, their devoted Christian hearts, and their pure humanity. The question I have asked myself during my adult life; would I do the same for them and risk my family's existence? I hope that I would have that spark of kindness and caring to save the life of a stranger as the Górskis did."[279]

---

[275] One of those rescued by Pietraszek reported that "After liberation the AK attacked him because he hid Jews during the war." AŻIH 301/2097, testimony of Mojsze Midzinskner. "Pietraszek Family," Database of Righteous Among the Nations, *Yad Vashem,* ttp://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=5747906.
[276] AŻIH 301/4161, testimony of Szpase Grinberg.
[277] "Zofia Roman and Stanisława Kasprzak," Database of Righteous Among the Nations, *Yad Vashem,* http://db.ya dvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=7493787.
[278] "Augustyniak Family," Database of Righteous Among the Nations, *Yad Vashem,* http://db.yadvashem.org/righteo us/family.html?language=en&itemId=4044811.
[279] "Górski Family," Database of Righteous Among the Nations, *Yad Vashem,* http://db.yadvashem.org/righteo us/family.html?language=en&itemId=7278893.

It was, perceivably, Aaron's choice to have his rescuers declared Righteous Among the Nations. From Aaron's published testimony and interview, it is clear that the actions of rescuers declared righteous are not inline with prevailing definitions, connotations, and implications of this word: In this context, it is intended to refer to a person whose actions were virtuous, morally correct, as demonstrated through unwavering, unselfish, help to Jews. Evidently, Aaron left certain aspects of his life in hiding with the Górskis, namely, the starvation and verbal abuse, out of the files submitted to Yad Vashem. Thus, while it is tempting to instinctually praise those declared righteous, the files of the righteous cannot be taken at face value to analyze dynamics in hiding between rescuers and rescuees; other materials must be included as well.

4.8 Conclusion

This micro-analysis of hiding in Sokołów County has conveyed much about the process of finding a place to hide, and illustrated the diversity of experiences in hiding. Although not explicitly stated in the archival documents, close contacts in the Polish community and decent knowledge of the Polish language was extremely useful, if not essential, to secure shelter. Furthermore, the documents convey the difficulty in finding long-term help: Wandering around the countryside, moving from house to house, was far more common. Once a willing party was found, hiding with a Polish gentile, in nearly every case discussed in this chapter, required payment. The amount of payment required could vary wildly; it seems that rescuers not only perceived payment as necessary to provide for the extra individuals in their household, but also as compensation for the extremely dangerous situation they now found themselves in: The benefit of increased wealth could perhaps subdue the enduring fear of denunciation and murder.

In the documents and interviews studied for this chapter, few individuals found long-term shelter with a Polish local who consistently protected them, did not radically increase the price for shelter, or threaten and abuse them. The testimony of Aaron Elster highlights this complexity of these relations; the tension between the threats and abuse he received and the choice of the Górskis to keep him and his sister until the liberation. A few other cases were uncovered wherein a local Pole committed to hiding a group of Jews and then subsequently denounced or murdered their charges, shifting between the roles of helper, and perpetrator. Regina Rosenberg's testimony, which recounts her rescue and also the murder of her family as a result of the actions of the same Polish farmer, shows that it was within the realm of possibility to be both a rescuer and a perpetrator. In her interview with the VHA in 1998, Regina expressed her incompatible memories of this farmer: "After all, because of him my whole family was killed, and after all, I was saved."[280]

This chapter mainly follows the survivors of the Holocaust in Sokołów; it is thus important to emphasize that this was the fate of a minute portion of the Jewish population. Few had the resources and contacts necessary to go into hiding, and met helpers who were willing, at different costs, to provide for them until the end of the war. In Sokołów Podlaski, the largest town in the county, around twenty to thirty survivors returned to the town from a prewar Jewish population of 6,000 – a survival rate of around 0.3 to 0.5 percent [281]

[280] Rosenberg, interview 41841, segment 19.
[281] Aaron Elster recalls that 29 survivors returned to Sokołów Podlaski after liberation, and that him and his sister were the only child survivors.

Image 5. Survivors of the Holocaust return to Sokołów Podlaski after the war, 1946.
Source: "Jewish survivors return to Sokolov Podlaski after the liberation." Provenance: Hyman Kawer. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Photograph Number 24173. Accessed February 28, 2019. https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1086981.

Records show that, among the Sokołów survivors of the Holocaust, certain were murdered immediately after the war by the AK. In his testimony submitted to the Jewish Central Committee of Łódź, Szmul Miedziński recalled that his friend Icze from Sterdyń survived three years working in Treblinka I yet, he was murdered after the war in Sokołów County by the AK.[282] Near the end of his testimony, he reported that an additional "Eight [people] were murdered in Kosów [Lacki] after the liberation by the Home Army."[283] In this town, the AK were seen dragging two Jews out of hiding, who were later found dead. Szpase Grinberg wrote that this event created a panic in Kosów and neighbouring towns, leading many Jews to flee the

[282] AŻIH 301/1186, testimony of Szmul Miedziński.
[283] Ibid.

area.[284] Soldiers of the AK were involved in the murder of Jews during and after the war; the fight for an independent Poland was easily aligned with the destruction of Polish Jewry.

The ID Cards produced by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Yad Vashem Database of Shoah Victims, provide information on the ultimate fate of many former Jewish residents of Sokołów County. The lives of the majority of Jews of Sokołów County ended in the gas chambers of Treblinka: Sarah Rivka Felman was born in Sokołów Podlaski in 1923, her family owned a grain business in the town. Sarah, her mother, and her younger brother Moishe Felman were deported and murdered at Treblinka in 1942.[285] Sima Bonda was born in Kosów Lacki in 1922. She was deported from Kosów Lacki to Treblinka and murdered, according to a testimony submitted to Yad Vashem by her niece.[286] As Simche Poliakewicz, a Jew from Sterdyń, mourned in his postwar book of remembrance *In the Shadow of Treblinka*, "There are no more Jews in the Jewish town of Sokołów."[287]

[284] AŻIH 301/4161, testimony of Szpase Grinberg.
[285] "Sarah Rivka Felman," Holocaust Encyclopedia, *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/id-card/sarah-rivka-felman.
[286] "Sima Bonda," The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names, *Yad Vashem*, https://yvng.yadvashem.org/index.html?language=en.
[287] Simcha Poliakewicz, *In the Shadow of Treblinka*, 1957, https://sokolow.jewish.pl/en/simche-poliakewicz-en/in-the-shadow-of-treblinka/.

CONCLUSION

This analysis of Jewish testimonies of hiding has illuminated much about Jewish-gentile relations during the Holocaust in Poland and Jewish perspectives of their gentile aid-providers. The second and fourth chapters considered payment in the context of hiding, and proposed a wider definition of payment that includes the performance of services, the exchange of property and valuables as well as, of course, payment as the trade of currency, which has remained the focus of scholarly writing on paid help. In adopting an inclusive, wider lens of payment, it becomes further apparent that payment greatly impacted**,** and at times directed**,** relations between Jews and gentiles in hiding. The historical evidence reveals that is was incredibly challenging, if not impossible, to receive shelter from Polish gentiles without providing something in return. Additionally, payment was imperative for many exchanges between Poles and Jews other than simply a physical place to hide (*kryjówka* or *schron*): Payment was often necessary to initiate agreements for shelter, to receive food and other necessities in hiding and, although outside of the scope of this study, also for the production of fake papers.

In the testimonies of Jews, it is emphasized that prospective gentiles would only agree to provide shelter once the going rate for their services was perceived as sufficient. This financial exchange was often the lifeline connecting Jews in hiding with their aid-providers; in a notable number of circumstances, offers of shelter were rescinded gradually or immediately once financial resources ran dry. In contrast to the personification of Polish rescuers in much of the late twentieth literature on rescuers as unwavering guardians of moral good, the testimonies of Jews paint a complex picture of their gentile helpers and rescuers as individuals often roused by

and lusting after the money or other benefits promised by hiding Jews; the act of rescuing was altogether secondary to these quantifiable rewards.

Participating in a growing academic conversation surrounding gender and sexuality during the Holocaust, the second chapter considered the role of gender in Polish-Jewish relations and explored the factors that made Jewish women in hiding extraordinarily vulnerable to sexual abuse by their gentile aid-providers. The field has yet to devote significant attention to experiences of sexual violence, and many scholars have suggested that a lack of relevant primary material impedes a full-consideration of sexual violence in hiding. In this chapter I aimed to contribute to both the historiography and methodology of this field in demonstrating that researching and writing on sexual violence in hiding requires a deeply interpretative approach to sources, one that considers what is left unsaid as carefully as what appears on the page, and does not eschew "unreliable" sources such as oral history.[288]

This chapter ultimately highlighted that sexual violence was very commonly perpetrated by Gentile helpers and rescuers, most definitely far more often than historians are able to accurately estimate, in part, due to historical and contemporary systemic barriers hindering the narration and publication of testimonies of sexual violence, and the enduring reluctance of many Holocaust historians to welcome the lens of gender as a methodological approach to the study of the destruction of European Jewry. The fear and threat of rape, molestation, and all forms of sexual violence were realities for Jewish women at every stage of the Holocaust. One oral testimony in which a woman noted her surprise that she was *not* sexually abused by the Polish farmer who concealed her implies the commonality of this experience.

[288] Alistair Thomson, "Memory and Remembering in Oral History," in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, edited by Donald A. Ritchie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 79-80.

By foregrounding the fear and experience of sexual violence in hiding, I contribute to the existing literature on Jewish-gentile relations in hiding in two interconnected ways. Primarily, studies on hiding tend to emphasize the threats posed by perpetrators external to the hiding place: Neighbours, local German authorities, and the Polish "blue" police. Life in hiding is so often characterized by this delicate balance between safety and fear, as threatening forces lurk just outside of the aid-provider's doors. Posed against the threats abounding outside, the hiding place is often painted as one of the scarce realms of safety for Polish Jews after 1942.[289] Yet, this chapter exposed that for Jewish women in hiding, the homes of their rescuers and helpers could be perceived as equally threatening as the outside world. Scholars have begun to complicate this notion of the hiding place as a sanctuary by exploring the abuse faced by Jews in hiding, which often resulted in their denunciation and murder. For many Jewish women, although they were indeed "protected" and "rescued" until liberation, their hiding place was marked by the perpetual risk of sexual abuse.

In the introduction of this thesis, I made reference to the intimacy of post-1942 Polish-Jewish relations that these testimonies expose in great detail. Throughout the body of the thesis, I traced this intimacy by highlighting exchanges of conversation and food between tenants and helpers, considering what these regular encounters can tell us about life in hiding. While the term intimacy is most often employed to convey amorous relations, during the Holocaust, intimate relations between Poles and Jews in hiding carried uniquely dark dimensions. Sexual violence in hiding is but one example of a deleterious intimacy between Poles and Jews in hiding; sexual abuse was greatly facilitated by the closeness of quarters (in certain cases, Jews shared a bed or bedroom space with their Polish aid-providers) and a lethal political context in post-1942 occupied-Poland which alienated Jews without "good" Polish looks or false papers from the

[289] Fogelman, *Conscience & Courage*, 6; 21.

outside world. In this regard especially, sexual violence in hiding converses with the broader field of women and gender history: This chapter engages with the theme of dangerous domesticity, the danger of the private-sphere to women, an enduring threat for Jewish women during the Holocaust as they were unable to leave their hiding place for numerous years, trapping them in situations of unfathomable sexual abuse, perimetered by the threat of annihilation.

This thesis has focused upon Jewish-gentile relations during the third stage of the Holocaust; the period after the liquidations of the ghettos, and massive deportations to the death camps. The liquidation of the ghettos in 1942 in no sense marked the end of interactions between Jews and gentiles. This thesis has shown how the process of searching, negotiating, and establishing a place to hide, involved close interactions with former gentile neighbours. Historians who are closely familiar with the events that comprised this third stage of the Holocaust, have argued that the category of bystander is by and large nugatory in this context. I would agree. In chapter four, which traced the post-1942 period in small towns where ghettos had little to no demarcations, it is evident that gentile residents unavoidably witnessed the persecution and murder of their Jewish neighbours; remaining neutral or uninvolved was thus impossible.

Future research would benefit from pursuing the testimonies of gentile Poles, in addition to those of Jews, to consider what they can tell us about Jewish-gentile relations in hiding. Additionally, the topic of sexual violence in hiding and alternative forms of paid help must be considered in order to provide an inclusive perspective on the experiences of Jews in hiding. Sexual relations between Poles and Jews in hiding deserves markedly greater attention, in all of its expressions; consensual relations to non-consensual sexual violence. While this thesis has considered sexual violence at length, it would be pertinent for scholars to turn to the multiple expressions of sexual relationships. The study of hiding could further benefit from extending the temporal unit of study to the post-war period, such as Joanna Michlic's article on relationships

between Polish rescuers and Jews through the lens of postwar written correspondence. Greater attention to postwar exchanges between Poles and Jews may illuminate new themes in the relations, and will very likely show that payment for shelter continued beyond the temporal bounds of wartime.

For far too long, hiding with gentiles during the Holocaust was investigated solely for the purposes of psychological analysis; to arrive at broad conclusions on the nature of human morality. Carefully placed in their appropriate historical context, the significance of personal testimonies of hiding is that they can expose intimate day-to-day interactions between two individuals, sometimes former neighbours, and study how external factors specific to this historical context shaped this relationship. In hiding, Jews were faced with a multitude of threats; the threat of being discovered and murdered by German and local Polish authorities, as well as internal threats from their aid-providers. Personal testimonies provide us access to a uniquely private sphere of interactions which, despite their necessary susceptibility to the social and political context, developed in domestic and isolated spaces. Historians must necessarily place these relationships in their broader historical context, while remaining open to consider how the hiding place was a context in its own right, in which private relationships developed and new realities were negotiated.

In this thesis, I argue for the applicability and usefulness of hiding as a lens to study Polish-Jewish relations during the third-stage of the Holocaust. After the liquidation of the ghettos and mass deportations to the exterminations camps in occupied-Poland, Jews could no longer exist freely and openly. Due to the vulnerability of Jews in hiding, produced by unavoidable reliance upon the Polish gentile who was housing and feeding them, and the physical proximity sustained by both parties for periods of variable length, life in hiding facilitated anomalous contact between two neighbouring communities. Significantly, hiding represents one

of the few, if not the only context, in which Poles and Jews continued to embark upon economic exchanges, and develop day-to-day relations in the post-1942 period.

In no way a uniform experience, this thesis has exposed that relations in hiding between Jews and Poles developed in non-linear, often contradictory ways that entirely complicate preexisting notions of gentile rescuers. The portrait of hiding presented in this monograph is not only one of benevolent hosts and desperate guests: Rather, Jews mobilize an active role in the process of hiding, through exchanges (often, in non-orthodox forms such as sex) with their hosts to guarantee their survival. Ultimately, however, in hiding Jews were vulnerable to the everyday, momentary whims of their gentile helpers. The testimonies of Jews force us to completely re-conceptualize preexisting notions of what constitutes "rescuers" and "helpers": These individuals could be simultaneously perpetrators. In order to comprehend the full-breath of experiences in hiding and the multi-faceted nature of relations between Poles and Jews in this context, the semantic significance of rescuer, helper, perpetrator, and aid-provider, must be reevaluated.

EPILOGUE

PUBLIC MEMORY AND POLITICS OF HOLOCAUST RESCUERS IN CONTEMPORARY POLAND

Introduction

In the vast majority of Polish cities today, it is quite challenging to avoid (quite literally speaking) narratives of the past: The history of the Second World War, in particular, is embedded in marble and stone in the urban landscape. Warsaw, for instance, boasts a wide variety of memorialization. While smaller, intimate pavement stones mark the former boundaries of the Warsaw ghetto and plaques on residential buildings recount the fates of their former residents during the war, a wealth of monolithic statues and museums dedicated to the history of the German-occupation dominate the cityscape. It is truly difficult to maneuver around the center of the city without encountering physical mnemonic devices, such as the monument to the heroes of Warsaw, the Warsaw uprising monument, and a monument to child soldiers, all of which can be found in the small, tourist-laden old town, occupying only 200m² of the area along the Vistula river.

In this epilogue, I explore the ways in which the experience of hiding with Polish gentiles during the Holocaust is represented in physical and public mnemonic devices around present-day Poland. I pay special attention to the changes initiated in these institutions since the election of PiS in 2015, a governing body which has been fiercely dedicated to the image and narrative of Poland and Poles presented in the public sphere. I do not strive to capture the memory of hiding in the Third Polish Republic in its entirety by focusing on these devices. As numerous scholars

have asserted, the memory of an event can manifest in spontaneous, unpredictable ways that challenge the narratives presented in national memorials and museums.[290] Scholars have further cautioned against conflating politics and society; by conceptualizing public memory as an expression of collective memory, for instance, scholars ignore the power of societies to produce and maintain multiple and conflicting memories of the past.

The term "public memory" is misleading, as these public spaces are not "the embodiment of memory" but rather "mnemonic devices"; transmitters of certain narratives and ideas that can, in turn, unearth perceptions of the past.[291] In the following pages, I investigate these spaces of memory with the aim to identify and unsettle official narratives of the past held and promoted by the leading political party in Poland today. Since these spaces have drawn little scholarly attention, I shift outside of the primary focus of this thesis to address the ways in which memorials and museum exhibits present Polish-Jewish relations more broadly.

Since their election in 2015, PiS has made legal and institutional shifts to promote a specific narrative of the Holocaust and the Second World War that silences or marginalizes alternate histories. The IPN, a state body charged with "uncovering the truth about the most difficult but also the most beautiful moments in the history of Poland and the Polish Nation", and its team of historians, has gained increased power over museum exhibits.[292] The work of scholars investigating Polish collaboration with the Nazis has been overtly criticized by the government, while great weight has been placed on Polish rescuers of Jews, the history of Polish gentiles

[290] Interesting examples of this phenomenon include Jewish culture festivals, the restoration of synagogues, and various ceremonies, discussed in Marta Dyngosz-Duch, "From Absence to Loss: Holocaust Commemoration in Present-day Poland," *Remembrance and Solidarity Studies* 5 (2007): http://enrs.eu/articles/1744-from-absence-to-loss-holocaust-commemoration-in-Present-day-poland; Erica T. Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited: Heritage Tourism in Unquiet Places* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).
[291] Gregor Feindt et al., "Entangled Memory: Toward a Third Wave in Memory Studies," *History and Theory* 53 (2014): 26.
[292] "Mission," *Institute of National Remembrance*, accessed April 17, 2019, https://ipn.gov.pl/en/about-the-ipn/mission/875,Mission.html

declared Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem, and their contribution to a broader history of Polish sacrifice, suffering, and victimhood.

Indicative of this martyring of the Polish righteous is a new state holiday signed into existence by Polish President Andrzej Duda in 2018: In Poland, March 23rd is the annual "National Day of Remembrance of Poles who saved Jews from the Holocaust during World War Two." The act reads that this day was established "in tribute to Polish Citizens - heroes who, in the act of heroic courage, incredible bravery, compassion and human solidarity, faithful to the highest ethical values, orders of Christian mercy and the ethos of a sovereign Republic of Poland, rescued their Jewish neighbors from the Holocaust which was planned and implemented by the German occupiers."[293]

While the changes to the Polish memorial landscape directed by PiS will be discussed in due course, the most internationally recognized "memory policy" of this government is the recently implemented Holocaust law. Passed in early 2018, the original text of this law read:

> Who publicly and against the facts ascribes to the Polish Nation, or to the Polish State the responsibility or complicity for the Nazi crimes committed by the III German Reich as defined by article 6 of the International Military Tribunal attached to the international agreement concerning the prosecution and the punishment of the most important war criminals of the Axis powers, signed in London on August 8, 1945, or other crimes which constitute crimes against peace, humanity, or war crimes, or [who] otherwise greatly diminishes the responsibility of the real perpetrators of these crimes, will be subject to fine or three years of imprisonment.[294]

Government officials claimed that the main impetus for this law originated in the use of the damaging phrase "Polish death camps," uttered most prominently by former United States' President Barack Obama in 2012. It has become clear, however, that this law is also intended to

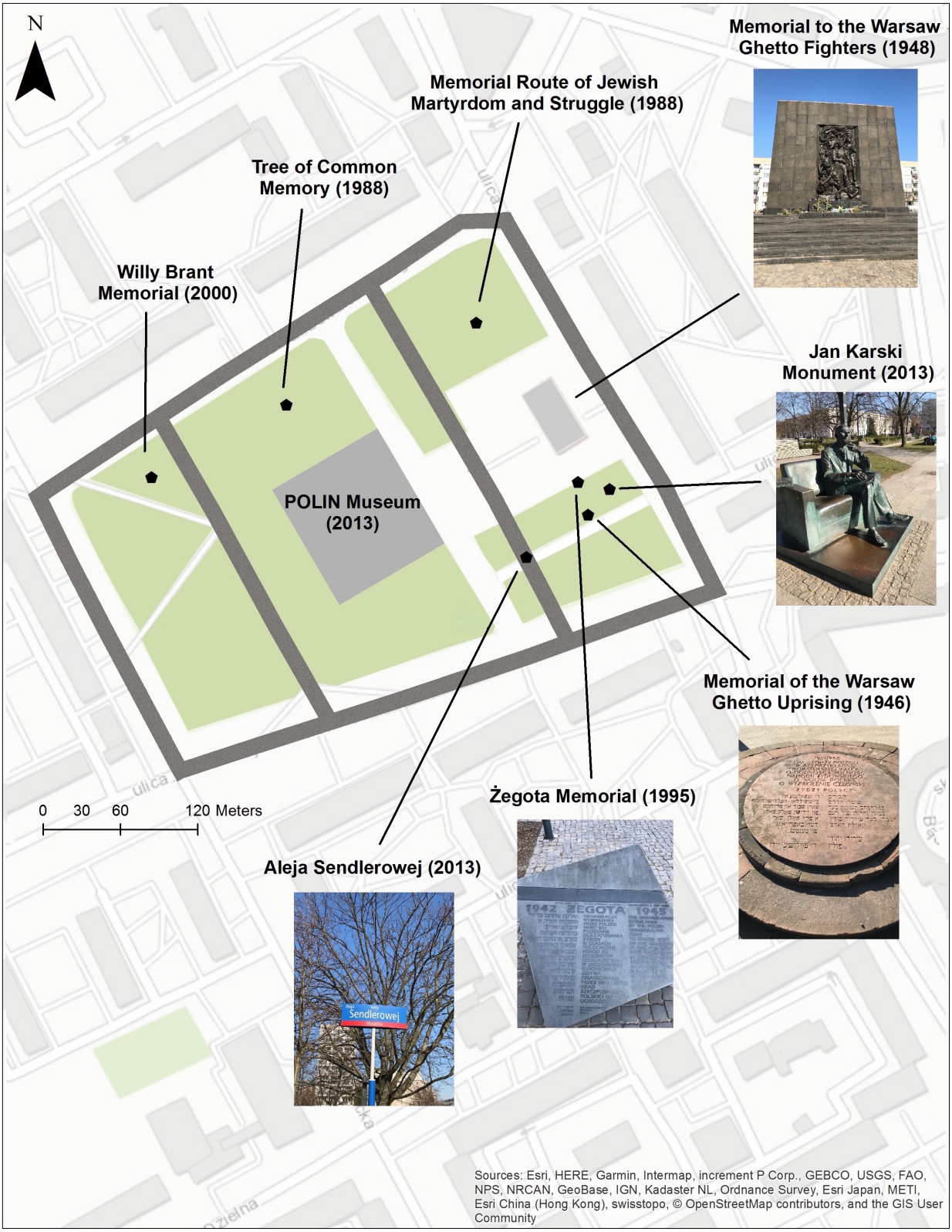
[293] "IPN Educational materials related to Poles Saving Jews during the Second World War," *Institute of National Remembrance*, accessed April 5, 2019, https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/1786,IPN-Educational-materials-related-to-Poles-Saving-Jews-during-the-Second-World-W.html.
[294] Jan Grabowski, "The Holocaust and Poland's 'Historical Policy," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 10, no. 3 (2016): 481-486.

silence academic and public debate on Polish collaboration with the Nazis. In June 2018, after facing widespread international condemnation, the Polish government revised the law changing the offense from criminal to civic, nullifying the three-year jail term.[295]

The POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw

The POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, which opened its doors in 2013, has been the topic of much debate surrounding the representation of Polish-Jewish wartime relations in contemporary Poland. The museum is located near the centre of Warsaw, within the bounds of the former ghetto. Small hills are scattered around the grounds, as the neighbourhood of Muranów was built on top of the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto without fully clearing the debris. Despite its prominence, the museum was not the inaugural mnemonic device in this neighbourhood. Likely drawn by the potent symbolism of this location, different groups erected a number of memorials and monuments in this area during the communist and immediate post-communist period. In 2013, Polish cultural anthropologist Elżbieta Janicka published an article which critically deemed the POLIN museum and its surrounding landscape "The Square of Polish Innocence."[296] While two memorials in this square are dedicated to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the majority of the memorials celebrate the lives of gentile Poles such as Irena Sendler and Jan Karski, a leader of the Żegota organization (the Council to Aid Jews) and the courier to the Polish government-in-exile, respectively.

[295] Marc Santora, "Poland's Holocaust Law Weakened After 'Storm and Consternation,'" *The New York Times*, June 27, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/27/world/europe/poland-holocaust-law.html.
[296] Elżbieta Janicka, "The Square of Polish Innocence: POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw and its symbolic topography," *East European Jewish Affairs* 45, no. 2-3 (2015): 200-214.



Map 4. The terrain of the POLIN Museum in Warsaw.
Source: Author.

Also featured in this space is a Tree of Common Memory, planted on the forty-fifth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising to commemorate "both the Polish Jews murdered in the Holocaust as well as Poles who died rescuing Jews."[297] Karski and Sendler were realized as heroes of the Polish state around the early 2000s, after their legacies began to gain traction internationally.[298] Of her sudden deification by the Polish state, Irena Sendler, who also received a street in her honour adjacent the POLIN Museum in 2013, expressed that "After Jedwabne a hero is needed."[299]

In her pointed and highly critical analysis of the POLIN museum, Janicka argues that this memorial space is part of an ongoing process of "De-Judaization," the removal or diminishment of the Jewish experience in narratives of the Holocaust, hence extracting the "essence" of the Holocaust from the narrative of the Holocaust itself. The message presented by the POLIN Museum and the memorial space surrounding it, writes Janicka, is clear: "Polish solidarity with the Jews was a fact and it stood the test of terror and death brought about by the Germans."[300] Given that this memorial space must be encountered in order to access the museum's entrance, and confronted once again upon exit, the space is necessarily a part of the museum's narrative of the past, although it is external to the exhibit space.

Less attention is given in Janicka's article to the exhibit space of the POLIN museum itself. The POLIN museum is one of the few institutions of public memory in Poland today that remains independent of the national government, and its contents reflect this fact. Although the museum

[297] Ibid., 203
[298] Janicka, "The Square of Polish Innocence," 206-209.
[299] Jan Karski became well-known following his interview in Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*, and Irena Sendler was "discovered" by American students who created and performed a play about her life in 2000. Janicka, "The Square of Polish Innocence," 209.
[300] Elżbieta Janicka, "The Embassy of Poland in Poland: The Polin Myth in the Museum of the History of Polish Jews as Narrative Pattern and Model of Minority-Majority Relations," in *Poland and Polin: New Interpretations in Polish-Jewish Studies,* edited by Irena Grudzińska Gross and Iwa Nawrocki (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2016), 122.

was first imagined as a "Museum of Life" and remains dedicated to this motto, its interior features a considerably in-depth and sizeable Holocaust exhibit, substantially bigger than that of the Second World War Museum in Gdańsk. It must be said that the exhibit space in the POLIN museum adopts a remarkably critical lens to Polish-Jewish relations before, during, and after the Holocaust. In response to the question of "What was the attitude of Poles to the Jewish tragedy?", an exhibit plaque delineates that, "Few [Poles] chose to risk their lives and the lives of their families by trying to save Jews. Many were simply too preoccupied with everyday hardships of the occupation to concern themselves with the fate of Jews. Some Poles denounced Jews to the Germans or murdered them themselves."

While the contents of the exhibit space question persistent national mythologies of Polish victimhood and righteousness by exploring various forms of collaboration, the physical design of the exhibit space often hinders the museum's message. As it is the topic of the thesis, I am most strongly concerned with the means by which hiding is presented in the exhibit space in POLIN. The POLIN museum uniquely addresses paid help and the murder of Jews in hiding by Polish aid-providers. For example, one plaque recounts the experience of three Jews in hiding with a Polish man, emphasizing the power of greed in motivating aid-provision and murder: "In summer 1942, Itsik Lener together with Ester Rybak and her little daughter tried to avoid deportation from Komarówka. Piotr Kapczuk offered help. They paid him 10,000 zlotys to look after the child for three months. Ester went to stay with Kapczuk's from Młynarczyk. Itsik stayed with Kapczuk's friend Natalia Konarzewska in Warsaw. Kapczuk murdered the child and paid Młynarczyk 10,000 zlotys to kill Itsik and Ester, hoping to get his hands on their property. On 19 July 1943, Młynarczyk shot and killed Ester, but only wounded Itsik. After the war, Itsik testified that Młynarczyk had said: "Don't blame me, blame Kapczuk – if it hadn't been me, someone else would have killed you."

The narratives of hiding exhibited in the POLIN museum are uncomfortable, challenging the notion that those who helped Jews necessarily provided help for selfless reasons. However, this section on hiding is located in a small room, off from the main exhibit track; although walking through most of the museum necessitates following a pre-arranged path, one must diverge from this path to encounter these stories of hiding. Even more, the room is very dark and the small plaques featuring descriptions of life in hiding are embedded in a deep crack that runs along the wall. It is immediately evident that this was done, at least partially, for reasons of creativity. In line with a growing trend of experiential museology, visitors must couch down, squint, and peer through this deep, and quite narrow, crevice in the wall to read primary accounts of hiding, as though they are in hiding themselves, experiencing the same compressed space and darkness that many Jews did for the course of the war. [301] One cannot help but be pessimistic, and speculate that it is also politically in fashion to sideline these aspects of Jewish-gentile relations in exhibit space. Although it satisfies its didactic purposes of conveying the challenges of life in hiding, the location and inaccessibility of this exhibit strongly communicates that hiding was a marginal experience during the Holocaust.

It is quite likely that, given the political climate in Poland, this museum will witness significant changes to its exhibit space in the next few years. In February, it was announced that the contract of the current director of the museum, Dariusz Stola, who has held the position since the museum's opening, was not to be extended, and a general competition has been opened (to which Stola can reapply). One newspaper speculated that the failure to renew Stola's contract

[301] Gary Weissman, *Fantasies of Witnessing: Postwar Efforts to Experience the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

was political, as Stola has overtly criticized the government's Holocaust bill.[302] Although it seems a bit premature to deem the ending of his five-year contract, after this term had run its natural course, an "ousting," the article is rightfully suspicious of the intentions of the current government to shape the country's museums inline with their political motives and perspective of the past.

The Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk

The main initiative for the creation of a museum dedicated to the Second World War in Gdańsk originated in the government of Donald Tusk, in 2007. It was proposed as an institution that would highlight aspects of war often neglected in museum exhibits, namely the impact of the Second World War on civilian populations. Its scope was envisioned as global, placing Poland's history and the experience of Poles in this broader context to allow for a uniquely comparative perspective to transcend the intellectual bounds of the traditionally national museum.[303] To build an exhibit space centered upon the individual, average civilian, a nationwide search for relevant personal materials was conducted between 2011 and 2014, through which the museum ultimately accumulated around forty thousand historical artifacts.[304] Personal artifacts presented in the museum space included the house keys of Jews killed in the 1941 Jedwabne massacre at the hands of their Polish neighbours, personal items (such as toys and jewelry) of the Poles that were killed in 1943 by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in Volhynia, and a goodbye note sent from an

[302] Cnaan Liphshiz, "Poland: Ousting Jewish museum head who criticized Holocaust law 'not political,'" *The Times of Israel,* February 21, 2019, https://www.timesofisrael.com/poland-ousting-jewish-museum-head-who-criticized-holocaust-law-not-political/.
[303] "Report on the activities of the Museum of the Second World War in 2010," *Museum of the Second World War*, Gdańsk, 2011.
[304] Anna Muller and Daniel Longemann, "War, Dialogue, and Overcoming the Past: The Second World War Museum in Gdańsk, Poland," *The Public Historian* 39, no. 3 (2017): 87.

imprisoned Polish politician to his wife in 1940.[305] These pieces were placed together into exhibits in a way that blurred boundaries between perpetrators, bystanders, and victims; "moral ambiguity" is the museum's very lifeblood.[306] Everyday objects, such as plates, were used to convey narratives of Polish-Jewish relations, specifically the wide variety of reactions to the persecution of the Jews in Poland beyond the righteous gentiles.[307]

However, the exhibits in the form described above would not last for long. Immediately upon the museum's opening in March 2017, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage evicted the previous management of the museum, firing the museum's director Paweł Machcewicz and placing Karol Nawrocki, an IPN historian, in charge.[308] The government justified this decision as they believed the museum in its original form did not "give enough attention to the Polish perspective."[309] Piotr Niwiński, a historian from Gdańsk accused the museum of ignoring "positive features of the war, such as patriotism, dedication, and sacrifice."[310]

The current, reformed exhibit space draws great attention to these qualities, and clearly diverges from the initial aims of the museum's exhibit space. The scope of the museum is still global, although much focus is given to the Polish perspective and experience of the war. It seems that significant energy was dedicated to making certain that visitors exit the museum assured that Poland suffered the most in the Second World War. For instance, at the end of the

---

[305] Claudia Ciobanu, "Poland's WWII museum under political bombardement," *Politico,* May 15, 2017, https://www.politico.eu/article/polands-wwii-museum-under-political-bombardment/; Rachel Donadio, "A Museum Becomes a Battlefield Over Poland's History," *The New York Times,* November 9, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com /2016/11/10/arts/design/museum-of-the-second-world-war-in-poland-debate.html.
[306] Muller and Longemann, "War, Dialogue, and Overcoming the Past," 93.
[307] Ibid.
[308] Ibid., 94.
[309] Joanna Berendt, "Court Clears Takeover of Poland's New World War II Museum," *The New York Times,* April 5, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/05/arts/design/poland-new-world-war-ii-museum-court-clears-takeover.html.
[310] Emilia Stawikowska, "Cenzor zamyka Muzeum II Wojny Światowej," *Gazeta Wyborcza – Trójmiasto*, April 5, 2017, http://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/7,35612,21597759,cenzor-zamyka-muzeum-ii-wojny-swiatowej.html.

exhibit space there is a bar graph entitled "Causalities sustained by a given country during the Second World War," with individual bars displaying civilian and military causalities. Poland is listed first, at the top of this graph, as it appears that the scope of its civilian causalities exceed those of all other countries. If one looks closely, however, in small font the graph specifies that these causalities are expressed as a percentage of the total prewar population. Although the Soviet Union suffered fourteen million civilian causalities, and Poland 5,700,000, the graph implies that the loses sustained by Poland were nevertheless greater. The museum discreetly mobilizes the power of exhibit framing to convey that the suffering of Poland and Poles was much greater as compared to that of other countries, thus advancing the museum's overarching narrative of Polish adversity, regeneration, and ultimate triumph.

Exhibit plaques firmly re-delineate boundaries between perpetrators, bystanders, and victims: In one large-scale photograph, armed German soldiers stand beside Jews wearing yellow Stars of David and raising their arms in a gesture of surrender. A glass screen inscribed with "*Sprawcy*" ("perpetrators") covers one of the German soldiers, while another screen placed over two Jewish children features the word "*Ofiary"* ("victims"). Finally, and most interestingly, the word "*Świadkowie*" ("bystanders") is etched upon the glass which highlights the crowd of gentile onlookers. Looking very closely at these "bystanders", it is apparent that many of them are smiling and laughing. It can be surmised that one intention of this photo and the glass covers is to emphasize that Poles were distant observers to the Holocaust, yet it unintentionally accomplishes the opposite: According to this photo, not only did Polish gentiles directly witness the persecution of their Jewish neighbours, certain Poles were evidently pleased to witness such scenes of humiliation and violence.

The Gdańsk museum parallels the suffering and persecution of Poles and Jews in occupied-Poland through a wealth of specific examples and a marked paucity of historical

context. Nazi policies directed specifically at Jews (such as ghettoization), are placed alongside food rations for gentile Poles under the broader category of "hunger as a weapon of war." Under the title of "Discrimination against Polishness" a wide range of examples are provided, from the use of Jewish headstones as paving stones, to curfews for gentiles. In the prewar period, Jews lacked certain privileges awarded to gentile citizens: In the realm of education, for one, quotas restricted Jews from attending university, and those who did attend were forced to sit on different seats or stand during courses. In the Gdańsk museum, Jews are conveniently merged with gentile citizenry to heighten visitor perceptions of Polish wartime hardships, uncritically ignoring the history of Anti-Semitism in the Second Polish Republic.

The history of hiding during the Holocaust receives a dedicated, albeit very limited, space in the museum. This exhibit is entitled "Poles in the Face of the Holocaust" and introduced by a life-sized photograph of the Ulma family, a Polish family murdered by the Germans for sheltering Jews. On a digital screen below the photograph, visitors can browse through five tabs at their own pace, all of which concern "Poles saving Jews". The first four tabs are: "Heroism despite…", "Guarding the values", "(Extra)ordinary heroes", and "The Ulma Family", which discuss punishments given to Poles for sheltering Jews and the history of Żegota, emphasize the widespread nature of gentile aid, and recount the story of the Ulma family, respectively. The final page, "The garden of the righteous" generally concludes that "Looking at the deadly threat to their Jewish neighbours, Poles saved them at the price of their own lives", essentially painting the act of rescue as the overwhelmingly dominant response of Poles to the Holocaust. Absolutely no part of this exhibit includes the perspective of Jews in hiding with Poles: The discussion of hiding is limited to the history and perspective of Righteous Poles, while Jews are simply acted upon and have no independent role in this history.

The final piece of the exhibit is a short film produced by the IPN: "The Unconquered."[311] The movie begins with the German and Soviet invasions of Poland in 1939, and then proceeds to illustrate the persecution and resistance of Poles and Poland from 1939 to 1989 inclusively. The pronouns "we" and "us" are sprinkled generously throughout the movie, perhaps to evoke the anger of contemporary Poles at the continual indifference of the world to Polish suffering (one of the film's central themes) and pride at the lone resistance shown by the AK and civilians.

Polish Jews appear twice in this film, in the context of the rescue of Jews by Poles and the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising – which is subsumed into a narrative of fierce Polish resistance to the Nazi-occupation. Poles are framed as the lone protectors and saviours of Jews. At one point in the film, German soldiers walk past a Polish woman in a nurse's uniform who, once the soldiers are out of sight, opens a door behind which ten to fifteen Jewish children are hiding.

According to the film, Poland was never liberated in 1944 and 1945: The Second World War seamlessly merges into the Cold War, when "despite everything the Poles did to resist, the world leaves them behind the Iron Curtain." Nevertheless, Poles continue to resist, as "the pope gives us strength." In 1989, with the fall of the Iron Curtain, the singular, nearly half-century "war" is over. Placed at the end of the exhibit, this movie essentially negates the museum's negligible consideration of Polish collaboration, leaving visitors with an uncritical, feel-good nationalism which paints Poles as martyrs of the anti-fascist and anti-communist resistance in a battle that, for Poland, lasted more than forty years.

[311] This film is available online at http://www.theunconquered-movie.com.

The Ulma Family Museum of Poles Saving Jews in World War II in Markowa

In 1943 or 1944 the Ulma family, comprising of a wife, husband, and six children, took eight Jews into their home in the village of Markowa in southern Poland, near Rzeszów. Quickly, a Polish "blue" policeman became enlightened to these activities, and reported the Ulma's to the Germans. In 1944, a group of German gendarmerie and Polish "blue" policemen visited the Ulma house to search for the Jews in hiding. After they were discovered, all parties were murdered: The eight Jews in hiding, and the eight members of the Ulma family.

In 2016, near the former location of the Ulma family house, a museum dedicated to the family and, more generally, to the rescuing activities of Poles in the Podkarpacie region, was created. Similar to the POLIN Museum, the Ulma Museum features an array of memorialization outside of the museum's entrance that sets the tone for the exhibit space. Embedded in a concrete-wall in front of the museum are the names of Poles who rescued Jews in this region (which Jan Grabowski and Dariusz Libionka likened to the style of the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C.). Additional glass plaques, angelically illuminated by lights emanating from below, are inscribed with the names of Polish rescuers in the museum's courtyard.

The contents of the exhibit were created and are being maintained by the Rzeszów district office of the IPN. The museum is divided into seven main sections: Poles and Jews before 1939 in the Podkarpackie region, residents of the Podkarpackie region during the German occupation, Poles saving Jews, shelters and hiding places, Poles killed for helping Jews, the Ulma family, and the post-war period. Although the museum does not neglect to mention that Polish "blue" policemen indeed collaborated with the occupiers, and that hunts for Jewish fugitives were conducted by local Polish communities, these narratives are subtly pushed to the background to ensure that righteous gentiles consistently receive the spotlight. In regards to the Polish "blue"

policeman who denounced the Ulmas, the museum emphasizes his Ukrainian origins.[312] Grabowski and Libiońka further mention that documents which expose stories of denunciation, collaboration, and murder are quite inaccessible – either they are featured in small print, or the Hebrew and English translations of the Polish are limited.

On its website, the museum proudly displays an alphabetical list of all rescuers in this region. They define rescuers liberally as any Pole who saved Jews by "giving shelter, food, financial aid, making fake identification documents, organizing escapes from the ghettos."[313] Yet, while these names are proudly displayed as badges of honour for the Polish state, no detail is provided on the nature of these rescuing activities. A main finding of this thesis was that it is was possible to rescue Jews and behave as a perpetrator simultaneously; while certain gentiles were indeed rescuers, they also engaged in abusive behaviours towards the Jews in their care. This ambiguity is glaringly absent from the museum. Moreover, the creators of the museum altered the numbers of those who rescued Jews to make it appear as though these actions were more widespread than they really were. For instance, the museum cites that, in the Podkarpacie region, Poles rescued 2921 Jews. However, as noted by Jan Grabowski and Dariusz Libiońka, this number represents all Jews who survived the war (whether they were in a concentration camp, in the Soviet Union, a member of the partisans hiding in the forest, or hidden by a Pole), and arrived at a central Jewish committee afterwards.[314]

Certain testimonies that disrupt the narrative presented in the museum, mainly those recorded by Jews in hiding, were left out of the exhibit space entirely, regardless of their

[312] Jan Grabowksi and Dariusz Libionka, "Bezdroża polityki historycznej. Wokół Markowej, czyli o czym nie mówi Muzeum Polaków Ratujących Żydów podczas II Wojny Światowej im. Rodziny Ulmów," *Zagłada Żydów* 12 (2016): 620.
[313] "Rescuers," *The Ulma Family Museum of Poles Saving Jews in World War II,* accessed April 5, 2019, https://muzeumulmow.pl/en/rescuers/.
[314] Grabowski and Libiońka, "Bezdroża polityki historycznej," 622.

relevance to the area under study. These documents recount the murder of Jews by their gentile helpers, which one survivor said occurred in great number after the Ulmas were murdered.

The Ulmas are the new historical heroes of the Polish state: Their tragic story appears in many public spaces of memory around the country. Significantly, the National Day of Remembrance for Poles saving Jews was chosen as March 24th, since this was the day that the Ulma family was murdered by the Germans. The website of the IPN upholds that "The internationall [sic] recognized symbol of Polish martyrdom for helping Jews is the Ulma family."[315]

The stories of Poles murdered for sheltering Jews deserves a prominent place in spaces of memory dedicated to the Holocaust and Second World War in Poland: It is not their presence that I take issue with, it is how these stories are abused to artificially mold a singular narrative of Jewish-Polish relations that paints rescuing as the instinctive, dominant reaction of Polish gentiles to the murder of Polish Jews.

Survivors' Park in Łódź

In Łódź, a city in central Poland which was once the beating heart of the country's industrial production, a new park dedicated to Holocaust survivors was opened in 2004, on the sixtieth anniversary of the liquidation of the Litzmannstadt (Łódź) ghetto. The park sits in what was the Aryan quarter in Łódź, with one side running along a boundary of the former ghetto. Upon entering the park from Oblęgorska street, stepping into what was the Ayran side, it immediately seemed to me that the name "Park Ocalałych" ("Survivors' Park) was an utter misnomer. Aside from two projects initiated by a Holocaust survivor, planting trees and laying

[315] "The Polish National Day of Remembrance of Poles Rescuing Jews under German Occupation – 24 March 2019," *Institute of National Remembrance,* accessed April 5, 2019, https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/1789,The-Polish-National-Day-of-Remembrance-of-Poles-Rescuing-Jews-under-German-Occup.html.

stones dedicated to survivors, this park is filled with memorials dedicated to gentile Poles who helped Jews.

The first monument featured in the park, beginning at the Oblęgorska street entrance, is an immense complex dedicated to the Polish Righteous Among the Nations. Despite its prominent place in the park, this monument was not part of the original plan, which was the planting of a group of trees meant to symbolize Jews being lead to death, but was added upon the initiative of the city's mayor.[316] This monument includes twelve plaques inscribed with the names of all Poles declared Righteous by Yad Vashem – more than 6,000 in total. These plaques are arranged into the shape of the Star of David from above – a key detail which is lost on the average visitor deprived of such a bird's eye view. Adjacent to these plaques is a towering obelisk dedicated "To The Righteous Among The Nation of the World – To The Poles Who Saved Jews During the German Occupation 1939-1945," featuring a soaring, presumably Polish, eagle at its peak.

Following a path deeper into the park leads to a memorial dedicated to Żegota. At the time of my visit, the base of this small plaque was encircled by flowers and gas lanterns left by visitors, one of which decorated with a Polish flag featuring with the emblem of the IPN. Walking past the stones dedicated to Holocaust survivors leads to a final statue at the easternmost edge of the park: The figure of Jan Karski located at the top of a winding hill. The hill itself is a "Memorial Mound," intended to commemorate the victims of the Łódź ghetto. The symbolism of placing this statue at its peak is powerful: Sitting on a bench, the statue of Jan Karski rests on the memorial to the victims of the Łódź ghetto and overlooks the entire park, into the grounds of the former ghetto. Most unsettlingly, this memorial can be read as transmitting the ultimate triumph

[316] "Survivors' Park," *Centrum Dialogu im. Marka Edelmana w Łodzi,* accessed April 17, 2019, https://www.centrumdialogu.com/en/survivors-park.

of the gentile Pole, in contrast to the near complete annihilation of Poland's Jewish population. It seems utterly inappropriate and insensitive to place a statue directly on top of a memorial hill for victims of the ghetto, and facilitates such an interpretation of the memorial space. The location of the Jan Karski statue in this park, summarizes its overarching message: Poles did not abandon Jews during the war; not only did many Poles rescue Jews, but individuals such as Jan Karski "watched over" the Jews in the ghetto, by attempting to alert various Western nations to the events of the Holocaust.

Image 6. Memorial plaques inscribed with the names of Polish Righteous Among the Nations in Survivors' Park, Łódź.
Source: Photo by author, March 27, 2019.

Image 7. An obelisk, featuring the Polish eagle, dedicated to the Polish Righteous Among the Nations in Survivors' Park, Łódź.
Source: Photo by author, March 27, 2019.

Image 8. A monument of Jan Karski sits at the peak of the "Memorial Mound," commemorating the victims of the ghetto, in Survivors' Park, Łódź. The memorial to the Polish Righteous can be spotted in the background.
Source: Photo by author, March 27, 2019.

Conclusion

In Craig Wight's study of Lithuanian Holocaust museums and other sites of memory, he characterizes museums as "powerful expressive spaces that create and legitimate structures of knowledge."[317] Traditionally, memorials are constructed of material designed to last a great deal of time, and both museums and memorials are spread out throughout the cityscape as centres of tourist interest and unremarkable parts of the daily environment for locals: Public memorials and museums convey a permanence and yet simultaneously appear organic, which I perceive as incredibly persuasive. Essentially, by interacting with a city, locals and visitors alike are conditioned to integrate a narrative of history into their consciousness; thus, the immense potential power of these narratives becomes clear.

In response to reductive narratives present in museums, monuments, and memorials, scholars have argued that public spaces of memory should reflect democratic principles: "These institutions [museums] must serve as crucibles of conceptual, ethical, and aesthetic confrontation, [but] too many museums board, curators and patrons […] see clash as always and everywhere a bad thing."[318] Often the main supporters, both financially and politically, of institutions of memory such as museums, are governments in power. Museums hold a promising possibility for them, as "Ownership of memory" can be mobilized as a "hegemonic device imagined to influence our behaviour in the present and future."[319] Governments, as actors involved in the creation of memory sites, can manipulate the past in line with their own interests, interests that often coagulate in creating a sense of national cohesion. This cohesion, however, is essentially

[317] Craig Wight, "Myth, Rhetoric and Human Tragedy in Lithuanian Museums and Sites of Memory," *Acta Turistica* 25, no. 2 (2013): 196.
[318] Timothy Luke cited in Bernadette Lynch, "Challenging Ourselves: Uncomfortable Histories and Current Museum Practices," in *Challenging History in the Museum: International Perspectives,* edited by Jenny Kidd et al. (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014), 91.
[319] Sara McDowell and Máire Braniff, *Commemoration as Conflict: Space, Memory and Identity in Peace Processes* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 16.

false and "at odds with democratic principles and practice", as it ignores conflicting narratives and views.[320]

Museums and memorials around Poland pertaining to the Second World War have become increasingly dominated by "The Righteous Defense": The idea that the help provided by Poles to Jews during the war is the only true narrative of Polish-Jewish wartime relations, de facto negating all critical historiography. This defense necessitates the "instrumental use of the memory of Poles decorated by Yad Vashem," including an inflation of numbers of the righteous, and a whitewashing of the righteous to remove any morally dissonant behavior.[321] Spaces of memory around the country, particularly the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk, the Markowa Museum, and Survivors' Park in Łódź are shaped into topographies to promote the altruistic behavior of the rescuers, while the rest of the history of Polish-Jewish relations is pushed aside or utterly ignored. The righteous and the history of Polish rescuers have become central to the historical policy of the current government in Poland, providing them with a tool to defend Poland's "good name," from the onslaught of publications on the role of Poles in murdering and denouncing their Jewish neighbours during the war.

[320] Lynch, "Challenging Ourselves," 91.
[321] Grabowski, "The Holocaust and Poland's 'Historical Policy," 484.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archival Sources

AŻIH 301/119. Testimony of Moszek Merin from Będzin.

AŻIH 301/484. Testimony of Jerzyński Ludwik from Warsaw.

AŻIH 301/601. Testimony of Jozef Hechel from Łapanów.

AŻIH 301/608. Testimony of Nuchem Perlman from Parczew.

AŻIH 301/668. Testimony of Chaim Kwiatek from Stoczek.

AŻIH 301/688. Testimony of Aron Czechowicz from Warsaw

AŻIH 301/853. Testimony of Lili Hirschsprung from Lwów.

AŻIH 301/1185. Testimony of Szynom Grinszpan from Sokołów Podlaski.

AŻIH 301/1186. Testimony of Szmul Miedziński from Sokołów Podlaski.

AŻIH 301/1795. Testimony of Jakub Mendziuk from Mizoczu.

AŻIH 301/2097. Testimony of Mojsze Midzinskner from Łódź.

AŻIH 301/2292. Testimony of Szyja Szteinwurcel from Zmudzi.

AŻIH 301/2505. Testimony of Józef Kopyto from Sokołów Podlaski.

AŻIH 301/2732. Testimony of Rozalia Kożuchowicz from Ostrów Mazowiecki.

AŻIH 301/2803. Testimony of Icek Lerner from Komarówce.

AŻIH 301/3073. Testimony of Jerzy Himelbrau from Warsaw.

AŻIH 301/3079. Testimony of Łask Uszer from New York.

AŻIH 301/3283. Testimony of Józef Kornbluth from Buczacz.

AŻIH 301/3534. Testimony of Heniek Ostrowicz from Warsaw.

AŻIH 301/3782. Testimony of Stanisława Gostkowska from Warsaw.

AŻIH 301/3864. Testimony of Markus Halpern from Kraków.

AŻIH 301/3866. Testimony of Dawid Wasserstrum from Lviv.

AŻIH 301/3979. Testimony of Szepsel Grynberg from Sokołów Podlaski

AŻIH 301/4022. Testimony of Lila Mittler from Tarnów.

AŻIH 301/4161. Testimony of Szapse Grinberg From Sokołów Podlaski.

AŻIH 301/4174. Testimony of Abraham Sukno from Sterdyń.

AŻIH 301/4380. Testimony of Sonia Powonzek from Dobre.

AŻIH 301/4429. Testimony of Cela Froks from Tomaszowie Mazowiecki.

AŻIH 301/4507. Testimony of Alex Hamburger from Kalisz.

AŻIH 301/4771. Testimony of Pinchas Lerman from Zaręby Kościelne.

AŻIH 301/5108. Testimony of Róża Berek.

AŻIH 301/5218. Testimony of Janc H. from Warsaw.

AŻIH 301/5238. Testimony of Hena Szmitt from Pułtusku.

AŻIH 301/5396. Testimony of Ewa Mogielnicka from Warsaw.

AŻIH 301/5521. Testimony of Lili Szynowłogi.

AŻIH 301/5996. Testimony of Róża Szetner.

Feldman, Fred (provenance). "Survivors of Sokolow Podlaski pose around a makeshift tombstone during a memorial service for the Holocaust victims of the town." Photograph. c. 1947. *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.* https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1173955.

Generalgouvernment Distrikt Warschau Kreishauptmannschaft Sokolow. c. 1939-1945. 1:500,000 scale. Archiwum Państwowe w Warszawie.

"German Administration of Poland, 1942." Map. Holocaust Encyclopedia. *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.* https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/map/german-administration-of-poland-1942.

Mapa Gmin Rzeczyposplitej Polskiej: Podział Administracyjny Według Stanu z Dnia 1.IV 1938 Roku. 1938. 1:100,000. Głownego Urzędu Statystycznego w Warszawie.

Plan Sytwacyjny m. Sokołowa. 1925. 1:2500 scale. Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie.

Rzeczpospolita Polska: Podział Administracyjny w Dniu 1 Października 1934 Roku. 1934. 1:2,000,000 scale. Archiwum Państwowe w Poznaniu.

YVA 03/2734. Testimony of Ryba Goldy from Sokołów Podlaski.

Oral Sources

Bleiweiss, Sophie. Interview 55127. Interviewed by Sharon Gerber. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*. September 12, 1991. Houston, TX. Audio: 2:38:20.

Boraks-Nemetz, Lillian. Interview 40074. Interviewed by Irene Dodek. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* April 14, 1998. Vancouver, BC. Audio: 2:49:36.

Cohn, Dora. Interview 52546. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* August 7, 1996. Portola Valley, CA. Audio: 2:15:57.

Cynamon, Celia. Interview 14385. Interviewed by Elise Arden. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* April 22, 1996. Aventura, FL. Audio: 1:48:18.

Da Silva, Joan. Interview 4900. Interviewed by Ileane Kenney. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* December 12, 1998. Alexandria, VA. Audio: 3:17:23.

Elster, Aaron. Interview 8527. Interviewed by Susan London. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*. November 10, 1995. Lincolnshire, IL. Audio: 1:52:37.

Feldman, Mendel. Interview 32911. Interviewed by Dina Cohen. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* September 3, 1997. Rockville, ML. Audio: 2:58:02.

Fixler, Helen. Interview 49493. Interviewed by Renée Firestone. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* August 30, 1998. Beverly Hills, CA. Audio: 2:01:56.

Galloway, Janine. Interview 28452. Interviewed by Carol Hurst. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* February 24, 1997. Slough, UK. Audio: 2:20:37.

Garfunkel, Rachel. Interview 55341. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* January 1, 2007. Edmonton, AB. Audio: 2:09:48.

Ger, Sonia. Interview 54116. Interviewed by Avraham Fisher. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*. May 5, 1994. Toronto, ON. Audio: 1:48:50.

Hacker-Elmowitz, Charlotte. Interview 3296. Interviewed by Phyllis Lee. Visual History Archive*, University of Southern California Shoah Foundation* June 19, 1995. Audio, 2:12:56.

Helfgott, Eva. Interview 1303. Interviewed by Brenda Braun. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* March 8, 1995. Bondi, Australia. Audio: 3:04:04.

Hollander, Esther Dobrofsky. Interview 847. Interviewed by Faye Levinson. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* February 10, 1995. Glenview, IL. Audio: 1:31:37.

Kief, Fay. Interview 10131. Interviewed by Ruth Resnikoff. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*. December 15, 1995. Delray Beach, FL. Audio: 1:57:59.

Kopyto, Israel. Interview 7023. Interviewed by Devorah Levine. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* September 20, 1995. Toronto, ON. Audio: 1:28:06.

Mark, Esther. Interview 24771. Interviewed by Meryl Loonin. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* January 15, 1997. Newton, MA. Audio: 2:44:33.

Naparsted, Lynn. Interview 15332. Interviewed by Ann Page. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* May 21, 1996. Aventura, FL. Audio: 1:54:30.

Newman, Pearl. Interview 23494. Interviewed by Naomi Rappaport. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* December 19, 1996. Lawrence, NY. Audio: 2:37:35.

Scherb, Samuel. Interview 42361. Interviewed by Ellen Adler. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* June 8, 1998. Fresh Meadows, NY. Audio: 1:42:30.

Shore, Ann. Interview 39906, Interviewed by Hilary Helstein, Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* Great Neck, NY, Audio: 3:07:38.

Silber, Sara. Interview 55041. Interviewed by Steve Lang. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* January 23, 1995. Houston, TX. Audio: 31:13.

Stein, Leah. Interview 41850. Interviewed by Rosalyn Livshin. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* May 24, 1998. Manchester, UK. Audio: 5:03:59.

Steiner, Frieda. Interview 26874. Interviewed by Rita Jacobsohn. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* February 12, 1997. Sunrise, FL. Audio: 2:26:42.

Stolarsky, Rena. Interview 25673. Interviewed by Harriet Zucker. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*. February 2, 1997. New York, NY. Audio: 2:18:22.

Ratafia, Tema. Interview 26360. Interviewed by Marvin Greenberg. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* February 19, 1997. Palm Beach, FL. Audio: 1:51:58.

Rosenberg, Regina. Interview 41841. Interviewed by Lorrie Fein. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* May 20, 1998. Brooklyn, NY. Audio: 1:55:48.

Rubel, Lillian. Interview 5990. Interviewed by Florence Shuster. *Visual History Archive, University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* August 24, 1995. Brooklyn, NY. Audio: 1:40:02.

Weinsberg, Alicia. Interview 7161. Interviewed by Eve Orlans Mayer. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*. September 22, 1995. New York, NY. Audio: 2:30:13.

Yedwab, Shirley. Interview 25616. Interviewed by Patricia Stein. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* January 24, 1997. Coconut Creek, FL. Audio: 1:48:33.

Young, Miriam. Interview 33788. Interviewed by Martha Frazer. Visual History Archive, *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation.* September 29, 1997. Bronx, NY. 1:21:16.

Published Primary Sources

Applebaum, Molly. *Buried Words: The Diary of Molly Applebaum.* Toronto: The Azrieli Foundation, 2017.

Arad, Yitzhak, Yisrael Gutman, and Abraham Margaliot, Ed. *Documents on the Holocaust: Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland, and the Soviet Union.* Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1981.

Bauman, Janina. *Winter in the Morning: A Young Girl's Life in the Warsaw Ghetto and Beyond, 1939-1945.* London: Virago Press, 1986.

Bielawski, Shraga Feivel. *The Last Jew from Węgrów: the Memoirs of a Survivor of the Step-by-Step Genocide in Poland.* New York: Praeger, 1991.

Borenstein, Henry. *All Alone: A Young Boy Hiding in Wartime Poland*. Victoria: Makor Jewish Community Library, 2008.

Burakowski, Ella. *Hidden Gold: A True Story of the Holocaust.* Toronto: Second Story Press, 2015.

Elie, Weisel. *Night.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012.

Elster, Aaron and Joy Erlichman Miller. *I Still See Her Haunting Eyes: The Holocaust and a Hidden Child Named Aaron.* Peoria: BF Press, 2008.

Frank, Anne. *The Diary of a Young Girl.* New York: Bantam Books, 1993.

Fuks, Zila. "Life in Hiding: Razek's Barn: An Excerpt from *Silent Screams*." In *Women and the Holocaust: Narrative and Representation,* edited by Esther Fuchs. Lanham: University Press of America, 1999.

Głowiński, Michał. *The Black Seasons*. Evanston: Northeastern University Press, 2005.

Górski, Józef. "At the Turn of History." *Holocaust: Studies and Materials* (2008): 300-311.

Hochberg-Mariańska, Maria and Noe Grüss, Ed. *The Children Accuse*. London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1996.

Isaacson, Judith Magyar. *Seed of Sarah: Memoirs of a Survivor.* Urbana: University of Illionois Press, 1991.

Jagur, Orna. *The Hiding Place.* Łódź: Oficyna Bibliofilów, 2006.

Kaplan, Chaim A. *Scroll of Agony: The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999.

Levi, Primo. *Survival in Auschwitz.* New York: Touchstone, 1986.

Levi, Primo. *The Drowned and the Saved*. New York: Vintage International, 1989.

Maltz, Moshe. *Year of Horror – Glimpse of Hope: The Diary of a Family in Hiding*. New York:

Shengold Publishers, 1993.

Peritz, Irena. "Each Day Could Be Our Last: Irena's Wartime Diary." In *Before All Memory Is Lost: Women's Voices from the Holocaust*, edited by Myrna Goldenberg. Toronto: The Azrieli Foundation, 2017.

Ringelblum, Emmanuel. *Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War.* New York: Fertig, 1976.

Rochman, Leyb. *The Pit and the Trap*. New York: Holocaust Library, 1983.

Samson, Naomi. *Hide: A Child's View of the Holocaust.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000.

Śliwowska, Wiktoria, Ed. *The Last Eyewitnesses: Children of the Holocaust Speak.* Vol 1. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993.

Szpilman, Władysław. *The Pianist: The Extraordinary Story of One Man's Survival in Warsaw, 1939-1945*. London: Orion Books Ltd, 2002.

Toll, Nelly S. *Behind the Secret Window: A Memoir of a Hidden Childhood during World War Two.* New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1993.

Weinstein, Eddie. *17 Days in Treblinka: Daring to Resist, and Refusing to Die.* Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008.

Media and Internet Primary Sources

Berendt, Joanna. "Court Clears Takeover of Poland's New World War II Museum." *The New York Times,* April 5, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/05/arts/design/poland-new-world-war-ii-museum-court-clears-takeover.html.

Ciobanu, Claudia. "Poland's WWII museum under political bombardement." *Politico,* May 15, 2017. https://www.politico.eu/article/polands-wwii-museum-under-political-bombardment/.

Donadio, Rachel. "A Museum Becomes a Battlefield Over Poland's History." *The New York Times,* November 9, 2016. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/10/arts/design/museum-of-the-second-world-war-in-poland-debate.html.

"Frieda Altman Felman." Holocaust Encyclopedia. *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. Accessed October 21, 2018. https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/id-card/frieda-altman-felman.

Gnauk, Gerhard. "Poland's World War II museum opens amid controversy," *DW,* March 3, 2017. http://www.dw.com/en/polands-world-war-ii-museum-opens-amid-controversy/a-38074880.

"IPN Educational materials related to Poles Saving Jews during the Second World War." *Institute of National Remembrance*. Accessed April 5, 2019. https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/1786,IPN-Educational-materials-related-to-Poles-Saving-Jews-during-the-Second-World-W.html.

Liphshiz, Cnaan. "Poland: Ousting Jewish museum head who criticized Holocaust law 'not political.'" *The Times of Israel,* February 21, 2019. https://www.timesofisrael.com/poland-ousting-jewish-museum-head-who-criticized-holocaust-law-not-political/.

"Mission." *Institute of National Remembrance*. Accessed April 17, 2019. https://ipn.gov.pl/en/about-the-ipn/mission/875,Mission.html.

Poliakewicz, Simcha. *In the Shadow of Treblinka*. 1957. https://sokolow.jewish.pl/en/simche-poliakewicz-en/in-the-shadow-of-treblinka/.

"Report on the activities of the Museum of the Second World War in 2010." *Museum of the Second World War*. Gdańsk, 2011.

"Rescuers." *The Ulma Family Museum of Poles Saving Jews in World War II.* Accessed April 5, 2019. https://muzeumulmow.pl/en/rescuers/.

Santora, Marc. "Poland's Holocaust Law Weakened After 'Storm and Consternation.'" *The New York Times*, June 27, 2018.

Stawikowska, Emilia. "Cenzor zamyka Muzeum II Wojny Światowej." *Gazeta Wyborcza – Trójmiasto*, April 5, 2017. http://trojmiasto.wyborcza.pl/trojmiasto/7,35612,21597759,cenzor-zamyka-muzeum-ii-wojny-swiatowej.html.

"The Polish National Day of Remembrance of Poles Rescuing Jews under German Occupation – 24 March 2019." *Institute of National Remembrance.* Accessed April 5, 2019. https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/1789,The-Polish-National-Day-of-Remembrance-of-Poles-Rescuing-Jews-under-German-Occup.html.

Secondary Sources

Aleksiun, Natalia. "Intimate violence: Jewish testimonies on victims and perpetrators in Eastern Galicia." *Holocaust Studies* 23, no. 1-2 (2017): 17-33.

Aleksiun, Natalia. "Neighbours in Borysław. Jewish Perceptions of Collaboration and Rescue in Eastern Galicia." In *The Holocaust and European Societies: Social Processes and Social Dynamics*, edited by Andrea Löw and Frank Bajohr. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016

Alexievich, Svetlana. *Voices from Chernobyl: The Oral History of a Nuclear Disaster*. New York: Picador, 1997.

"Augustyniak Family." Database of Righteous Among the Nations. *Yad Vashem.* http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=4044811.

Bartoszewski, Władyslaw and Zofia Lewinówna. *Righteous Among Nations: How Poles helped the Jews, 1939-1945.* London: Earlscourt Publications Limited, 1969.

Bartov, Omer. "Wartime Lies and Other Testimonies: Jewish-Christian Relations in Buczacz, 1939-1944." *East European Politics and Societies* 25, no. 3 (2011): 486-511.

Baumel, Judith Tydor. "Women's Agency and Survival Strategies during the Holocaust." *Women's Studies International Forum* 22, no. 3 (1999): 329-347.

Bemporad, Elissa. *Becoming Soviet Jews: The Bolshevik Experiment in Minsk.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Bergen, Doris L. "Sexual Violence in the Holocaust: Unique and Typical?" In *Lessons and Legacies VII: The Holocaust in International Perspective*, edited by Peter Hayes and Dagmar Herzog. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2006.

Bernard-Donals, Michael. *Forgetful Memory: Representation and Remembrance in the Wake of the Holocaust.* Albany: University of New York Press, 2009.

Bikont, Anna. *The Crime and the Silence: Confronting the Massacre of the Jews in Wartime Jedwabne.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004.

Błoński, Jan. "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto." In *'My Brother's Keeper?' Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust*, edited by Antony Polonsky. London: Routledge, 1990.

Brescó, Ignacio and Brady Wagoner. "Context in the cultural psychology of remembering: Illustrated with a case study of conflict in national memory." In *Contextualizing Human Memory: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Understanding How Individuals and Groups Remember the Past,* edited by Lucas M. Bietti and Charles B. Stone. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Cesarani, David. *Final Solution: The Fate of the Jews, 1933-1949.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016.

Cobel-Tokarska, Marta. *Desert Island, Burrow, Grave: Wartime Hiding Places of Jews in Occupied Poland*. Berlin: Peter Land GmbH, 2018.

Confino, Alon. *A World Without Jews: The Nazi Imagination from Persecution to Genocide.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

Confino, Alon. "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method." *American Historical Review* (1997): 1386-1403.

Connerton, Paul. "Seven types of forgetting." *Memory Studies* 1, no. 1 (2008): 59-71.

Dean, Martin. *Robbing the Jews: The Confiscation of Jewish Property in the Holocaust, 1933-1945.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Dean, Martin, Ed. *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945,* Vol. 2: Ghettos in German Occupied Eastern Europe. Washington: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2012.

DiGeorgio-Lutz, JoAnn and Donna Gosbee, Ed. *Women and Genocide: Gendered Experiences of Violence, Survival, and Resistance.* Toronto: Women's Press, 2016.

Dreifuss, Havi. *Relations between Jews and Poles during thee Holocaust: The Jewish Perspective.* Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2017.

"Dobrowolski Family." Database of Righteous Among the Nations. *Yad Vashem*. http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=4034522.

Doss, Erika. *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Dyngosz-Duch, Marta. "From Absence to Loss: Holocaust Commemoration in Present-day Poland." *Remembrance and Solidarity Studies* 5 (2007). http://enrs.eu/articles/1744-from-absence-to-loss-holocaust-commemoration-in-present-day-poland.

Engel, David. *The Holocaust: The Third Reich and the Jews.* London: Routledge, 2012.

Engelking, Barbara. "Murdering and Denouncing Jews in the Polish Countryside, 1942-1945." *East European Politics and Societies* 25, no. 3 (2011): 433-456.

Engelking, Barbara. *Such a Beautiful Sunny Day … Jews Seeking Refuge in the Polish Countryside, 1942-1945.* Jerusalem: Yad Vashem: 2016.

Engelking, Barbara. "…we are entirely at their mercy…" The Everyday Experience of Hiding and Relations with Landlords on the Basis of Fela Fischbein's Diary." *Holocaust: Studies and Materials* (2010): 128-150.

Engelking, Barbara and Jacek Leociak. *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

Ephgrave, Nicole. "On Women's Bodies: Experiences of Dehumanization during the Holocaust." *Journal of Women's History* 28, no. 2 (2016): 12-32.

Evans, Jennifer V. *Life among the Ruins: Cityscape and Sexuality in Cold War Berlin.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Feindt, Gregor et al. "Entangled Memory: Toward a Third Wave in Memory Studies." *History and Theory* 53 (2014): 32, DOI: 10.1111/hith.10693.

Forecki, Piotr. Reconstructing Memory: The Holocaust in Polish Public Debates. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Land GmbH, 2013.

Fogelman, Eva. *Conscience & Courage: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust.* New York: Random House, 1994.

Friedländer, Saul. *Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939-1945: The Years of Extermination*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007.

Friedman, Jonathan C., Ed. *The Routledge History of the Holocaust.* New York: Routledge, 2011.

Gerstenfeld, Manfred. *The Abuse of Holocaust Memory: Distortions and Responses.* Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2009.

Glassberg, David. "Public History and the Study of Memory." *The Public Historian* 18, no. 2 (1996): 7-23.

Goldenberg, Myrna and Amy H. Shapiro, Ed. *Different Horrors, Same Hell: Gender and the Holocaust.* Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2013.

"Górski Family." Database of Righteous Among the Nations. *Yad Vashem.* http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=7278893.

Grabowski, Jan. "A Study in the Microhistory of the Holocaust: The *Liquidierungsaktion* in Węgrów Ghetto." In *Lessons and Legacies Volume XIII: New Approaches to an Integrated History of the Holocaust: Social History, Representation, Theory,* edited by Alexandra Garbarini and Paul B. Jaskot. Northwestern University Press, 2018.

Grabowski, Jan. *Hunt For the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Grabowski, Jan. "Powiat Węgrowski." In *Dalej jest noc: Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski*. Vol. 1. Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagłada, 2018.

Grabowski, Jan. *Rescue for Money: Paid Helpers in Poland, 1939-1945.* Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008.

Grabowski, Jan. "The Holocaust and Poland's 'Historical Policy." *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 10, no. 3 (2016): 481-486. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23739770.2016.1262991.

Grabowski, Jan. "The Polish Police: Collaboration in the Holocaust," Lecture, Ina Levine Annual

Lecture, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,Washington D.C., November 17th 2016.

Grabowksi, Jan and Dariusz Libionka. "Bezdroża polityki historycznej. Wokół Markowej, czyli o czym nie mówi Muzeum Polaków Ratujących Żydów podczas II Wojny Światowej im. Rodziny Ulmów." *Zagłada Żydów* 12 (2016): 617-640.

Gross, Jan Tomasz. *Golden Harvest*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Gross, Jan. *Neighbours.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Gutman, Israel. *The Jews of Warsaw, 1939-1943: Ghetto, Underground, Revolt.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.

Hansen-Glucklich, Jennifer. *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2014.

Hedgepeth, Sonja M. and Rochelle G. Saidel, Ed. *Sexual Violence Against Jewish Women During the Holocaust.* Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2010.

Herzog, Dagmar. *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

High, Steven, ed. *Beyond Testimony and Trauma: Oral History in the Aftermath of Mass Violence.* Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015.

Hilberg, Raul. *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.

Janicka, Elżbieta. "The Embassy of Poland in Poland: The Polin Myth in the Museum of the History of Polish Jews as Narrative Pattern and Model of Minority-Majority Relations." In *Poland and Polin: New Interpretations in Polish-Jewish Studies,* edited by Irena Grudzińska-Gross and Iwa Nawrocki. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2016.

Janicka, Elżbieta. "The Square of Polish Innocence: POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw and its symbolic topography." *East European Jewish Affairs* 45, no. 2-3 (2015): 200-214.

Kidd, Jenny et al., Ed. *Challenging History in the Museum: International Perspectives.* Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014.

Klein, Kerwin Lee. *From History to Theory.* London: University of California, 2011.

Kosow Lacki. San Francisco: Holocaust Center of Northern California, 1992.

Kozik, Agnieszka and Joanna Tokarska-Bakir. “Telling the Truth About History, the Polish Way.” *SLH* 5 (2016): 1-4.

Kramer, Naomi. “The Institutionalization of Memory: Museums as Keepers of the Past and Education of the Future.” In *Building History: The Shoah in Art, Memory, and Myth,* edited by Peter M. Daly, et al. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2001.

Kucia, Marek. “The Europeanization of Holocaust Memory and Eastern Europe.” *East European Politics, Societies, and Cultures* 30, no. 1 (2016): 97-119.

Langer, Lawrence L. *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

Lehrer, Erica and Michael Meng, Ed. *Jewish Space in Contemporary Poland*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.

Lehrer, Erica T. *Jewish Poland Revisited: Heritage Tourism in Unquiet Places.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Lev-Wiesel, Rachel and Marianne Amir. “Holocaust Child Survivors and Child Sexual Abuse.” *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 14, no. 2 (2005): 69-83.

Lev-Wiesel, Rachel and Susan Weinger. *Hell Within Hell: Sexually Abused Child Holocaust Survivors, The Comorbidity of the Traumata*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2011.

Longerich, Peter. *Holocaust: The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

McDowell, Sara and Máire Braniff. *Commemoration as Conflict: Space, Memory and Identity in Peace Processes.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Michlic, J. “I will never forget what you did for me during the war”: Rescuer- rescue relationships in the light of postwar correspondence in Poland, 1945-1949.” *Yad Vashem Studies* 39, no. 2 (2011): 169-207.

Monroe, Kristen Renwick. *The Hand of Compassion: Portraits of Moral Choice during the Holocaust.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Moore, Bob. “The Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Belgium, France and the Netherlands.” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 50, no. 3 (2004): 385-395.

Mühlhäuser, Regina. “The Historicity of Denial: Sexual Violence against Jewish Women during the War of Annihilation, 1941-1945.” In *Gendered Wars, Gendered Memories: Feminist Conversation on War, Genocide and Political Violence*, edited by Aye Gül Altinay and Andrea Pet. Routledge, 2016.

Muller, Anna and Daniel Longemann, "War, Dialogue, and Overcoming the Past: The Second World War Museum in Gdańsk, Poland." *The Public Historian* 39, no. 3 (2017): 87

Novick, Peter. "The Holocaust Is Not – and Is Not Likely to Become – a Global Memory." Goldberg, Amos and Haim Hazan, Ed. *Marking Evil: Holocaust Memory in Global Age.* Berghahn Books, 2015.

Ofer, Dalia and Lenore J. Weitzmann, Ed. *Women in the Holocaust.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

Olick, Jeffrey K. *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility.* New York: Routledge, 2007.

Oliner, Samuel P. *Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*. New York: Free Press, 1992.

Paldiel, Mordecai. *The Path of the Righteous: Gentile Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust.* Hoboken: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1993.

Paulsson, Gunnar S. *Secret City: The Hidden Jews of Warsaw 1940-1945.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.

Person, Katarzyna. "Sexual Violence during the Holocaust – The Case of Forced Prostitution in the Warsaw Ghetto." *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 33, no. 2 (2015): 103-121.

"Pietraszek Family." Database of Righteous Among the Nations. *Yad Vashem.* http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=5747906/.

Randall, Amy E. "Introduction: Gendering Genocide Studies." In *Genocide and Gender in the Twentieth Century: A Comparative Survey.* Ed, Amy E. Randall. London: Bloomsburg Academic, 2015.

Ringelheim, Joan. "Thoughts about Women and the Holocaust." In *Thinking the Unthinkable: meanings of the Holocaust,* edited by Roger S. Gottlieb. New York: Paulist Press, 1990.

Rittner, Carol and John K. Roth, Ed. *Rape: Weapon of War and Genocide.* St. Paul: Paragon House, 2012.

Rittner, Carol, Stephen D. Smith and Irena Steinfeldt, Ed. *The Holocaust and the Christian World: Reflections on the Past, Challenges for the Future*. New York: Beth Shalom Holocaust Memorial Centre, 2000.

Rubin, Arnon, Ed. *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today*. Vol 2: District Lublin. Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University Press, 2007.

"Sarah Rivka Felman." Holocaust Encyclopedia. *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.* https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/id-card/sarah-rivka-felman.

"Sima Bonda." The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names. *Yad Vashem*. https://yvng.yadvashem.org/index.html?language=en.

Skibińska, Alina and Jakub Petelewicz. "Participation of Poles in Crimes Against Jews in the Świętokrzyskie Region." *Zagłada Żydów* 1 (2005): 114-148.

Sturken, Marita. *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997

Tammeus, Bill and Jacques Cukierkorn. *They Were Just People: Stories of Rescue in Poland During the Holocaust.* University of Missouri Press, 2009.

Tec, Nechama. *When the Light Pierced the Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Tec, Nechama. "Sex Distinctions and Passing as Christians During the Holocaust." *East European Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1984): 113-123.

"The Righteous Among the Nations." *Yad Vashem.* Accessed September 22, 2018. http://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/faq.html.

Thomson, Alistair. "Memory and Remembering in Oral History." In *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History,* edited by Donald A. Ritchie. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Timm, Annette F. "The Challenges of Including Sexual Violence and Transgressive Love in Historical Writing on World War II and the Holocaust." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 26, no. 3 (2017): 351-365.

Trezise, Thomas. *Witnessing Witnessing: On the Reception of Holocaust Survivor Testimony.* New York: Fordham University Press, 2013.

Trunk, Isaiah. *Lodz Ghetto: A History*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.

The Holocaust and the Christian World: Reflections on the Past, Challenges for the Future. Edited by Carol Rittner, Stephen D. Smith and Irena Steinfeldt. New York: Beth Shalom Holocaust Memorial Centre, 2000.

Those Who Helped: Polish Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust. Vol II. The Main Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation: The Institute of National Memory. The Polish Society for the Righteous Among the Nations: Warsaw, 1996.

Those Who Helped: Polish Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust. Vol III. The Main Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation: The Institute of National Memory. The Polish Society for the Righteous Among the Nations: Warsaw, 1997.

Tokarska-Bakir, Joanna. "The Unrighteous Righteous and the Righteous Unrighteous." *Dapim: Studies on the Shoah* 24 (2010): 11-63.

Tomaszewski, Irene and Tecia Werbowski. *Code Name: Żegota, Rescuing Jews in Occupied Poland, 1942-1945*. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010.

Waxman, Zoë. "Testimony and Silence: Sexual Violence and the Holocaust." In *Feminism, Literature and Rape Narratives: Violence and Violation*, edited by Sorcha Gunne and Zoë Brigley Thompson. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Waxman, Zoë. "Unheard Testimony, Untold Stories: the representation of women's Holocaust experiences." *Women's History Review* 12, no. 4 (2003): 661-678.

Waxman, Zoë. *Women in the Holocaust: A Feminist History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Waxman, Zoë Vania. *Writing the Holocaust: Identity, Testimony, Representation.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Weber, Suzanne Weiner. "The Forest as a Liminal Space: A Transformation of Culture and Norms during the Holocaust." *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History* 41, no. 1 (2008): 35-60.

Weissman, Gary. *Fantasies of Witnessing: Postwar Efforts to Experience the Holocaust*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.

Weitz, Eric. *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.

White, Hayden. "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality." *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (1980): 5-27.

Wight, Craig. "Myth, Rhetoric and Human Tragedy in Lithuanian Museums and Sites of Memory." *Acta Turistica* 25, no. 2 (2013): 191-210.

Wierzcholska, Agnieszka. "Helping, denouncing, and profiteering: a process-oriented approach to Jewish-Gentile relations in occupied Poland from a micro-historical perspective." *Holocaust Studies* 23, no. 1-2 (2017): 34-58.

Young, James E. *Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.

Żbikowski, Andrzej. “Night Guard”: Holocaust Mechanisms in the Polish Rural Areas, 1942-1945.” *East European Politics and Societies* 25, no. 3 (2011): 512-529.

“Zofia Roman and Stanisława Kasprzak.” Database of Righteous Among the Nations. *Yad Vashem.* http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=7493787.

Zubrzycki, Geneviève. *The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland.* University of Chicago Press, 2006.