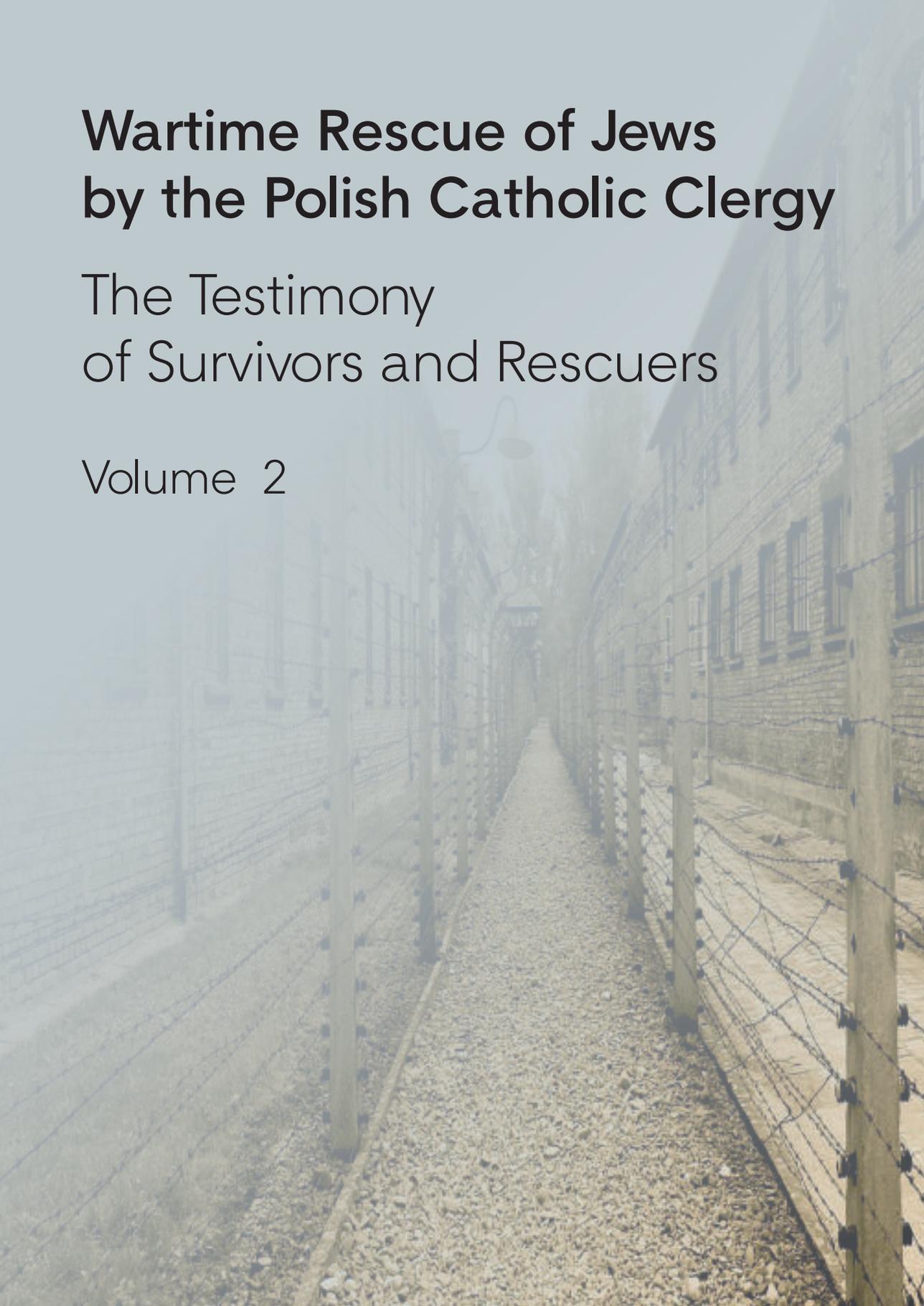


# Wartime Rescue of Jews by the Polish Catholic Clergy

The Testimony  
of Survivors and Rescuers

Volume 2



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by the Polish Catholic Clergy**

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of Survivors and Rescuers

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin



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## The Testimony of Survivors and Rescuers

Volume 2

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Wydawnictwo KUL  
Lublin 2023

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The Abraham J. Heschel Center for Catholic-Jewish Relations  
at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

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ISBN 978-83-8288-087-8

ISBN 978-83-8288-088-5

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Printing and binding: volumina.pl Sp. z o.o.  
ul. Księcia Witolda 7-9, 71-063 Szczecin  
tel. 91 812 09 08, e-mail: [druk@volumina.pl](mailto:druk@volumina.pl)

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# Abbreviations

## (for Archival Sources)

FVA	Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut
JHI	Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw
PRP	Polish Righteous, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Warsaw Internet: <a href="https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en">https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en</a>
RD	The Righteous Among the Nations Database, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem Internet: <a href="https://righteous.yadvashem.org">https://righteous.yadvashem.org</a>
SFV	Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, University of Southern California, Los Angeles Internet: <a href="https://vhaonline.usc.edu/">https://vhaonline.usc.edu/</a>
USHMM	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.
YVA	Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem Internet: <a href="https://documents.yadvashem.org/">https://documents.yadvashem.org/</a>



Masha Borenstein, a tiny Jewish girl, was smuggled out of the Warsaw ghetto in the summer of 1942. Elżbieta Andersz took the child in a rucksack to the home of her parents, Helena and Leon Godlewski, in Warsaw. With the help of her friend Rev. Edward Tyszka, Masha obtained a birth and baptismal certificate under the name of Irena Maria Janik. In 1943, Leon Godlewski was arrested for his activities in the Home Army and sent to Auschwitz, where he perished.

Helena had to manage on her own, raising three children, including the small Jewish girl. Despite her difficult financial situation, she did not abandon Misia, as she was then called, caring for her throughout the German occupation and beyond. Masha, later Miriam Adika, immigrated to Israel in 1956. Helena died in 1967; she was recognized by Yad Vashem 44 years later.<sup>1156</sup>

Both Rev. Tyszka, the pastor of St. Casimir Parish, and Rev. Franciszek Dyżewski, the pastor of the Parish of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in nearby Żbików, appealed to their parishioners to help Jews in any way they could. As head of the local branch of the Chief Welfare Council (Rada Główna Opiekuńcza), Rev. Tyszka provided food to the Pruszków ghetto.<sup>1157</sup>

There are numerous accounts mentioning the help of priests in Warsaw in obtaining documents (many more will follow):

- A Jew in hiding directed Wanda Kinrus (then Bołotna, b. 1919) to an unidentified priest in Warsaw for birth and baptismal certificates that shielded both Wanda and her sister Helena.<sup>1158</sup>
- After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto, Esther Lisak obtained an identity document from Rev. Zygmunt Kowalski.<sup>1159</sup>
- A Christian friend obtained birth and baptismal certificates for Wiera Baksztańska (later Sierpiński, b. 1920) and her mother, Frida Baksztańska (b. 1882), under the names of Zofia Weronika and Józefa Wojutyńska, from a priest in Warsaw.<sup>1160</sup>
- Felix Horn got false identity documents from the Home Army in Warsaw under the name of Feliks Wójcik, including a birth and baptismal certificate supplied by a priest.<sup>1161</sup>

<sup>1156</sup> Ceremony of Presenting The Righteous Among the Nations Awards, Warsaw, December 4, 2012, Embassy of Israel in Warsaw, Internet: [https://embassies.gov.il/warsaw/Departments/Sprawiedliwych/Documents/2012-12-04\\_ENG.pdf](https://embassies.gov.il/warsaw/Departments/Sprawiedliwych/Documents/2012-12-04_ENG.pdf); Helena Godlewska, RD.

<sup>1157</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 831; Skwara, *Pruszkowscy Żydzi*, 176–77.

<sup>1158</sup> Testimony of Wanda (Litwak) Bolotny Kinrus, YVA, file O.3/3510 (Item 3556636).

<sup>1159</sup> Testimony of Esther Lisak, YVA, file O.3/6820 (Item 3560295).

<sup>1160</sup> Baksztanska and Sierpinski Families Papers, USHMM, Accession no. 2004.331.3.

<sup>1161</sup> Oral history interview with Felix Horn, July 19, 1994, USHMM, RG-50.030.0294 (Transcript, at pp. 22, 41).

- Rev. Zbigniew Polanowski, a chaplain in an underground organization who worked as a fireman at the Fire Officers' School in Warsaw, supplied a number of birth and baptismal certificates to Jewish fugitives.<sup>1162</sup>
- A priest from Holy Cross Church in Warsaw provided birth and baptismal certificates for Mira Getler, Halina Lutkiewicz, and Halina's sister.<sup>1163</sup>
- Bella Rotstein obtained false documents from a priest in Warsaw, with which she passed as Catholic Pole in the countryside.<sup>1164</sup>
- Hana Hakman Debszok (b. 1911) obtained documents from St. John's Cathedral under the name of Apolonia Kraśnicka.<sup>1165</sup>

Jews obtained documents from priests, either directly or through intermediaries, throughout occupied Poland. In most cases, the priest who supplied the document is not identified by name.

- Severin Kohn (later Gabriel), who passed as a Christian in Warsaw, obtained a birth and baptismal certificate from a priest at the Church of the Holy Cross (Podwyższenia Krzyża Świętego) in Łódź, establishing his identity as Władysław Gawroński.<sup>1166</sup>
- Other priests from Łódź, among them Rev. Teodor Budnikowski, a vicar at the Salesian Parish of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, provided false birth and baptismal certificates to Jews.<sup>1167</sup>
- Unidentified priests from Lwów provided falsified birth and baptismal certificates to Janina Kalita, a Jewish woman married to a Catholic Pole,<sup>1168</sup> and to Hena Bakalarz Nomberg.<sup>1169</sup>
- Renia Kukiełka, a native of Jędrzejów, went to a town where she knew a railway worker, a former client at her parents' shop. This couple sought

<sup>1162</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 130.

<sup>1163</sup> Testimony of Halina Lyutkevich Lutkiewicz, YVA, file O.3/5626 (Item 3740158).

<sup>1164</sup> Testimony of Bella Rotstein, SFV, Interview code 22858.

<sup>1165</sup> Testimony of Hanka Apolonia Pilichowska, SFV, Interview code 26808.

<sup>1166</sup> Severin Gabriel, *In the Ruins of Warsaw Streets* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2005), 100, and the illustration between pp. 96–97.

<sup>1167</sup> Dorota Sierpacka, "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w Łodzi podczas okupacji niemieckiej," in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 706, based on Marek Budziarek, "Geneza, przebieg i następstwa masowych aresztowań duchownych katolickich 5–7 października 1941 r. (ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem diecezji łódzkiej)," in Bohdan Bejze and Antoni Galiński, eds., *Martyrologia duchowieństwa polskiego 1939–1956* (Łódź: Archidiecezjalne Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1993), 56. Rev. Teodor Budnikowski was arrested on October 6, 1941, and perished in Dachau on March 14, 1942.

<sup>1168</sup> Testimony of Janina Kalita, JHI, record group 301, no. 444.

<sup>1169</sup> Testimony of Hena (Bakalarz) Nomberg, YVA, file O.3/1652 (Item 3559955). This testimony also mentions an unidentified priest who found a hiding place for a young Jewish girl with a Polish family in the countryside.

help from their priest, who gave them the papers of a recently deceased local woman, Wanda Widuchowska.<sup>1170</sup>

A number of Jewish testimonies in the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies also attest to priests' supplying false documents to Jews in various localities: Rozwadów, near Stalowa Wola;<sup>1171</sup> Ulanów, near Nisko;<sup>1172</sup> and Mroczkowice, near Cielądz;<sup>1173</sup> a village near Lwów.<sup>1174</sup> There are many more such testimonies in various other collections.

- After escaping from the Siedliszcze ghetto, near Chełm, Bracha Bronia Kleinman obtained a false birth and baptismal certificate from a priest, with which she passed as a Pole, moving from place to place.<sup>1175</sup>
- Tosia Weissman Schrage from Łopatyn, near Radziechów, obtained false identity papers with the help of a local priest. She used her new identity to pass as a Christian worker in Germany.<sup>1176</sup>
- Chana Gindelman obtained false documents from a priest in Końskie;<sup>1177</sup> Maryśka Janowska from a priest in Bereza, near Międzyrzec Podlaski;<sup>1178</sup> Dawid Wajsbard (later Henryk Majewski) from a priest in Mniszew, near Warka;<sup>1179</sup> Shoshana Emilka (Kosover) Rosentzveig from a priest in Radzymin;<sup>1180</sup> Eva Reed from a priest in Stolin.<sup>1181</sup>

<sup>1170</sup> Judy Batalion, *The Light of Days: The Untold Story of Women Resistance Fighters in Hitler's Ghettos* (New York: William Morrow/HarperCollins, 2020), 103.

<sup>1171</sup> Pearl B. [Binder] Holocaust Testimony (HVT-2876), FVA. Pearl Binder was born in Rozwadów in 1921. Binder recalled cordial relations with non-Jews before the war. She obtained food illegally from local Poles and hid family valuables with Polish neighbours. She received help from a former teacher and was hidden by a Pole. She obtained false papers from a priest, which enabled her to volunteer for labour in Germany.

<sup>1172</sup> Sabina G. [Green] Holocaust Testimony (HVT-2181), FVA.

<sup>1173</sup> Emilia S. [Millie Selinger] Holocaust Testimony (HVT-1907), FVA.

<sup>1174</sup> Ella and Leon S. [Sawicki] Holocaust Testimony (HVT-305), FVA. Leon and Ella Schatzberg obtained birth and baptismal certificates and a marriage certificate under the name of Sawicki from a priest in a Polish village near Lwów. Earlier, when Leon had contracted typhus, he was hospitalized in a town near Lwów. where he was treated by doctors and a nurse—a nun—who knew he was Jewish.

<sup>1175</sup> Testimony of Bracha Bronia (Kleinman) Freiberg Bendori, YVA, file O.3 V.T/10098 (Item 8169767).

<sup>1176</sup> Tokarski Family, RD; Testimony of Joseph De Shrage, SFV, Interview code 16070.

<sup>1177</sup> Testimony of Chana Gindelman, YVA, file O.3/4537 (Item 3558581).

<sup>1178</sup> Testimony of Marishka Yanovska, YVA, file O.3/5010 (Item 3558939).

<sup>1179</sup> Testimony of Henryk Majewski, SFV, Interview code 29086. The parish priest of Mniszew at the time was Rev. Karol Gozdalski.

<sup>1180</sup> Testimony of Shoshana Emilka (Kosover) Rosentzveig, YVA, file O.3 V.T/4584 (Item 4690779).

<sup>1181</sup> Oral history interview with Eva Reed, USHMM, Accession number 1992.A.0129.29, RG-50.029.0029.

- Jehoszua Grinberg (b. 1907) from Radzymin obtained a false birth and baptismal certificate under the name of Jan Milewski from a local priest, allowing him to pass as a Catholic Pole in the vicinity of Warsaw.<sup>1182</sup>
- After escaping from the ghetto in Opole Lubelskie, Roza Korman (later Rosa Fajersztajn, b. 1919) turned to a priest in Chotcza who provided her with the birth and baptismal certificate of Jadwiga Ciecieląg, who had been sent to Germany as a forced labourer.<sup>1183</sup> The pastor at the time was Rev. Czesław Bociański.
- Geoge (Jerzy) Popper and his father, Leopold Popper, obtained false identity documents from a priest in Kraków.<sup>1184</sup>
- A Jewish girl born in 1942, known as Salomea (Sara), was adopted by Mrs. Gaszak. She was baptized by a priest in Fordon nad Wisłą, on the outskirts of Bydgoszcz.<sup>1185</sup>
- Janeta Wulkan (later Janeta Gościcki, b. 1912), obtained a Kennkarte under the name of Helena Kochanowicz with the assistance of a priest in Rokietnica, near Jarosław.<sup>1186</sup>
- Irena Jahr Rubin (b. 1913) obtained a birth and baptismal certificate from Rev. Franciszek Wróbel, the pastor of Jaworów, as Janina Terlecka. He also provided a certificate for her husband, Zenon Rubin.<sup>1187</sup>
- Regina Zofia Wand (later Wasner, b. 1923 in Wielka Wieś) and her mother, Rozalia Finder Wand, acquired false identity papers with the help of a local priest. Regina Zofia became Zofia Zięba, and Rozalia Wand became Maria Zięba. The two women worked as hired hands for landowners, mostly on large estates that belonged to Polish nobility. Immediately after the liberation they returned to Kraków.<sup>1188</sup>

In addition to her Polish husband, Adam Zozak, Giza Greifinger, then Jadwiga Zozak (later Sternberg, b. 1906), was aided by a priest and a Polish teacher from Warsaw.<sup>1189</sup>

<sup>1182</sup> Testimony of Jehoszua Grinberg, YVA, file O.3/3494 (Item 3557027).

<sup>1183</sup> Testimony of Rosa Fajersztajn, SFV, Interview code 18896.

<sup>1184</sup> Testimony of Jerzy Popper, SFV, Interview code 29235.

<sup>1185</sup> Testimony of Salomea Lukowska (Łukowska), SFV, Interview code 21009.

<sup>1186</sup> Paul Verlind Collection, USHMM, Accession no. 2002.251.1.

<sup>1187</sup> Testimony of Irena Jahr, SFV, Interview code 26053. Irena Jahr states that Rev. Wróbel provided certificates to other Jews as well.

<sup>1188</sup> Wasner and Wand Families' Papers, USHMM, Accession no. 2005.210.1.

<sup>1189</sup> Oral history interview with Jadwiga Roszak, USHMM, Accession number 2009.183, RG-50.621.0001.

In all likelihood, there many more cases that have not been recorded. What has been preserved is more than sufficient to belie two myths that crop up in Holocaust literature: the near universal unhelpfulness or hostility on the part of the Catholic clergy towards Jewish fugitives; those “few” Polish priests that provided documents to Jews were in the business of “selling” them, often for enormous sums.

There is no credible evidence that that was the case. This publication has provided copious examples of Jews obtaining birth and baptismal certificates directly from priests free of charge. Many priests worked closely with the Polish underground and supplied them with church certificates, both genuine and forged.

When individual Jews, posing as Christians, approached priests they did not know directly for such documents, like any other such person, they had to pay a small fee for the issuance of the document. (Clergymen had no pensions and relied on such fees for their livelihood and to maintain the parish.) Moreover, not to request the fee when dealing with unknown persons posed an obvious risk. One could never be sure who was behind the request; German agents were plentiful.

In June 1942, Minna Friedland (Frydland, later Aspler) escaped from the Warsaw Ghetto with the help of her Christian friend, Henryk Krueger. Krueger secured an identity card for her as Maria Burczyńska, using the birth and baptismal certificate of a dead child he obtained from Holy Cross Church in Warsaw. Minna worked at a library under her assumed identity. During the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, the library’s basement was turned into a first aid station, and Minna helped bandage the wounded, delivered messages to the outside, and searched burning buildings for people who were trapped inside. After the Warsaw Uprising, she was taken to forced labour in Germany under her assumed identity.<sup>1190</sup>

At first the relations during the occupation between Henry [Henryk] Krueger, a resident of Warsaw, and his friends interned in the local ghetto were completely businesslike. But the humanitarian values imbued in Krueger soon induced him to help the needy and the persecuted, at great risk to his own life and without receiving any payment. He supplied food to his acquaintances in the ghetto, such as Halina Wald and the Frydman [Frydland] family, but in the summer of 1942 when the big Aktion began in Warsaw in which the ghetto’s Jews were taken to Treblinka, he felt compelled to do more to save their lives. He managed to get into the ghetto, which was more closely guarded at the time, bringing Aryan papers in his pockets. He gave these to 20-year-old Mina Frydman [Frydland] and accompanied her to an apartment he had prepared to shelter her on the Aryan side of the city. While she was in hiding, Krueger continued to supply Mina with everything she

<sup>1190</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 405; Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 273; Minna Aspler Papers, USHMM, Accession no. 1999.267.2.

needed, and when she was threatened by blackmailers he moved her to another apartment. She remained there until the late summer of 1944 and after the Warsaw Uprising was taken, with her borrowed identity, to forced labor in Germany, where she was liberated by the Allied armies.<sup>1191</sup>

After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto in January 1943, 13-year-old Mosze Rozenblum (later Marian Rosenbloom) sought refuge with Stanisław Drabich, a family friend living in Warsaw. Drabich, who also assisted other Jews, took the boy in. He obtained a false birth and baptismal certificate for Mosze under the name of Marian Rudzki from a priest he knew. About six weeks later, the Gestapo raided Drabich's home. They found Mosze's ghetto registration card on his person when they searched him. They arrested Drabich and executed him on July 16, 1943. Mosze managed to escape and found shelter with a Polish family in the Praga suburb, together with several other Jews.<sup>1192</sup>

Marian Rozenblum was born in 1930 in Warsaw. In 1940 he found himself in the Warsaw Ghetto with his mother and siblings (three brothers and a sister). In 1942 his mother and twin brother were sent to Treblinka. The next year the two older brothers, who were laborers in a German factory, were sent there as well. Marian and his sister Elżbieta realized that the same fate would soon befall them. They reached out to a man their father had befriended before the war, the only person they felt they could trust in Warsaw: Stanisław Drabich. Stanisław sent word back to them that should they escape the ghetto, they could come to him. One day in 1943, Marian showed up on his doorstep. Stanisław let him in, showed him around, and told him he could stay. A couple of months later, the neighbors became suspicious, so Stanisław moved Marian away for a while but then took him back. Meanwhile, Elżbieta and her friends the Rozenfarb family escaped to the Aryan side. Because Stanisław owned an apartment, he was able to give them papers stating that they were registered at that address; he was also able to get false identification papers for them and Marian via a friend of his who was a priest. With Stanisław's help, Elżbieta and the Rozenfarbs found shelter in the attic of his cousins, Ireneusz and Teodora Studziński. Stanisław also helped another of Elżbieta's friends, Nora Goldman, who spoke perfect German and English and passed for Polish. He registered her at his apartment and found her a safe house for a while. ... One day the Gestapo came to Stanisław's house. Nora Goldman's German employer had found out she was Jewish, and when she was arrested, it was found that she was registered at Stanisław's apartment, so the Gestapo came to arrest him. They demanded to know who Marian was and arrested him as well. On the way to the Gestapo headquarters, Marian managed to jump into a passing street car and escape. Stanisław, however, was not seen or heard from again, and was apparently taken to a death camp. Marian ran to the only place he knew was safe—the Studziński's house, where his sister was staying. He only knew about the place because Stanisław had taken him there one day to meet his cousins. He may not even have been aware of the Jews hiding in the attic, but on the day of his rescuer's arrest, he joined them there. Marian remained there with

<sup>1191</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 405.

<sup>1192</sup> Susan M. Rostan, *Digging: Lifting the Memorable from Within the Unthinkable* (Cold Spring Harbor, New York: Rosalie Ink Publications, 2013).

the other Jews until summer 1944. After the war ended, Marian and the Studzińskis parted ways, but they remained in touch through letters over the years.<sup>1193</sup>

Helena Korzeniewska (née Krukowiecka-Kruk, later Korazim) was recognized as a Righteous Gentile for smuggling six Jews out of the Warsaw ghetto. Her uncle and aunt, Damazy and Julia Ciechanowski, sheltered them in Warsaw. An additional seven Jews joined them later.<sup>1194</sup> In her Yad Vashem testimony,<sup>1195</sup> Korzeniewska states that she repeatedly turned to Rev. Kolski for birth and baptismal certificates to protect her charges. (Rev. Kolski's identity has not been established.) Rev. Jan Sztuka, the pastor of the Purest Heart of Mary Church on Szembeka Square in the Grochów suburb of Warsaw, directed her to a woman who provided an identity document for Janina Eisenstadt. Two other Jews whom Korzeniewska assisted, Justyna Lilientahl and her young son Józio (b. 1944), were sheltered by Rev. Aleksander Grabowski in the parish rectory in Grodzisk Mazowiecki.

The following are some additional examples of priests from Warsaw who issued false baptismal certificates to Jews:

[1] Edward Chadzynski [Chądryński] worked for the Warsaw city administration in the public records department during the war. This position allowed him to provide Jews with false papers. He was also active in the Polish Resistance movements where one of his tasks was to organize false documents for underground activities. Edward also helped people who were in need of hiding places and for this he used his connections at work. ...<sup>1196</sup>

Procuring false documents required the cooperation of many people. First, one had to obtain a birth and baptismal certificate, which was necessary to fabricate an identity document and obtain a *Kennkarte*. For this, Chądryński relied on the parish churches of the Blessed Virgin Mary on New Market Square and St. Anthony on Senatorska Street. Employees in the public records department of the city administration helped by supplying birth and marriage certificates.<sup>1197</sup>

[2] Rosalia Werdinger met Boleslaw [Bolesław] Muchowski before the war at his place of work in the city of Drohobycz, in the Lwow [Lwów] district, and in time their friendship turned into love. After the attacks against the Jews began following the German occupation of the area, Boleslaw took Werdinger to his brother, Zygmunt Muchowski, who lived in the village of Dziejule in Siedlce county, while he himself rented an apartment in the nearby town of Lukow [Łuków]. Zygmunt took Rosalia under his wing and hid her in his home in the village, and after he obtained Aryan papers for her in the name of a deceased relative [using a baptismal certificate he obtained from the Basilica of the Sacred Heart

<sup>1193</sup> Stanisław Drabich, RD.

<sup>1194</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 372–73.

<sup>1195</sup> Testimony of Helena Korzeniewska, YVA, file O.3/2518 (Item 3739944).

<sup>1196</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 132–33.

<sup>1197</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 75.

in Warsaw<sup>1198</sup>], he took her to Lukow, where his brother Boleslaw was waiting for her. In Lukow, Boleslaw introduced Rosalia as his wife. Together with Soviet partisans active in the underground in the area, Zygmunt Muchowski continued to extend his assistance to Jews in need ... After the war, Boleslaw married Rosalia and they remained in Poland.<sup>1199</sup>

[3] During the occupation, Bronislaw [Bronisław] Nietyksza worked in the manpower department of the city of Warsaw. He was also active in the underground organization that found hiding places and procured false documents for those persecuted by the occupation authorities. In this capacity, Nietyksza was approached by Jews who escaped from the ghetto, whom he also helped. Nietyksza had an arrangement with two Catholic priests in Warsaw, who agreed not to publish the names of all the newly deceased in their churches so that their identity cards could be adapted for use by Jews hiding on the Aryan side of Warsaw.<sup>1200</sup> Nietyksza supplied more than ten Jews with false papers in this way before the Germans discovered what he was doing. They arrested him on May 24, 1944, and sent him to the Stutthof concentration camp, from which he escaped during the evacuation of the camp.<sup>1201</sup>

[4] Before the war, the Sliwczynskis [Śliwczyńskis], from the town of Mława [Mława] in the Warsaw district, lived on the same street as Ella Zlotnik [Złotnik] (later Perkiel), who was in the same class as one of the Sliwczynski girls. During the occupation, the two families moved to Warsaw, where the Zlotniks were interned in the ghetto. In 1943, when Ela [sic] and her father hid on the Aryan side of the city, the ties between the two families were renewed and Ella and the Sliwczynski's son, Jerzy, met frequently. In 1944, after the Gestapo arrested Ella's father, Ella had to change her identity and disappear. Jerzy helped her by arranging a temporary hiding place for her outside the city and obtained new Aryan papers for her. When Ella returned to Warsaw, she stayed with Sliwczynski until the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944. When the Germans arrested Jerzy, Ella stayed with his father, Tadeusz Sliwczynski, until after the war, when she emigrated to the United States. The Sliwczynskis helped other Jews from the town of Mława who hid on the Aryan side of Warsaw, including the Makowskis, the Kleniecs, Celina Czech, and Biezuńska [Biezuńska]. Despite the danger, the Sliwczynskis considered it their human duty to help their Jewish friends and never expected anything in return.<sup>1202</sup> [They were able to obtain false Kennkarte

<sup>1198</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 363.

<sup>1199</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 531.

<sup>1200</sup> Bronisław Nietyksza described the process as follows: "I had two prearranged Roman Catholic parishes—one on Three Crosses Square (St. Alexander's Church) and the other on Narutowicz Square (St. James Church). I had an agreement with the parish priests and secretaries of these parishes that they would not issue death certificates for deceased people in the 18–60 age range, leaving them in the records of living people in a given parish. In case of the need to issue a kenkarta [Kennkarte] to a person of Jewish origin as an Aryan, a suitable birth certificate of a person already deceased but not deleted from the records was then chosen. In this way those people obtained authentic and formally valid documents." See Sebastian Piątkowski, "Aryan Papers': On the Help Provided by Poles in Legalising False Identities for Jews in the Territory of the General Governorate for the Occupied Polish Regions," *Polish-Jewish Studies*, vol. 1 (2020): 437–63, at pp. 444–45.

<sup>1201</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 546–47.

<sup>1202</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 722–23.

for these Jews based on birth and baptismal certificates issued by Rev. Bolesław Dudziński from St. Charles Borromeo church in the Powązki district of Warsaw.<sup>1203</sup>

Sometimes, obtaining documents went hand-in-hand with religious instructions. A Catholic priest gave Ada Matulski individual instruction in Catholic faith and rituals before she was smuggled out of the Warsaw ghetto and hidden with Poles. Ada's father had obtained false papers for her as Zosia Kotlecka.<sup>1204</sup>

In some cases, birth and baptismal certificates were provided by parish staff, with or without the knowledge of the priest. Bernard Radzicki obtained fifteen blank birth and baptismal certificates from his friend who worked at the parish in Krośniewice near Kutno. These certificates were then used to obtain Kennkarten, official German documents, for members of his extended family, most of whom survived passing as Catholic Poles.<sup>1205</sup> The organist at the parish in Mińsk Mazowiecki searched the church records for deceased persons with suitable birth dates, whereupon authentic birth and baptismal certificates were issued to the Jews.<sup>1206</sup>

After escaping from the ghetto in Wołomin, near Warsaw, Fania Warman (Stecher) was sheltered by her friend Maria Maliszewska and Maria's parents. Maria obtained a false birth and baptismal certificate for Fania from a local priest. This enabled Fania to apply for work papers. She then secured employment as a servant with a Polish family in Warsaw.<sup>1207</sup>

Henryk (Froim Fiszel) Prajs from Góra Kalwaria near Warsaw,<sup>1208</sup> who received a false birth and baptismal certificate from Rev. Stefan Ścibiorek, a vicar in Osieck, survived with the assistance of many villagers—often complete strangers.

On 25th February 1941 they deported the Jews from Góra [Góra] Kalwaria to the ghetto in Warsaw. My sister was already there, she hadn't come back to Góra Kalwaria with the outbreak of the war. Mom didn't even think of escaping, and me neither, I wanted to go

<sup>1203</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 558. Rev. Bolesław Dudziński, who was exiled in Warsaw, used documents and records from Mława. See also Ryszard Juszkiewicz, *Losy Żydów mławskich w okresie II-jej wojny światowej* (Mława: Tow. Przyjaciół Ziemi Mławskiej, 1994), 119–20.

<sup>1204</sup> Ada M. [Matulski, née Gringlas] Holocaust Testimony (HVT-4003), FVA; Oral history interview with Ada Matulski, USHMM, Accession no. 1995.A.1272.346, RG-50.120.0346.

<sup>1205</sup> Testimony of Roma Rosenblat, SFV, Interview code 779.

<sup>1206</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 285.

<sup>1207</sup> Righteous Medal Award Ceremony, May 28, 2019, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/pl/aktualnosci/ceremonia-sprawiedliwych-w-lazienkach-krolewskich-w-warszawie>.

<sup>1208</sup> Henryk P. [Prajs] Holocaust Testimony (HVT-3171), FVA.

to the ghetto with my family. The neighbors would come over and say, “Listen, run away, go, you don’t look like a Jew, maybe you’ll make it.” I heard there were Jews in Magnuszew [town 25 km from Góra Kalwaria]—there was this sort of grapevine during the occupation—and that there are no deportations there. And so I basically ran away in the evening, after a talk with Mom. I don’t know what happened to my family. I lost contact with them on that day. They were gone without a trace. Only my brother came to me later on. Lots of people left the ghetto then, everyone tried not to surrender.

It’s twenty-something kilometers from Góra Kalwaria to Magnuszew, wintertime, so I stepped in a yard once in a while, knocked on the door, I asked, “Hello sir, open, please, I’m a Jew, I ran away, please, help me.” If it was a good man—he’d let me in, if not—he’d say “Go away, go away!” The Jews stayed in Magnuszew until May or June 1942. [The Magnuszew ghetto was liquidated in October 1942]. I didn’t know anyone there. I basically worked as a tailor, people came in, gave me something to sew, I did it, and it was enough to get by.

Two months before the deportations they created a ghetto, put everyone in, and later moved them to Koźmice [a town ca. 20 km from Góra Kalwaria, 80 km from Warsaw]. In Koźmice they selected young men and took them to Chmielew [village 5 km from Magnuszew] to dig irrigation ditches. There was a labor camp for Jews. I was one of those transported there.

We stayed there until December [1942], and later came the deportation and we went back to Magnuszew. I already had many friends there at the time, among those whom I tailored for. On our way back from Chmielew a Polish friend, Janek Cwyl, pulled me out of the column while the policemen weren’t paying attention. He took me with him, he saved me.

Somehow I managed to get through to Góra Kalwaria. I went to my neighbor, Mrs. Wasilewska. She immediately started to plan what to do. We went to Osieck [a town 15 km from Góra Kalwaria] together, to a parish priest, Kuropek [Rev. Stefan Ścibiorek] was his name I think. He issued a birth certificate for me. Later I got myself a kenkarta, in the name Feliks Zoladek [Żołądek]. You had to do it with the help of friends and friends of friends. Because the priest gave me the certificate, but not the kenkarta, naturally. A friend took the certificate, went to one of those doing funny business [people who fabricated false IDs], and had them make me a kenkarta, that’s how it was done. It wasn’t legal.

I lived in the country, staying with different farmers and tailoring for them. One told some other he knew a tailor, and so I kept going from one person to another. Some of them knew I was a Jew, they figured it out, but well, I did survive. I stayed in one village, returned to another, kept in hiding for some time, had to run away on another occasion, one was always looking for a safe house.

I’ve been exceptionally lucky. They told me: “Heniek, you don’t look like a Jew at all.” I also spoke correct Polish, more or less, I mean I had the right accent, because as for the grammar a peasant wouldn’t notice. I could quite safely assume I wouldn’t be recognized by anyone. Plus I was a soldier, I was brave. That’s why I took risks, I probably wouldn’t otherwise, just like many others. You can’t imagine, you could be killed any time, and not just you, but also the person harboring you. [On 15th October 1941, the death penalty for hiding a Jew was introduced in the General Government.]...

My longest single stay was in the village Podwierzbie near Zelechów [Żelechów, Podlęż community, Garwolin district] with a Mrs. [Katarzyna] Pokorska. She was an acquaintance or a cousin of Mrs. Wasilewska [Mr. Prajs’ neighbor]. Many decent people lived there

generally, the Pyz family for example, the Polak family, the Marciniaks. Even the head of the village protected me. And as for the villagers, some did and some did not believe that I was a Pole. Not once did they later tell me, after the end of the war: “It made us think, you lived here, it’s a poor house, and nobody came to see you, you didn’t leave for Christmas; we eyed you, a nice looking boy.” They didn’t know what to think.

I went to the dances once, but later decided not to go anymore, because I was afraid. I went to the church once, too, but was afraid someone would recognize me as well. But nobody gave me away, simply Godsend. I went to that church after the war and ordered a thanksgiving mass for all the villagers.

I’m not surprised people didn’t want to hide Jews. Everyone was afraid, who would risk his family’s lives? You can accuse the ones who kept a Jew, exploited him financially, and later gave him away or killed him. They’re murderers. But you absolutely can’t blame an average Pole, I don’t know if anyone would be more decent, if any Jew would be more decent.<sup>1209</sup>

**A**fter escaping from the Warsaw ghetto with his wife Irene, Stanley Bors (then Stanisław Przedborski) took refuge in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, outside Warsaw, at the home of his wife’s great uncle, a Jew who was married to a Polish woman named Halina. The Bors couple lived there openly, under false identities, passing as Poles under the protection of a local priest. Another Jewish couple lived in the house next door.

We ran away to my wife’s other uncle, the one who was married to a gentile woman. They lived in Grodzisk, another suburb of Warsaw. We were able to stay with them till the end of the war. The family consisted of the uncle, his wife and his young daughter. We were six people in a two-bedroom house. All our relatives were gambling with their lives by helping us. We had false birth certificates and passports obtained by the colonel [a member of the Polish underground] through his contacts in city hall, but any priest would know we were Jews from our lack of knowledge about the customs and traditions of the Catholic religion. The priest in that neighborhood didn’t report us. He was a good man and didn’t want to cooperate with the Germans. ...

My wife’s uncle was a teacher in his seventies. His wife was about the same age. They were married a long time and had lived in Lodz [Łódź]. When Hitler came they came back to Grodzisk, where his wife’s family lived. Everybody knew my uncle was Jewish but no one reported him to the Gestapo.<sup>1210</sup>

Now, here is a fuller summary of the several documented testimonies given by Irene and Stanley Bors. After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto shortly before its liquidation, the Bors couple were taken in by Maria Czerwińska, Irene Bors’

<sup>1209</sup> Testimony of Henryk Prajs, January 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/henryk-prajs>.

<sup>1210</sup> Sylvia Rothchild, ed., *Voices from the Holocaust* (New York: New American Library, 1981), 224–25.

great uncle's former maid. Because Czerwińska lived close to the ghetto, and the Germans were scouting the area in search of Jewish fugitives, the Bors couple relocated to the home of a former Polish officer in Rembertów, on the outskirts of Warsaw. This officer, with ties to the Polish underground, was sheltering a number of Jews, whom he provided with false identity documents: two of Irene Bors' elderly great uncles (one of who died there), a young couple with a child, two women, and the Bors couple.

Because of the large number of Jews living there, they decided it would be safer for the Bors to make a go of it on their own in rented quarters nearby. The Germans raided the Polish officer's home after the Bors had left. They executed the young Jewish couple and their child, let the two Jewish women go after a priest vouched for them as Catholics, and for some reason they also released one of Irene Bors' great uncles but executed the other. They sent the Polish officer to a concentration camp. Afterwards, the Bors couple and surviving great uncle relocated to Grodzisk Mazowiecki, where they resided in the home of another of Irene Bors' great uncles. This (third) great uncle was married to a Polish woman, with whom he had one daughter.<sup>1211</sup>

Another Jewish-Polish couple in Grodzisk Mazowiecki—a Jew by the name of Schreidman, passing as Fiałkowski, and his Catholic wife, Janina—sheltered Ludwik Simonsohn (b. 1936). Ludwik's parents had made arrangements to have him smuggled out of the Warsaw ghetto in April 1942, and he was handed over to Schreidman, who brought him to his home in Grodzisk. Ludwik lived there openly, passing as a Pole named Ludwik Szymański. When the Fiałkowskis' daughter started developing Jewish looks, they sent her to a convent.

Curiously, Schreidman worked as a driver for the Gestapo. It is likely that he was widely recognized as a Jew in Grodzisk, but no one bothered him until near the end of the occupation, when the Polish underground executed him as a collaborator, not as a Jew. Simonsohn recalled that, on one of his foraging trips, he encountered a nun, said to be a Carmelite who, realizing that he was Jewish, took him home and fed him. She also gave him a stick grenade and showed him how to use it.<sup>1212</sup> In fact, there was no Carmelite convent in Grodzisk or its vicinity, so the nun must have belonged to some other order.

<sup>1211</sup> See the following testimonies: Testimony of Stanley Bors, SFV, Interview code 6251; Oral history interview with Stanley Bors, USHMM, Accession no. 2000.91.2, RG-50.493.0002; Testimony of Irene Bors, SFV, Interview code 6250; Oral history interview with Irene Bors, USHMM, Accession no. 2000.91.13, RG-50.493.0013.

<sup>1212</sup> Testimony of Ludwik Simonsohn, SFV, Interview code 46649; Ludwik Simonsohn: *Escape from the Warsaw Ghetto—A Holocaust Survivor Remembers*, Parts 1–2, Internet: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/08/a6573008.shtml>; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/15/a6573215.shtml>.

Dora Śnieg, an aunt of Sima Wasser (née Gleichgewicht), placed her niece on the estate of Jan and Franciszka Wójcicki in Dąbrówka Szlachecka, outside of Warsaw. The Wójcickis' niece, Apolonia Gorzkowska, solicited the help of a priest. He issued a false birth and baptismal certificate for Sima under the name of Krystyna Budna. A Polish underground cell then used it to fabricate a Kennkarte (German identity document).<sup>1213</sup>

The following example from Włochy, on the outskirts of Warsaw, illustrates the risks associated with issuing false documents. Rev. Julian Chrościcki, the pastor (who was active in the Central Relief Council), local officials, and several other persons took part in an elaborate scheme to furnish false identity documents to Jews. Jewish escapees from the local ghetto were temporarily sheltered at the rectory in Włochy until hiding places could be found for them among parishioners.

The participants of the network were arrested on September 18, 1942 (or October 1, according to another version), interrogated at the Gestapo headquarters on Szucha Street, and then taken to the Pawiak prison, inside the Warsaw ghetto. From there, Rev. Chrościcki was sent to the Majdanek concentration camp where, by some miracle, he was released on May 15, 1944. The other conspirators wound up at Auschwitz.

September 1942—in Włochy, outside Warsaw, the Germans had seized Fr. Chruścicki [Julian Chrościcki], the parish priest, Franciszek Kostecki, the Mayor, Kazimierz Tarnas, the Registrar, Teofil Gruszka, the Town Hall cashier, and two teachers, [Michał] Latoński [Lotoński] and [Witold Zacharewicz, a popular actor], [the lumber merchant Mieczysław] Borkowski, [and Rev. Chrościcki's housekeeper] for helping Jews by issuing them with birth certificates and other documents. They were all taken to the Gestapo [Pawiak prison] in Warsaw and their homes were searched from top to bottom. The organist of the Church of the Holy Cross in Warsaw was arrested for abetting Jews in the procurement of false baptismal certificates.<sup>1214</sup>

Franciszek Kostecki, Kazimierz Tarnas, Teofil Gruszka, Michał Latoński, and Witold Zacharewicz all perished in Auschwitz, as did Wanda Zacharewicz, Witold's mother, who was arrested at the same time as the others.<sup>1215</sup> Rev. Witold Kiedrowski, from the Chełmno diocese, who was also imprisoned in Majdanek,

<sup>1213</sup> Kołacińska-Gałązka, *Dzieci Holocaustu mówią...*, vol. 5, 35.

<sup>1214</sup> Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945*, 43.

<sup>1215</sup> Agnieszka Goszczyńska, *Ksiądz Julian Chrościcki: Życie i działalność* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Archidiecezji Warszawskiej, 1998), 66–67; Robert Gawkowski, *Moja dzielnica Włochy: Historia Włoch i Okęcia* (Warsaw: Urząd Dzielnicy Włochy m.st. Warszawy, 2010), 137–39; “Witold Zacharewicz—przedwojenny aktor: Wspomnienia żony Witolda Zacharewicza—Haliny: Aresztowanie; Auschwitz,” Internet: <http://witold.zacharewicz.com.pl>.

witnessed Rev. Chrościcki accompanying a rabbi as he read psalms from a breviary the priest had managed to smuggle into the camp. Rev. Mieczysław Grabowski, the vicar at the parish in Włochy, also assisted in the rescue efforts. Rev. Grabowski sheltered the musical conductor Zdzisław Górczyński (Grunberg), passing as Jan Michalczyk, and his family.<sup>1216</sup>

The Herman couple, Jewish converts from Lwów, and their daughter, Ewa, survived the war in Włochy, on the outskirts of Warsaw, living openly as Poles, with the support of the local priest. “The Herman family occupied a small house in Włochy, all for themselves. ... They all three had a very distinctive Semitic features each of them looked not like one Jew, but like ten Jews, together. I think that all the surrounding knew that they are Jews, it was impossible not to. They survived the war ...”<sup>1217</sup>

The risks inherent in providing false documents are illustrated by the following account of Maria Rajbenbach, a Jewish woman who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto just before the outbreak of the uprising on April 19, 1943.

How did we obtain our documents? A brother [Tadeusz Romaszewski] of the painter [Marian] Malicki was employed, together with his wife [actually, with his sister Maria], at the Record Office of the Municipal Administration. Together with a parson they had forged both the death and birth registers to secure Christian birth certificates of two deceased women. Thus several people had to collaborate to prepare such certificates. The Malickis had supplied numerous Jews with such certificates. Unfortunately, one of these Jews was identified by the Gestapo and in this way the names of the three people became known to them. The parson was shot dead, the Malickis were sent to Treblinka [actually, it was Majdanek] concentration camp and Malicki had his arms and legs broken in an attempt to extort the names of other rescued Jews. But he would not give them away. Both perished in Treblinka [Majdanek] camp.<sup>1218</sup>

According to Teresa Preker (Prekerowa), the priest in question was pastor of the cathedral parish of St. John the Baptist; he was executed after a certificate he issued for Maria Rajbenbach fell into the hands of the Gestapo.<sup>1219</sup>

Not all the presumed facts in this account are accurate. Both Tadeusz Romaszewski and his sister, Maria Malicka, were employed in the chancery (record office) of the Warsaw Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. As members of the extreme right-wing Szaniec group (a continuation of the interwar National-Rad-

<sup>1216</sup> Gawkowski, *Moja dzielnica Włochy*, 139.

<sup>1217</sup> Rubin, *Against All Odds*, 151.

<sup>1218</sup> The account of Maria Rajbenbach and annotations are found in Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 233, 235, and Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 552, 554.

<sup>1219</sup> Prekerowa, *Konspiracyjna Rada Pomocy Żydom w Warszawie 1942–1945*, 148–49.

ical Camp “ABC”), they issued dozens of false birth and baptismal certificates to endangered Jews, as well as to Christian Poles. Malicka was betrayed to the Gestapo by her brother’s fiancée, Irena Lis, who—unknown to the organization—was a Gestapo agent. The Gestapo arrested Maria Malicka and her husband, Marian Malicki, who was sent to Majdanek and perished there. Malicka was imprisoned in Warsaw but survived the war. Romaszewski went into hiding. The information about the priest’s death has not been confirmed; it appears to be an embellishment.

As a result of this one act of denunciation, scores of people—Poles as well as Jews—were apprehended by the Germans. The Polish underground issued a death sentence against Lis, but she escaped to Lwów. She was brought to trial after the war.<sup>1220</sup>

**G**uta Tyrangiel (later Genevieve Tyrangiel-Benezra) was born on August 26, 1940, one day after the ghetto was established in Mińsk Mazowiecki. When the Germans liquidated the ghetto two years later, Guta’s parents managed to escape with Guta and her younger sister, Esther. They hid in the surrounding villages and then moved to a labour camp named Kopernik, where the danger to their lives seemed less immediate. Their young daughters were hidden in the attic of a building because it was forbidden for children to live in the camp.

Guta and her sister were smuggled out of the camp in a closed wicker basket in October 1942. A local Catholic priest, who worked with the Żegota organization, and a notary, Kazimierz Hert (who helped many Jews) supplied them with false birth and baptismal certificates and made arrangements for them to be cared for by different Polish families. Guta was entrusted to Józef and Bronisława Jaszczuk, a childless Polish couple who lived in Mińsk Mazowiecki. They presented her as their niece, Genowefa Filipiak. Guta survived the war, but her parents and younger sister did not.<sup>1221</sup>

In August 1942, after the liquidation of the Minsk [Mińsk] Mazowiecki ghetto in the Warsaw district and the transfer of most of its inmates to the Treblinka death camp, the Tyrangel couple arranged a hiding place for their two baby daughters while they themselves found shelter with a peasant family in a nearby village. The girls’ hosts, fearing for their safety, enlisted the help of the parish priest to transfer Guta Tyrangel to the Jaszczuks, who lived in Minsk Mazowiecki. The other girl was sent to another family, where all traces of her

<sup>1220</sup> Damian Sitkiewicz, “Maria Malicka: O pomocy udzielanej Żydom przez organizację narodową Grupa ‘Szańca,’” *Kolbajnik: Biuletyn Gminy Wyznaniowej Żydowskiej w Warszawie*, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 28–31.

<sup>1221</sup> Guta Tyrangiel, Photograph no. 09378, USHMM, Internet: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1039838>; Oral history interview with Guta Benezra, USHMM, RG-50.409.0001. See also Guta Tyrangiel Benezra, *Mémoire bariolée; Poetic Paintings; Głosy przeszłości: Post-Shoah peintures, poèmes, récits* (Ottawa and New York: Legas, 1995).

were lost. The girls' parents perished, and only Guta survived, thanks to the devoted care of Jozef [Józef] and Bronisława [Bronisława] Jaszczuk, who saw to all her needs. ... After the war, the Jaszczuks adopted little Guta, who later emigrated to Canada.<sup>1222</sup>

Several other accounts mention the helpfulness of priests from Mińsk Mazowiecki, in particular Rev. Władysław Osiński, the pastor of the Nativity of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary parish.<sup>1223</sup> The rescue stories of the Berger sisters and Irena Kuper (Irit Romano) are mentioned elsewhere. With the assistance of their chaplain, Rev. Stanisław Wiśniewski, the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary hid three Jewish boys in the steeple of the hospital chapel for several days before they were transferred to a safer hiding place.<sup>1224</sup>

After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto in the spring of 1942, Henia Niewiadomska (b. 1926), later Krystyna Wasiak, wandered from village to village in the vicinity of Mińsk Mazowiecki. She stayed for short periods of time with various farmers who knew or suspected she was Jewish. She eventually arrived at the farm of Leopold Sawicki in the village of Dąbrowa. Sawicki agreed to keep her longer. He obtained a birth and baptismal certificate for her under the name of Krystyna Orzechowska, a deceased relative, from the parish in Czerwonka Liwska, whose pastor was Rev. Franciszek Osiński. Henia retained this identity when she moved to Radzymin, where she resided in the home of Mrs. Wasiak. After the war, she married Mrs. Wasiak's son, Bolesław. In 1966, she moved to Israel together with her Polish husband and their three children.<sup>1225</sup>

After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto, Aisic Hirsch (b. 1930) wandered in the countryside. He entered a church in Goszczyn, south of Grójec, and confided in a priest. Rev. Kazimierz Weber, the local pastor, gave him comfort and encouragement. He provided Aisic with a birth and baptismal certificate under a false name (Bronisław Porszskinsky?) and taught him prayers to help him pass as a Catholic. The priest helped Aisic find work on a farm, where he remained for three years.<sup>1226</sup>

<sup>1222</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 308. See also Józef and Bronisława Jaszczuk, RD; "Jozef and Bronisława Jaszczuk Honored at Yad Vashem," YVA, Internet: <https://www.yadvashem.org/events/23-december-2008.html>.

<sup>1223</sup> Lilla Małgorzata Kłós, *Historia parafii pw. Narodzenia Najświętszej Maryi Panny w Mińsku Mazowieckim 1422-2012* (Wrocław: Kobus, 2012), 85.

<sup>1224</sup> Teresa Antonietta Frącek, "Ratowały, choć za to groziła śmierć," Part 2, *Nasz Dziennik*, March 12, 2008.

<sup>1225</sup> Testimony of Krystyna Wasiak (Henia Niewiadomska), October 8, 1962, JHI, record group 301, no. 5874; *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 698.

<sup>1226</sup> Testimony of Aisic Hirsch, SFV, Interview code 17574.

In 1941, after more than year in a local ghetto [Mogielnica], Aisic, his mother, five-year-old brother, and grandmother were herded into the Warsaw Ghetto, the largest ghetto in Poland. There, amidst “absolute misery,” where “rats and sickness were everywhere,” he watched helplessly while his brother and grandmother died of typhus, and his mother slid into madness. Although he did not want to leave his mother, she pushed him out of the ghetto under the auspices of “Save the Children,” a Jewish organization that paid off German and Polish guards. Upon his release, the little boy was on his own.

After several nights of walking, eleven-year-old Aisic was taken in by family friends who hid him briefly in their barn. Fearing German retaliation, he was told he had to leave. Aisic moved on to the village of Goszczyn, arriving on a Sunday morning. Where else does one go on Sunday mornings, but to the local church? Thanks to his blond hair and blue eyes, Aisic blended in with the congregation. It was here that he found the noblest of humanity. When Aisic knelt for confession, all he could do was cry.

The young priest, suspecting the child was a Jew, touched his head through the confessional window and said, “This world will not go on forever. It will end. One day you will find all your loved ones again.”

The clergyman gave Aisic a “real” Polish name and birth certificate and taught him Catholic prayers that would one day save his life. He helped Aisic find work on a Polish farm of a half-German woman whose two sons worked for the Gestapo. Before he got the job, he had to prove he could correctly recite his Catholic prayers. He was saved again. Aisic remained on the farm for three years until his liberation by the Russians in May 1945. “That priest was my guardian angel. He saved my life. It is because of him that I am here today,” he says.<sup>1227</sup>

At least ten Jewish children were sheltered by the Sisters of St. Elizabeth. They had been displaced from Grabie, near Toruń, and relocated to Świder, now a part of Otwock, a town near Warsaw. The Sisters ran a home for children there; it was known as the Educational Institute of St. Anthony (Zakład Wychowawczy św. Antoniego—“Promyk”). The children were given false identities and supporting birth and baptismal certificates issued by Rev. Canon Ludwik Wolski, the pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Otwock, and his vicar, Rev. Jan Raczkowski. (The children were not required to undergo baptism.) Two nuns, Sister Gertruda (Stanisława) Marciniak,<sup>1228</sup> the superior, and Sister Ludwika (Halina) Małkiewicz, as well as Rev. Ludwik Wolski, Rev. Jan Raczkowski, and Bronisław Marchlewicz were all recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Gentiles for their role in the rescue.

Among their charges were: Daniel Landsberg (b. 1939, passing as Wojciech Płochocki, who was later placed with a Polish family);<sup>1229</sup> Maria (Marysia)

<sup>1227</sup> Aisic Hirsch, Birmingham (Alabama) Holocaust Education Center, Internet: <https://bhe-cinfo.org/survivors/hirsch-aisic/>.

<sup>1228</sup> See also Sister Gertruda Stanisława Marciniak, Yad Vashem, Internet: <https://www.yad-vashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous-teachers/marciniak.asp>.

<sup>1229</sup> Testimony of Dan Landsberg, SFV, Interview code 45402.

Osowiecka (passing as Halina Brzoza, later Michaëlle Donat and Michèle Donnet); Ruth (Rutka) Noy (passing as Teresa Wysocka); Manfred Karl Röder-Blicksilber (b. 1934, passing as Adolf Karol); Jurek Adin; Helena Kokoszko; Sasza Wecer (Staszek Wetzter or Szaszka Thau<sup>1230</sup>); Salome Rybak; Anita Szapiro; and Zeev Hertz Fulman (b. 1941).<sup>1231</sup> Their stories appear below. The nuns also gave refuge to a couple of Jewish adults while the local Blue Police commander, Bronisław Marchlewicz, a Home Army member, extended his protection to the convent.

Bronisław Marchlewicz from Otwock (Warsaw District) was a veteran police officer. During the occupation period, he served as the commander of the Polish “Blue Police” (named for the color of their uniform) and had connections with the Polish underground, the Home Army (AK). He was known for his fair treatment of both the Polish and the Jewish inhabitants of the city. Unlike many of his colleagues who collaborated with the German authorities, he endeavored in the framework of his complex job to help rescue Jews who arrived on the “Aryan” side from the local ghetto. While the ghetto still existed, Bronisław would turn a blind eye to Jews who came to market in order to purchase staples. He also released those who had been arrested and brought to the police station. He protected the Jewish woman, Zofia Eisenstadt, from Polish collaborators who tried to blackmail her. As a policeman in the city working under the direct command of the Germans and privy to classified information, he would warn Jews when deportations were about to take place. His involvement in the rescue of Jews increased after the liquidation of the ghetto in August 1942, particularly in the rescue of children. In this matter, he cooperated with the nuns of the St. Elizabeth convent (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Św. Elżbiety), under the guidance of Gertruda Marciniak, the mother superior, who ran the Promyk orphanage where several Jewish children were being hidden. The Jewish child, Maria Osowiecka (later, Michèle Donnet), was brought to the police station at the time of the liquidation of the ghetto. Bronisław Marchlewicz entrusted her to the Polish woman, Aleksandra Szpakowska and helped to bring the child to the convent. In addition, he arranged for another three Jewish children to be taken into the convent: Daniel Landsberg, Renata Noj, and Salomea Rybak. Bronisław did not participate in the liquidation of the ghetto and ignored the command of his German superiors to shoot fleeing Jews. He also forbade his Polish subordinates to participate in the plunder and pillage. After the liquidation of the ghetto, he knew of several Jews who were hiding in the city in Polish homes or under false identities, and was in contact with them and warned them in times of danger. Among these were the members of the Fleising family who entrusted him with valuables for their subsistence during the war, knowing that they would receive the remainder back.<sup>1232</sup>

**T**he rescue of Maria Osowiecka (later Michèle Donnet) has been recorded:

In August 1942, on the eve of the liquidation of the ghetto in Otwock (Warsaw District), five-year-old Maria Osowiecka (later, Michèle Donnet) and her mother, Anna (née Litewska), were evicted from the apartment they were renting after the landlord discovered that

<sup>1230</sup> Barbara Engelking, Jacek Leociak, and Dariusz Libionka, eds., *Prowincja noc: Życie i zagłada Żydów w dystrykcie warszawskim* (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 2007), 356.

<sup>1231</sup> Testimony of Zeev Hertz Fulman, YVA, file O.3 V.T/10481 (Item 8837478).

<sup>1232</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 592.

they were Jews. Maria's mother tried desperately to find someone who would take her daughter in. She asked Aleksandra Szpakowska to rescue the girl, who in the meantime had been taken to the local police station. Following an exchange with the Polish police chief, Bronisław Marchlewicz, Aleksandra secured the girl's release and took her home with her. Maria stayed there for a time, until Aleksandra obtained a Christian birth certificate for her [under the name of Halina Brzoza] from the community priest, Ludwik Wolski, who cooperated with her. After Maria learned the Christian prayers, Aleksandra, who declared herself the girl's legal guardian, moved her, under an assumed identity as a Polish orphan, to the St. Elizabeth convent (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Św. Elżbiety), under the guidance of Gertruda Marciniak, the Mother Superior, who ran the Promyk orphanage where several Jewish children found refuge. She kept in touch with the girl and visited her frequently, and when danger loomed moved her to a different location. The girls' [sic] parents were murdered, and at the end of the war her cousin, Hanna Kaminska [Kamińska], arrived and took her. During the occupation, Aleksandra, who was known in Otwock for her activity in aid of the needy and distressed, opened her home to other Jewish fugitives as well.<sup>1233</sup>

The family of Max Noy survived the war in Otwock thanks to the assistance of a number of Poles, among them a priest and the Sisters of St. Elizabeth, who sheltered their daughter Ruth.

Raizel Noy of Otwock, near Warsaw, gave birth to her daughter Ruth in September 1939, after the German occupation began. In August 1942, during the large-scale deportation of Jews from Warsaw, the Noys managed to escape from the ghetto with their young daughter. Maks Noy, Raizel's husband, worked in a labor camp run by a German contracting company in the nearby town of Karczew; Raizel and her daughter wandered in the vicinity with no hope of finding shelter. Because she looked Jewish, Raizel experienced constant tension and fear of the lurking dangers that she and her daughter faced. Aware that the likelihood of her survival was dwindling, Raizel decided to spare no effort to at least to save Ruth. At his workplace, Noy made contact with Ludwika Malkiewicz [Małkiewicz], a Catholic nun who taught at the Otwock convent orphanage, and asked her to rescue his daughter. Malkiewicz consulted with Krystyna Bykowska, the mother superior [this is inaccurate, as the mother superior was Sister Gertruda Marciniak; Bykowska was not a nun but the daughter of Władysława Cygler (below)—Ed.], and the two agreed to admit the girl. In coordination with Malkiewicz and Bykowska, Ruth was left in the convent corridor one night and when she began to cry—alone and in the dark—the nuns came out and brought her inside. Little Ruth was placed with the Polish children and the nuns cared for her devotedly. Sisters Malkiewicz and Bykowska performed this act of rescue as a human duty flowing from their deep religious faith and sought no recompense for it even though it endangered their lives. Maks Noy eventually escaped from his labor camp and he and Raizel found shelter in Praga, Warsaw, in an apartment they rented from Władysława [Władysława] Cygler. Although Cygler knew they were Jews, she prepared a hideout for them in case of danger and sheltered them from inquisitive neighbors. The only person who knew their address was Sister Malkiewicz, who, in the summer of 1944—five weeks

<sup>1233</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 623.

before Praga was liberated—brought Ruth to them because a child in the orphanage had threatened denunciation. After the war, the Noys immigrated to the United States ....<sup>1234</sup>

Noy provides the following testimony:

During the German occupation, I worked in the Otwock ghetto as a guard.

One day Sister Ludwika Malkiewicz [Małkiewicz] came to me with a piece of paper from the Germans stating that she would be getting some furniture. I don't remember the precise details but she needed ten beds. ... I told the sister to take as many beds as she wanted ...

Soon our conversation turned around to my family. I told her I had a daughter. At first I feared revealing where Ruth was hiding, but finally I told her that she was in Otwock with relatives, but that it wasn't a permanent arrangement and that is why I would like for her to be in an orphanage. At that time my wife was staying with an acquaintance of hers, a Polish woman.

Sister Ludwika took the beds, as many as she wanted, and from that time we became friends—she used to telephone me, and I her, so as not to lose touch with each other. ...

Irka, the Polish woman, was frightened because she had her own family. After all, the Germans killed entire Polish families for harboring Jews! ... my wife went with Ruth to Kocowa [?], if only to stay there for two weeks. After staying in Kocowa, my wife wandered around with my daughter. Somehow we always managed to stay in contact. Then one day we made an arrangement. I sent a Pole I knew, Kobus, to bring my daughter. He couldn't take my wife because there was too much risk involved.

Kobus took my daughter to his place in Otwock, and then she became ill. ... She had to see a doctor. Since I had been a student at Warsaw University, I had many Polish doctors as friends. I asked a pediatrician, Stas Wieslawski [Staś Wiesławski], to help. He visited my daughter. ...

It was winter already. I made contact with Sister Ludwika, and as soon as Ruth got well, we gave her the child. It was a winter's evening, cold and snowy. The doors of the orphanage were open and my wife said to Ruth: "Go inside; you'll get some candy there."

Ruth went. We made an arrangement with Sister Ludwika that in case of trouble she would light a candle in the window. If no light shone that would indicate that everything had gone alright. We froze outside for two hours, but no light came, so we left the orphanage.

We visited our daughter only twice. She was under the care of Sister Anna, a brave young nun. Later, when we were in hiding, our link with our daughter was the Polish woman I've already mentioned, Irka.

Sister Ludwika was very careful in her activities, which is why we felt safe having Ruth stay in the convent. We left Ruth with a letter, because that's how it was done in those days. She also had an authentic [baptismal] certificate, with the name of Teresa Wysocka on it, which I got in Otwock from a priest I knew.

Provided with the letter and certificate, Ruth started to cry once she was inside the orphanage. The nuns came down to see what was happening, and then they talked about whether the child was Jewish and if so, whether they could put the other children in

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<sup>1234</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 485–86.

danger if they took her in. My daughter went up to the mother superior at that point, and the mother superior reacted with these words:

“If the child has come to me, then I will share her fate.”

Luckily, my daughter did not talk Yiddish or Hebrew; she only knew Polish and we only spoke Polish at home. Before we left for the convent, we had taught her what to say—that her mother had been taken by the Nazis to Germany, and that her name was Teresa Wysocka.

We gave Sister Ludwika *carte blanche* when we sent Ruth to the convent; she could do anything she wanted with the child for its safety, including baptizing it, for a little water would not be bad if it saved the child’s life. We also left the nuns a little money. They accepted the money, but it would have made no difference if we had not given it, for Ruth would have been accepted into the convent regardless.

We informed the Polish police commissioner in Otwock of the fact that we had given our child to the convent. He assured us that in case something happened and the child ended up at the police station, he would call an engineer living nearby, Szpakowski, and then his wife would take the child in as her own, so that our daughter would not fall into the hands of the Germans.

When Ruth was already in the convent, my wife and I went to Praga to hide. When the Germans were already losing the war, and the front was nearing Warsaw in 1944, Sister Ludwika managed to inform us that the Germans were moving the orphanage to the west and that she didn’t know what would be happening to them. So we sent our liaison, Irka, to pick up the girl, and after that our daughter was with us. She didn’t have to hide anymore and no one suspected that she was Jewish.<sup>1235</sup>

**S**ister Ludwika Małkiewicz gave a more detailed account of her rescue activities.

When on October 10, 1940, the Germans kicked us out of the children’s home in Grabia [Grabie], near Torun [Toruń], and sent us to the General Government (to make room for the Hitlerjugend), the Social Welfare Dept. of Warsaw picked us up at the station in Warsaw and placed us with the Sisters of St. Teresa in Swidrze [Świder] on Mickiewicz St. The living space was too small for all of us, so we requested the mayor to let us have the Jewish boarding school in the neighborhood, which was empty since the Jewish population was already in a ghetto. By ourselves we painted the interior and created a chapel, and the mayor gave us the necessary furniture from that furniture that had been left behind by the previous boarders. I received desks from a Jewish school that had been closed in Otwock.

The owner of the boarding school, as we found out, was Jozef [Józef] Kaplon, a Jew, who was at the time in the ghetto in Otwock, about a kilometer away. We decided that since we were using his establishment, it was only proper to see if he needed food in the ghetto. I sought him out. It was 1941.

Kaplon was without any family and already very old and also ill. He was happy to see me and asked me to visit him regularly. He had something to eat, but every Sunday I brought him a warm dinner and a bit of this and that. Thus I became acquainted with Jews.

<sup>1235</sup> Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, 218–20.

I always entered the ghetto under the barbed wire, for there was no entrance from the side of Swidrze. Except for Kaplon, the Jews looked at me with suspicion. But this didn't last long. The ghetto police themselves proposed that when I would be going from Otwock to Swidrze, I should shorten my way by walking through the ghetto. With time they began to trust me completely, so much so that they gave me their savings for safe keeping, and, needing money, they came for it at night. Later I started going to the ghetto on Saturday, right after school lessons, to see how the Jews prayed and observed the Sabbath.

And that is the way I began my contact with Jews and how it came to be that I wound up helping both Jewish adults and children.

The decision to help Jews belonged solely to the mother superior of our house, Sister Gertruda Marciniak, while I was the person who carried out her instructions, with the stipulation that in case of immediate danger the decision rested with me.

Jewish children were brought in through the requests of hiding parents or Mr. Adamowicz, who worked for the Welfare Department of Warsaw at 72 Złota [Złota] St.

The director of the department was Antoni Chacinski [Chaciński].

In our home there were several Jewish children. They came with fictitious names, some of which I don't remember. I will only tell you about those I do remember:

1) Alfred Karol (Leopold Blitzyberg, phonetically spelled), born in Baden-Baden. His mother was German, his father was a Jew. When the father was killed in the Warsaw ghetto, the mother escaped with Alfred to the Polish side, taking nothing with her. She begged for bread from some German soldiers but did not present herself to the German authorities in fear that they would take her child away to the ghetto. An Austrian woman, Marta Harf (likewise phonetically spelled) saw her on the street. Seeing a sick and teary-eyed woman in front of her, she decided to help. The mother was taken to a hospital, and Marta Harf took the child to her place. The mother died in the hospital, but before she died she asked Marta Harf to send the child to its family in Baden-Baden. The German authorities didn't allow this, and the child was to return to the ghetto.

Marta, a decent human being, looked around everywhere to save the child's life. Finally, Sister Gertruda sent me to Marta. Once there, after examining the situation, I was to decide whether to take the child back with me or not.

There was a fear, which Director Chacinski expressed, that this was a ruse on the part of the Germans, since Marta had assured the Welfare Department that the child was of pure German blood, in the face of which the question became why send the child to a Polish home for children? If I didn't take the child, it would have to go to the ghetto. So I took this seven-year-old boy to our home in Swidrze [Świder]. This was in 1941. The boy remained with us to the end of the war.

2) Daniel Lanberg (phonetically spelled). In 1941 his parents begged us to take him. At their request the child was baptized and received the baptismal name of Wojciech. The child was barely three. The boy's father died in the Otwock ghetto; the mother survived the war and became baptized.

Daniel was a very thin child; he looked half-starved. He constantly had to eat, so he would go by himself to the kitchen to get a bite there. One day he got on top of a table to take a look out the window. Two German soldiers who were passing by saw him and rushed to the kitchen very angry and accusing us of hiding Jews. I ran to Mother Superior Getruda Marciniak, who knew German quite well. (In those days the populace in the

General Government did not know German.) The mother superior entered the kitchen, and with a smile on her face, said:

“How can you possibly think that we have Jews here?”

Daniel, who was called Wojciech at our convent, did not understand what was being said, and at the sight of these faces looking at him with such anger, he went into a panic, crying and cuddling to the mother superior, who took him by the hand and said to him in Polish and to the soldiers in German:

“So you are the one who is supposed to be a Jew? What a joke! Don’t cry, Wojciech; see how nicely these gentlemen are dressed and how good they are. They like children a lot—won’t you like them?”

The boy, though he was still crying, extended his hands out to one of the Germans so that he could hug him. The soldiers were speechless. The mother superior, ignoring their confusion, asked them if they wanted tea and something to eat, all the while acting very calmly and smiling. The Germans were so dumbfounded that all they wanted to do was to leave our convent as quickly as possible. And yet it would have been very easy for them to see if Daniel was circumcised. Apparently they thought our mother superior was German.

3) Ruth Noy, the daughter of Max and Roza [Róża] Noy. She was accepted to our home on Swiderski [Świderska] St. in Otwock in November 1942, at the request of her parents, who were hiding after the liquidation of the ghetto there. With the agreement of the convent I made out a fictitious birth certificate for her under the name Teresa Wysocka.

We arranged the “abandonment” of the child: Without being seen, the mother left the child in the courtyard in the evening. The little girl began to cry, at the sound of which the nuns, and the personnel of the convent, came rushing up, and everyone saw the abandoned child. The girl had a small pouch about her neck, and inside was her fictitious certificate and a letter requesting us to keep the girl for a short time. The mother wrote in the letter that her husband had been taken to Germany to work and that she herself was spending a lot of time trying to make a living and didn’t have a place to keep Teresa. In her difficult situation she counted on the mercy of the nuns. Of course, the mother signed her name as Wysocka.

The child was in our home for almost two years. Her parents saved themselves, hiding in Warsaw on Pelpinski [Pelpińska] St. After the war they wanted to give whatever money they had left to the convent for saving their child. The mother superior refused to take the money, so they offered it to me, and I likewise refused to take it.

4) Salome Rybak. In 1941 or 1942, I don’t remember exactly, thirteen-year-old Salome (I don’t know if that was her real name) was hiding under the stairs in the empty Jewish boarding school in Swidrze [Świdz]. At night she used to come to our children’s home on 1 Mickiewicz St. and take from a barrel before our building the remnants of food left over left as fodder for pigs. Caught in the act, Salome was placed by us in our farm building and given a place to sleep and something to eat. When winter came, we took her in with the group of children in the children’s home where, unfortunately, she could only remain for a few months. One of the wards, the son of an [sic] Ukrainian, wanted to tell the Germans about her. Here, once again, Mr. Adamowicz helped out and found another children’s home for her, this one run by the nuns in Starowce [Starówka, Warsaw’s Old Town]. I took her there myself, though I’ve forgotten the name of the street.

Her Semitic features gave her away. To take her to Warsaw, I bandaged her entire head, leaving just an opening for one eye. I don't know what happened to her afterward.

All the children that were hiding with us were of the Hebraic religion. The only one who was baptized was, as I have already mentioned, Lancberg, and this was done at the request of his parents.

My attitude toward baptizing Jewish children was based on canonical law, which states that in regard to the baptism of children, one should get the approval of both or one of their parents. Furthermore, the baptized child should have a Catholic upbringing. There was no such certainty with the Jewish children we had because their parents could survive the war and bring them up in the Jewish religion.<sup>1236</sup>

**J**urek (Jerzy) Adin, who was born in Warsaw in 1933, was cared for by his prewar governess, Maria Pyjek, after he was spirited out of the Warsaw ghetto in February 1941. Unable to secure accommodation for Jurek, she turned to a Capuchin priest who assisted her in placing the boy at a children's home in Otwock run by the Sisters of St. Elizabeth.<sup>1237</sup> Adin gave his testimony not long after the war ended.

I sometimes went to the Aryan side and many times wanted to remain there but no opportunities arose. ... I asked one boy to take me to my private tutor. I could not stay there because she worked as a nurse for the Germans and lived in a Krankenstube. She placed me with her friend who was already hiding one Jewish boy named Borenstein. ... My tutor arranged for me to be taken to the home of Mrs. Adela. She told me to go to a particular shop at Belwederska Street from where I would be taken by Mrs. Adela. Mrs. Adela arranged a Christian birth certificate for me and registered me as Marian Podbielski. My tutor paid out of her own pocket to buy my false birth certificate. I spent some time at Mrs. Adela's home. She used to go to work in the morning and I was left on my own. In the summer of 1942, I went to a resort called Zielonka [a small locality in the vicinity of Warsaw] and in August I returned to Warsaw. The priest who baptized me was very good to me and placed me in St. Anthony's children's home in Świder [now part of Otwock, a suburb of Warsaw]. ... I stayed there until 1945, when my tutor came and took me with her to Rozalin. Again I felt so good. My family was found in the United States. They asked my tutor many times to place me in a Jewish orphanage. I am supposed to leave for the United States, but I would rather stay in Poland.<sup>1238</sup>

**H**alina Lewkowicz, who escaped to Warsaw from a ghetto in Upper Silesia, eventually found employment at a convent of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth, in the Warsaw suburb of Żoliborz.

<sup>1236</sup> Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, 157–61.

<sup>1237</sup> Maria Pyjek's account is found in Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 372–74.

<sup>1238</sup> Testimony of Jurek Adin, JHI, record group 301, no. 3695.

In the summer of 1943, Halina Lewkowicz managed to escape together with her six-year-old son, Richard, during the liquidation of the Zawiercie ghetto in Upper Silesia. Their escape was made possible due to the assistance extended by Poles active in the underground, who moved her and her son to Warsaw, where they sent them to the apartment of Jan and Halina Mrozowski, both of whom were active in the AK [Armia Krajowa—Home Army]. Lewkowicz and her son, who arrived without any money or papers, were warmly received by the Mrozowskis, who provided them with false papers, shelter, and help. Within a short time, Mrozowska found work for Lewkowicz doing housework for her brother, while little Richard remained under the devoted care of the Mrozowskis. In time, Lewkowicz became active in the underground, acting as a courier. In November 1943, she began working as a practical nurse in the Elizbietanek [Elżbietanki] Sisters' convent in the suburb of Żoliborz [Żoliborz], where she remained during the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944 to care for the wounded brought to the convent, which had been converted into a field hospital. Jan Mrozowski, who was arrested during the uprising, was deported to a concentration camp, where he perished. His wife and young Richard were deported to the Pruszków [Pruszków] camp, and the child, whom she placed in the orphanage set up in the camp, was liberated in January 1945. Lewkowicz and her son remained in Poland.<sup>1239</sup>

The Dańko and Chłond families of Otwock extended help to a number of Jews with the support of Rev. Ludwik Wolski, the local pastor, and nuns, among them Sisters of St. Elizabeth.

From 1936, Mieczysław Dańko lived in Otwock, where he was director of the Finance Department of the Municipal Board. During the September military campaign, he was captured by the Russians, but he escaped from the transport and returned to Otwock.

During the war, he was an activist in the peasant movement, also its underground counterpart. In the years 1941–1943 Mieczysław was the commander of the Warsaw-Right-Bank circuit of the Peasant Battalions and used the pseudonym “Odwaga” (“Courage”). In 1943, he was imprisoned by the gestapo in Nowy Sącz for three months.

The Jewish family Wecer (Weczer) was starving in the ghetto in Otwock. Only little Maria would sneak out from the ghetto to buy medications, which she then sold to others, thereby earning bread for her brothers Zbyszko and Sasza, and her grandparents. In the fall, the girl's bare feet got injured. In such a state she met her former neighbor Jadwiga Dańko at a drugstore one evening. “My God, Muszka what happened to you?,” asked Jadwiga, then took the girl to her home on Reymont Street.

After many years, Miriam Thau (Maria Wecer) mentioned in the testimony for Yad Vashem: “That evening was fed and my injured legs were washed and dressed. The Dańko family—Jadwiga and her husband, Mieczysław and sister Nina—listened, horrified, to my account about poverty in the ghetto. It was a time when people were already lying on the streets swollen from hunger. In the morning, when I thanked and I wanted to go back, Jadwiga said to me solemnly: ‘Do not go back again to the ghetto, Muszka.’ Once again, I thanked and explained that I could not stay with her—‘Sasza is there waiting for me, he will die without me.’ The Dańkos could not take him home. He was circumcised, and they

<sup>1239</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 531.

had two children whom they did not want to expose to danger. On the same day, I brought Sasza a cart full of food. From then on, for weeks I would bring him meals every day.”

With the help of a parish priest, Ludwik Wolski, Maria Wecer received a birth certificate for the name Laskowiecka (it was the name of her mother's first husband). Little Sasza also received a similar birth certificate. Then, Mieczysław Dańko with a clerk from the municipal council in Otwock, Mr. Grzywacz, took Sasza away from the ghetto and placed him in a convent in Świder (which probably belonged to the St. Elizabeth convent) as a “Christian child, who had been circumcised by his Jewish caregivers.”

One day Tamara Wecer, the children's mother appeared at the Dańkos' house. She had previously left Otwock, seeking contact with her husband and ways to escape. And again, Mieczysław Dańko helped her. He managed to get her an ID with the name of her first husband. The Dańkos also helped the whole family to find accommodation. The mother took little Sasza from the monastery. However, he died soon. Years later, Maria Thau says “he was dying before my eyes. He died at night, holding my hand. His last words were: ‘Musia, give me bread.’” On his death certificate issued on October 20, 1942 by Rev. Wolski, Aleksandra Szpakowska, another Righteous of Otwock, signed herself as a witness.

Tamara, Maria and Zbigniew Wecer survived the war. In 1946, the children's father, Rudolf Wecer, returned to Poland. Zbigniew went to Israel in 1948, Maria and her mother did in 1958.<sup>1240</sup>

Krystyna's (Krysia) father (b. 1917), Karol Chłond, worked as secretary of the municipal council in Otwock for many years. As a widely respected citizen, he had many friends, both Poles and Jews. His four children grew up in a spirit of respect for other human beings regardless of their nationality or religion.

Krysia Chłond and Lusia Kokoszko became friends in middle school. They sat in one bench at school for five years and visited each other at home.

When the Kokoszko family was in the ghetto in Otwock during the war, Krystyna still visited them often, although it was forbidden. She also brought them money from Warsaw. Lusia's parents asked Krystyna to take their younger daughter, 6-year-old Maryna, to Warsaw, to a safer place in the district of Leszno. [Maryna or Maria Kokoszko was placed in an orphanage under an Aryan name.<sup>1241</sup>] The parents, along with Lusia, escaped from the ghetto and hid in Celestynów, and later in Józefów. Krystyna visited them there as well, serving as a contact person between the parents and daughter hidden in Warsaw. Dr. Michał Kokoszko, working under the false name Kosowski, ran a pediatric clinic.

The entire Kokoszko family managed to survive the war. They lived in Warsaw for the rest of their lives. As emphasized by Krystyna Dańko, her whole family believed that helping other people was completely natural. There was another Jewish child, who lived for several months in the Chłond family's home in Otwock on Łukasińskiego Street during the war i.e. a 4-year-old Jasia Kotowicz, the daughter of Olena Kotowicz née Zybert, who was hiding in Warsaw at that time. Krysia's older sister, Elizabeth, took care of Jasia. Olena with

<sup>1240</sup> The Dańko Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-danko-family>.

<sup>1241</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 169.

her husband and daughter survived the war. Her brother, Selim Zybert, Krystyna's former high school friend, was hiding in Warsaw, but unfortunately did not survive the war.<sup>1242</sup>

Rev. Ludwik Wolski, the elderly pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Otwock, and his vicar, Rev. Jan Raczkowski, both of whom have been recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem, assisted a number of Jews in various ways. They gave them food,<sup>1243</sup> helped them find shelters, and provided them with false birth certificates. In their sermons, the priests condemned German crimes against the Jews as well as the activities of local bandits and extortionists, and urged their parishioners to help those in need. When the Otwock ghetto was being liquidated, Rev. Wolski rescued seven-year-old Marysia Osowiecka (later Michelle Donat) with the assistance of Bronisław Marchlewicz, the captain of the Blue Police, and Aleksandra Szpakowska. After the Germans were driven out, the young girl's aunt wrote to Rev. Wolski to thank him for his selfless deeds.

During the Nazi occupation, the parish's presbytery in Otwock was attended by many people—regardless of their nationality or religion—it was a place of safe shelter, help and care. Those most needy could count on food, supply of medicines and financial aid.

Being in charge of the births, marriages and deaths register, Father Wolski issued selflessly fictitious birth certificates to children of Jewish residents in Otwock, so that they could stay legally in educational institutions and orphanages as baptized children, coming from Roman Catholic families. He would do it risking not only his own life, but also the lives of people from his closest circle. The exact number of people whom priest Wolski helped in this way is unknown. He certainly issued false birth certificates to five Jewish children: Maria Osowiecka (for the name of Halina Brzoza), Dan Landsberg (for the name of Wojciech Płochocki), Ruth Noj (for the name of Teresa Wysocka), Maria and her brother Sasza Wecer (for the name of their mother's first husband, Konstanty Laskowiecki).

Maria Thau (née Wecer, now a citizen of Israel), who was also rescued in such a way, says in her memoirs entitled *Powroty* (Returns):

“A priest in a church in Otwock cooperated with the underground. There were rumors among the survivors from the surrounding towns, who were hiding after the dissolution of ghettos, about a priest who helped Jews, and especially children. He placed many children in convents. He issued fictitious documents and birth certificates without any compensation.”

Also in her testimony made in the Yad Vashem Institute in 1964, Maria Thau talks about “an old parish priest of the church in Otwock,” and “his assistant priest,” who “saved lives of many Jewish children” (referring to Father Wolski and Father Jan Raczkowski).

<sup>1242</sup> The Dańko Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-danko-family>.

<sup>1243</sup> Julek Sendler, an orphan who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto together with Zygmunt Datyner, stated that after they made their way to Otwock, they would go to the rectory for soup daily. See Izabela Stachowicz, *Ocalił mnie kowal* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1956), 111.

The parish priest from Otwock allowed the Jewish refugees (including adults) to sleep in a wooden presbytery building that no longer exists and even under the roof of the church. Hanna Kamińska recalls:

“During the war, thanks to Father Wolski, the parish of St. Vincent was known among the Jews of Otwock as a place where you could get help and, if necessary, spend the night. I myself spent the night there in November 1942 (over two months after the dissolution of the ghetto).”

Saving Jewish children in Nazi-occupied Poland required in almost every case the whole chain of people of good will. Priest Ludwik Wolski worked closely in this respect with other Righteous people from Otwock: Aleksandra Szpakowska, Bronisław Marchlewicz and the Sisters from St. Elizabeth convent.

Hanna Kamińska’s letter of September 12, 1945 [addressed to Rev. Wolski] (original spelling retained) is its beautiful testimony:

“I feel the pleasant duty to express [to] the Reverend canon priest warmest thanks for the care of my 7-year-old cousin, Marysia Osowiecka. In August 1942, during the highest intensity of Nazi terror in Otwock, where on 19 August and the following day the ghetto was being dissolved [liquidated], the priest did not hesitate to risk his life to save an unknown Jewish child. In the context of unruly bands of Germans and Nazis, as well as local villagers’ behavior who would rush out like vultures to grab the possessions left by the Jews, the Christian attitude displayed by Father Wolski, who along with Ms Szpakowska, an engineer, and with Mr Marchlewicz, a commander of the police station of the time, did not fear to save a helpless Jewish child, is reflected even more starkly.

The existence of such people as the canon priest, Ms Szpakowska and Mr Marchlewicz fills us with the faith for a better tomorrow, the victory of good over evil. I wish that my clumsy words could at least in part reflect the feelings that I cherish for the canon priest, Ms Szpakowska and Mr Marchlewicz. Let Poland be filled up with such people.”

In the remembrance of the Otwock’s residents—both Poles and Jews—Father Ludwik Wolski is perceived as a man who believed that helping other human beings is his human, Christian and priestly duty.

After the war, the parish priest of Otwock helped in turn those persecuted by the NKVD and Security Office, and especially the Warsaw insurgents and members of the Home Army. He continued to support passionately the upbringing and education of indigent children and young people, allocating for this purpose his time and money, since he was living a very modest, simple life himself.<sup>1244</sup>

**R**ev. Jan Raczkowski was honoured by Yad Vashem on the strength of Hanna Pinkert-Langer’s testimony. Ten Jews, including five members of the Pinkert and Wilner families, were rescued by the collective effort of several Poles from Otwock, among them Zofia Sydry, Czesława Dietrich, and Antoni Serafin.<sup>1245</sup>

<sup>1244</sup> Szymańska, *Ludność żydowska w Otwocku podczas drugiej wojny światowej*, 86–87.

<sup>1245</sup> Ludwik Wolski, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-wolski-ludwik-0>; Hanna Pinkert (Hanna Langer), PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/your-stories/hanna-pinkert-hanna-langer>.

A number of misfortunes befell the Pinkerts in the Otwock Ghetto, until finally they were told in no uncertain terms that it was time to flee. [Czesława] Dietrich and [Zofia] Sydry came to their aid again, getting [Antoni] Serafin to add Hanna [Pinkert] to the number of Jews already hiding in his house, and later they convinced him to take Zygmunt [Pinkert] in as well. Their stay was not peaceful: one day a German soldier walked in and discovered them, and only a bribe drove him away. When Serafin found out, he was terrified and ran to the local priest, Jan Raczkowski, for advice.

Raczkowski was a figure of authority and renown in the area, and he had aided many Jews. He helped indirectly by influencing his parishioners to be merciful, even instructing them directly to help Jews; he also assisted people like Joanna Kaltman, who was hiding in the area under the guise of being a Catholic, and whom he instructed discreetly as to Catholic rituals and the things she was to say and do in church so as not to be discovered. Furthermore, he handed out fake baptism and birth certificates and did not fear the danger that was all the greater for him because he was such a public person.

Raczkowski told Antoni Serafin to continue hiding the Jews despite the danger, and he even offered his own home to one of the women [Anna Różycka] and her child [Aleksander or Olek Różycki]. In this way the families survived until the liberation in 1944.<sup>1246</sup>

Joanna Kaltman (b. 1929) escaped from the Warsaw ghetto with her mother, Dr. Ewa Kaltman. Toward the end of 1943 they changed their hiding place, moving from Warsaw to the nearby town of Otwock. Here she describes her stay in Otwock and assistance given by the school chaplain, Rev. Jan Raczkowski.

I believe that both for our hosts and in the private classes to which I was admitted almost immediately after moving, in spite of the good official documents and a reasonably believable story, the true state of affairs was quite clear. One can surmise this from the behavior of our landlady, who, during the more turbulent periods of roundups and ransacking by the Gestapo in Otwock, would come to us, sometimes at night, to lift our spirits. Also, from the fact that the vicar priest who was then effectively the spiritual leader of Otwock, Father Raczyński [actually, Jan Raczkowski], would push into my hands notes certifying to my alleged confession. I would later hand these in to the same Chaplain Raczyński during religion lessons in the private classes, as this was compulsory for pupils during the preholiday period. (I had no idea then that Mrs. [Anna] Różycka, who escaped the ghetto with little Olek [Aleksander], was hiding with him in the presbytery at that time.) We could also tell from other small, but then very meaningful, gestures of assistance and goodwill on the part of various people.<sup>1247</sup>

After fleeing from the Warsaw ghetto, Wanda Ziemska (née Posner, b. 1934) was sheltered by a number of Poles in Warsaw. When she found herself in an emergency shelter on Sienna Street at the beginning of 1944, afflicted with typhus, she was cared for by Rev. Bolesław Stefański. At the end of July, a nun

<sup>1246</sup> Jan Raczkowski, RD.

<sup>1247</sup> Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 1, 82.

in lay clothing took Wanda and several other girls to St. Joseph's orphanage in Otwock, where Wanda survived the war.<sup>1248</sup>

It is not clear whether her caregiver at the Sienna Street shelter was Rev. Stefański, a vicar in Grójec, near Warsaw, who was a Home Army member and activist of the right-wing National Party. Rev. Stefański served as a hospital and prison chaplain. He provided Jews with false documents and gave shelter in his rectory to Jan Obalski (Oberfeld), a prominent engineer, postwar professor, and scholar of Jewish origin. The Stalinist security forces arrested Rev. Stefański in June 1946, tortured and sentenced him to death on trumped up charges. His sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, and he was released in 1954 because of ill health. He died ten years later.<sup>1249</sup>

**A** branch of Żegota, the Council for Aid to Jews, also functioned in Lwów, headed by Władysława Choms (known in Polish as Władysława Chomsowa, her married name). Her local branch received extensive assistance from the Polish underground and Catholic Church.

In Lvov [Lwów], the Eastern Galician capital, those who offered to help Jews included Władysława Choms, a Polish woman known as the 'Angel of Lvov'. Following the establishment in Warsaw of Żegota [Żegota]—the Council for Assistance to the Jews—she became the head of its local branch. Later she was to describe how both the Roman Catholic Church and the underground Armia Krajowa or Home Army assisted her and Żegota in making it possible for Jews to be saved. "The Catholic clergy were of invaluable assistance," she wrote, "in enabling us to obtain certificates of baptism, for which they provided blank forms, instructions on what to do, and ready-made certificates. How much effort and nerves went into the making of one document! With time we became more experienced. Żegota from Warsaw began to supply us with blanks of documents and the Home Army legalizing cell with beautifully made official stamps. The fury of the Gestapo at our graphic skills was correspondingly great for they realized what was going on."<sup>[1250]</sup> ...

One of those who owed his survival to Władysława Choms and to at least one other member of Żegota in Eastern Galicia was Zygmunt Chotiner. ... "Mrs. Choms helped to hide the doomed Jews from the ghetto and the escapees from the underground water canals. Two of her Polish lady friends were tortured to death after the search and discovery of false papers for the Jewish people. ... She placed a lot of Jewish children in the orphan houses too."<sup>1251</sup>

<sup>1248</sup> Gutenbaum and Latała, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 2, 348–49.

<sup>1249</sup> Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 388–89; Jacek Żurek, *Ksiądz Bolesław Stefański: Żołnierz bezdomny* (Warsaw: Szkoła Wyższa Przymierza Rodzin w Warszawie, 2014).

<sup>1250</sup> Iranek-Osmecki, *He Who Saves One Life*, 50.

<sup>1251</sup> Gilbert, *The Righteous*, 34–36.

The following information is from *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*:

Wladyslawa [Władysława] Choms, the wife of a major in the Polish army, was known in her town, Drohobycz, as an active democrat ... In 1938, Choms moved to Lwow [Lwów] and, after the German occupation, began smuggling food, money, and medicines into the ghetto. Choms, who was elected chairman of the Lwow branch of *Zegota* [Żegota] in the spring of 1943, organized the escape of a number of Jewish families from the ghetto, provided them with Aryan documents, and arranged accommodation for them in and around Lwow. She placed many Jewish orphans in Christian orphanages and local convents and wrote a report on the situation of the Jews in Lwow which the Polish underground delivered to the Polish Government-in-Exile in London. In late 1943, when the Germans got wind of her activities, Choms fled to Warsaw, where she continued with her underground work. Until her death, Choms kept up contact with many of her survivors in Israel and other countries. The book *The Angel of Lvov*, which describes her activities, was written by people she had saved. On March 15, 1966, Yad Vashem recognized Wladyslawa Choms as Righteous Among the Nations.<sup>1252</sup>

The assistance provided by an elderly priest, identified as Fr. Joseph, in Janówka, near Tarnopol, in eastern Galicia, was described by Irene Opdyke (formerly Irena Gut), a Righteous Gentile credited with rescuing twelve Jews. The church in this village belonged to the parish in the city of Tarnopol.

In Janówka, about three hundred Jewish people escaped. Some of them were from our plant, and some were from other German plants. ...

There was a priest in Janówka. He knew about the Jews' escape—many of the Polish people knew about it. Can you imagine living underground as the Jews were forced to do when the winter came? Many people brought food and other things—not right to the forest, but to the edge—from the village. The priest could not say directly “help the Jews,” but he would say in church, “not one of you should take the blood of your brother.” ...

During the next couple of weeks there were posters on every street corner saying, “This is a Jew-free town, and if any one should help an escaped Jew, the sentence is death.”<sup>1253</sup>

In her memoir, Irene Opdyke describes in greater detail her encounter with the village priest after having smuggled some Jews from Tarnopol, where she worked in a German officers' dining room, to the forest near Janówka.

It was on my way back to Ternopol [Tarnopol] that day that I stopped at the church in Janówka. ...

There were not many people. They were peasants, mostly ... The priest was speaking when I dipped my knee toward the altar and took a seat in the back.

<sup>1252</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 143.

<sup>1253</sup> Rittner and Myers, *The Courage to Care*, 47–48.

I bowed my head and closed my eyes as though in prayer, but truly I was both exhausted and overexcited. ... at first I did not pay much attention to his words. But then I began listening, and I realized that he was encouraging his flock to resist the Nazis and to help the Jews.

“... and to remember those who are less fortunate than you,” he was reminding them in a quiet voice. “Our Savior commands that we not stain our hands with the blood of innocents. The righteous path is never an easy path, but at its end lies eternal love, eternal life.” Surely, he must have known that the forest surrounding his parish was filled with hunted men. He was telling his parishioners to help them. What he was saying could well bring him punishment from the Germans.

I looked up and studied him with new interest. He was a very old man, bald and wrinkled, but he had an upright carriage and his voice had no quaver in it. I noticed him glance my way from time to time, and I thought his look was kind. ...

When the service was over, I lingered in the churchyard, admiring the roses, while the priest blessed the country folk, and one by one, or in small family groups, they took their leave of him ...

At last, he turned to me. “Good morning,” he said. “I am Father Joseph.” ...

“Is this your *dorożka* [carriage]?” the priest said, walking to the bony horse and stroking his nose.

I wiped my nose quickly, sniffing back my tears. “Yes—at least, I borrowed it from a friend.”

“Making a delivery?” he asked. He turned his mild eyes to me, the eyes of a man who had seen everything and yet still loved people.

At once, my heart ached to confide in him, to lay my worries and responsibilities in someone else’s lap. ... The only thing I did not tell him was that I was helping Jews escape. It was too dangerous a secret to share

When I was finished, I looked at him anxiously, waiting to hear the sort of sorrowful rebuke that so many priests specialized in. But Father Joseph only nodded again.

“Irena, this is a war. God knows your heart. And God knows what you are doing with that *dorożka* today.” ...

“Thank you, Father Joseph,” I said at last.

“When you come through Janówka next time, stop and visit me.” ...

I had taken six people to the forest, and although they had disappeared, they were never far from my thoughts. When I could, I borrowed the *dorożka* from Helen’s farm and drove to Janówka, where I left bundles of food. ...

I did not always stop at the church to see Father Joseph. Occasionally, I was in too great a hurry, and had to be back to serve a meal. Or else I would see the old priest, with his straw gardening hat shielding his eyes from the sun, leaning on a pitchfork and talking with a neighbor. He knew what my trips to the *puszcza* [forest] meant. I was sure of it. I did not know if anyone else in the village noticed my comings and goings to the forest. In those days, people were either especially nosy, or they kept anxiously to themselves—but no one ever seemed to recognize me or take notice.<sup>1254</sup>

<sup>1254</sup> Irene Gut Opdyke with Jennifer Armstrong, *In My Hands: Memories of a Holocaust Rescuer* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 146–51.

Irene Gut Opdyke recalls the executions of November 1943 that she watched in horror in nearby Tarnopol. These public spectacles—which Poles were often forced to watch—were calculated to strike terror into the hearts of ordinary civilians and thereby subjugate the Polish nation.

I was running across the town square ... and the square, although usually active on a market day, was choked with a milling, bewildered crowd. SS men abruptly pushed me into the middle of the square, just as they had the others, with a command not to leave. A scaffold had been erected in the center of the square, and what appeared to be two separate families were slowly escorted through the crowd to the block. A Polish couple, holding two small children, were brought up first, followed by a Jewish couple with one child, all three wearing the yellow Star of David. Both groups were lined up in front of dangling nooses. They were going to hang the children as well! Why didn't somebody do something? What could be done? Finally, their "crimes" were announced—the Polish family had been caught harboring the Jewish family! Thus we were forced to witness the punishment for helping or befriending a Jew. I thought I would die! I closed my eyes tightly, but I could still hear the horrible thuds, as the weight of the bodies hit the ends of their ropes. It is impossible that what I imagined in my mind could have been more terrible than what I might have seen, had I watched, but I felt as if it were. Nightmarish images passed in front of my eyes, unbelievable and horrible, as I heard the death sounds emanate from the scaffold. Not a soul moved; no one made a sound, although a sigh reminiscent of a moan seemed to sweep over the crowd.

"This family, caught harboring Jews against the law, has been executed as an example to all," and [sic] SS officer announced. "This is the result of their crimes." The officer pointed accusingly at the bodies dangling in front of him.

My mind would not accept this statement of brutality. Innocent people killed for saving lives? I kept my eyes shut tightly, wanting desperately to erase the whole scene from my mind, but of course the incident was played back, over and over again in my memory. I saw the same fate ahead of me, if my actions were ever discovered. But I had to go on as before. I had no choice.

Finally they released us ...<sup>1255</sup>

Jewish accounts from the vicinity of Tarnopol attest to the helpfulness of Catholic priests. Fr. Adolf Iwańciów, a priest from Tarnopol, provided the birth and baptismal certificate of a deceased Polish woman to a Jewish woman who fell into the hands of the Gestapo. Although Fr. Iwańciów was interrogated by the Gestapo, he was released for lack of proof of complicity.<sup>1256</sup> Abraham Wand (Avraham Vand) lived in a village, passing as a Christian with false identity

<sup>1255</sup> Irene Gut Opdyke with Jeffrey M. Elliot, *Into the Flames: The Life Story of a Righteous Gentile* (San Bernardino, California: Borgo Press, 1992), 139.

<sup>1256</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 156.

documents obtained from a priest.<sup>1257</sup> Yosef Schwartz recalled that a priest provided food to Jews.<sup>1258</sup>

After escaping from the hospital in Trembowla, where she worked, Dr. Natalia Weisselberg was sheltered by the Ganczarski family in Sady, on the outskirts of Trembowla, in Tarnopol voivodship, along with her husband, Jakub, and her daughter, Ludwika (later Steinfeld). Her host, Jan Ganczarski, turned to Rev. Waclaw Szetelnicki, a local vicar, for guidance.<sup>1259</sup>

On June 5, 1943, we had to flee [from the hospital in Trembowla], past the Ukrainian guards and barking of dogs, and in enormous fear we hurried to Sady, arriving at the home of the Ganczarski family where we remained until March 1944, when the Russians entered. Near the end of our stay, still under the German occupation, Jan Ganczarski wanted to assure himself that he was doing the right thing by sheltering Jews and thereby exposing his entire family to death. [A Polish pharmacist's family living nearby had just been executed by the Germans.] He therefore went to confession. His confessor, Rev. Waclaw Szetelnicki, presently residing in Wrocław, praised him for his actions, encouraged him to keep sheltering us and forbade him to surrender us to the Nazis. In March 1944, Mr. Ganczarski saw us off, giving us his blessing on our road to freedom.<sup>1260</sup>

Rev. Szetelnicki also paid regular visits (on the first Friday of each month) to an elderly Polish couple in Sady, by the name of Szajdek. They were hiding a Jewish couple—the Parilles, from Tarnopol—in the cellar of their small cottage. The Parilles, who survived the war, would come out of their hiding place to converse with Rev. Szetelnicki during his visits.<sup>1261</sup>

Rev. Jan Pawlicki, the pastor of Zborów, near Tarnopol, was one of several Poles instrumental in saving the Dul (Doll) family. He provided false documents to Maksymilian (Meniachem) Dul, his wife, Anna, and their daughter, Janina, and

<sup>1257</sup> Testimony of Abraham Wand (Avraham Vand), YVA, file O.3 V.T/3333 (Item 4030753).

<sup>1258</sup> Testimony of Yosef Schwartz, cited in Yehoshua Pinchas Klarner, “Bursztyn,” in Mordekhai Amihai, David Stockfish, and Shmuel Bari, eds., *The Community of Rohatyn and Environs*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/rogatin/rohatyn.html>, translated from *Kehilat Rohatyn ve-ha-seviva* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Rohatyn in Israel, 1962), 327 ff.

<sup>1259</sup> Ludwika Steinfeld, *Far from Lambarene: A Biography, the Second World War, and Typhus Spotted Fever* (Frankfurt am Main: Steinfeld, 1992); Ludwika Steinfeld, *Żydzi i ludzie* (Frankfurt am Main: Steinfeld, 1997); Ludwika Steinfeld, *Huragan i cisza: Epizody wojenne* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 2017). Dr. Natalia Weisselberg's daughter, Ludwika, had been previously sheltered, together with her grandmother, by Hanna Rozkosz in the village of Krowinka near Trembowla. See “Moja mała ojczyzna—Brodów,” (XV), Internet: <https://mularczyk-rodzice.jimdofree.com/moja-ma%C5%82a-ojczyzna-brod%C3%B3w/>.

<sup>1260</sup> Waclaw Szetelnicki, *Trembowla: Kresowy bastion wiary i polskości* (Wrocław: Rubikon, 1992), 243.

<sup>1261</sup> Szetelnicki, *Trembowla*, 249.

transferred them to Brzeżany, where Maksymilian found employment with the assistance of a Polish friend, Karol Bogucki, who passed them off as Poles. Both Rev. Pawlicki and Bogucki were recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations, as was Alfred Schlüssel.

In 1942, after the massacres by the Germans and Ukrainians against the Jews of Zborow [Zborów], in the Tarnopol district, Maksymilian Doll [Dul] and his wife, Anna, decided to flee with their daughter, Janina. Jan Pawlicki, the local priest, came to their aid, by providing them with false documents and moving them to nearby Brzeżany [Brzeżany]. While in Brzeżany, Doll found work through a friend, Karol Bogucki, who passed the Dolls off as acquaintances of his. In 1943, the Gestapo, on the basis of a tipoff, arrested the Dolls. When Bogucki discovered what had happened, he hurried to the Gestapo and testified that the Dolls were Polish friends of his. After the Dolls were released, Doll found work as an accountant in a Polish office run by Dr. Alfred Schuessel [Schüssel]. Although Schuessel knew that the Dolls were Jewish, he tried to help them to the best of his ability. Amongst other deeds, he went to the population registry to testify that their papers were authentic. When the Dolls were rearrested by the Gestapo, Schuessel used ties with government officials to obtain their release. The Dolls were liberated in the summer of 1944, after which they immigrated to Israel ...<sup>1262</sup>

The complicated process of obtaining false documents is described by Maksymilian Dul.

In Zborow [Zborów] I met with my colleague Waraszinski [Władysław Woroszyński], a former high-school teacher in Złoczów. He introduced me to the Roman Catholic priest, Jan Pawlitzki [Pawlicki], from whom I received documents for my wife and child. From now on my wife would be called Maria Konisz [Kunysz] and our daughter, Janina Konisz. They both had Catholic birth certificates. Maria Konisz was a little older than Anna Duhl, but that is how it had to be. On the blank forms that I had from Jezierna, I attached an identification permit with a photograph of my wife with the name Maria Konisz. That, along with the birth certificate, were her new documents. I had to translate my birth certificate into German and have it authorized by a notary. I could not get that done in Zborow because the notary there was a Ukrainian; one could only get it done in Tarnopol with a Polish notary. The priest Pawlitzki sent one of his people to Tarnopol and he delivered it to me. I burned the original.<sup>1263</sup>

<sup>1262</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 103.

<sup>1263</sup> Menachem Duhl, "A Year in Jezierna and Four Months in Zborow with the Germans," in Yitshak Sigelman, ed., *Sefer Jezierna* (Haifa: Committee of Former Residents of Jezierna in Israel, 1971), 230–53, translated as *Memorial Book of Jezierna*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/ozerna/Ozerna.html>. In his Yad Vashem testimony, Maksymilian Dul identifies several other Poles from Brzeżany who helped rescue Jews but were not recognized by Yad Vashem: Władysław Kruczkiewicz, Jan Nowak, Judge Stankiewicz, Dr. Stefan Biliński. See the testimony of Maksymilian Dul, YVA, file O.3/3302 (Item 3556429).

Rev. Pawlicki also came to the assistance of Maria Cukier. As she jumped from a train taking Jews from Zborów to the Bełżec death camp, Cukier was shot by a German guard. She managed to get to Złoczów, but the Jewish council would not help her. Two unknown Polish women took pity on her and took her to the local hospital, where she was operated on. The doctors and personnel surmised that she was Jewish but treated her very well. After her release from hospital, she went to the rectory in Zborów, where she met Rev. Pawlicki and confided to him that she was Jewish. Cukier remained at the rectory for about two weeks. Rev. Pawlicki provided her with clothes, money and food. He took her to Lwów, where she stayed for several weeks under the care of his friends. Since Cukier was known by many people in Lwów, Rev. Pawlicki relocated her to an estate in Synowódzko Wyżne, near Stryj. There, Cukier met Łukasz and Ludwika Kruczkowski, who took her into the room they lived in. She had to leave when the estate inspector tried to blackmail her. Fortunately, Cukier survived the war, moving from place to place.<sup>1264</sup>

Rev. Pawlicki is mentioned in other testimonies as a very courageous defender of Jews who encouraged his parishioners to shelter them. The family of Leib (Leon) Kronisch (Kronish) from Zborów, consisting of a couple and their two daughters, were among nine Jews sheltered by the Tyrz family in the village of Futory, near Zborów, with the priest's encouragement.<sup>1265</sup>

After escaping from a German work camp in Zborów, Zygmunt Margules and Yossel Zeigersohn found shelter with the Mikuliński family, near Zborów. The destitute fugitives randomly entered their barn and were allowed to remain there after they were discovered. Margules recalled the impoverished proprietor of the farm, Teodora Mikulińska, as an angel. Not only did the priest—believed to be Rev. Pawlicki—support their host's decision, but he also sent food to help feed the Jewish charges. When the Soviet front approached and the area came under bombardment, Margules and his companion took cover in a building where a priest led the faithful in prayer. The priest recognized them as Jews, and he protected them. Another priest then took them under his wing. He too realized that they were Jews. After the Germans had been driven out, in appreciation, Margules sewed a cassock for Rev. Pawlicki.<sup>1266</sup>

Sabina Fuchs (later Schweid, b. 1931) obtained false documents from Rev. Pawlicki that enabled her to survive.<sup>1267</sup> Faja Unruch Szapiro (Faye Shapira,

<sup>1264</sup> Testimony of Maria Cukier, JHI, record group 301, no. 2520.

<sup>1265</sup> Yehuda Bauer, *The Death of the Shtetl* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 109–10. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 832–33.

<sup>1266</sup> Testimony of Zygmunt Margules, SFV, interview code 7785; Lucille M. [Margules] Holocaust Testimony (HVT-1933), FVA.

<sup>1267</sup> Bauer, *The Death of the Shtetl*, 188 n.34; Sabina Schweid, *Consider Me Lucky: Childhood and Youth during the Holocaust in Zborów* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2011). Sabina and

b. 1922) survived in the vicinity of Zborów with the help of a number of Poles, among them Julia Werbicka of Tustogłowy and Katarzyna Rozumkiewicz. She too obtained false documents from a priest, possibly Rev. Pawlicki.<sup>1268</sup>

Josephine Fiksel (then Józia Zauberman, b. 1930), who, together with her father, was hiding with Maria Bartosiewicz in the village of Tustogłowy, near Zborów, tells the story of a helpful priest from the village of Friszna (Jezierna?). The priest even told them when Yom Kippur occurred so they could fast.<sup>1269</sup>

Rev. Zygmunt Białowęż, the pastor of Jezierna, near Zborów, provided false documents to Maria Fischer (later Zahn, b. 1929), a 13-year-old girl from Tarnopol who had escaped from a labour camp in Jezierna. She lived for several months with the priest's nephew Stanisław Mazur, and his wife, Bronisława, passing as Maria Sieczka, Bronisława's cousin. Afterwards, Rev. Białowęż put her father in contact with a black marketeer from Katowice who arranged for Maria to become a nanny in Breslau (now Wrocław).

Her protectors, the Mazurs, continued to pose as her family. They corresponded with her in order to support her cover as a Catholic Pole. Maria's parents and brother remained in Jezierna, where "Everybody in the neighborhood knew we were hiding, but nobody told the Germans. The people in Jezierna were good people. They didn't give us away. They helped us with food. We couldn't have survived without them."<sup>1270</sup>

Rev. Białowęż also came to the assistance of Bronisława Szarer (later Feuer, b. 1921), the daughter of Jewish landowners with whom he was on friendly terms. He provided her with false documents that she used to pass as a Catholic Pole. At first, Bronisława moved to Lwów. After she contracted tuberculosis, she moved to Warsaw, where she was hospitalized for the duration of the war.<sup>1271</sup>

Maria Kamińska (b. 1935 in Lwów as Ruta Linder), survived the war by hiding with Polish families. Her parents owned a pharmacy in Pomorany, near Zborów, in Tarnopol voivodship. Their acquaintance, Rev. Stanisław Kostołowski, the local pastor, found a safe hiding place for their daughter with Malwina

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her mother, Klara, were two of nine Jews sheltered by Antoni and Anastazja Bigos and Julia Czurko-Skrzeczyńska, who were recognized by Yad Vashem.

<sup>1268</sup> Bauer, *The Death of the Shtetl*, 185 n.5; Testimony of Faja (Unruch) Szapiro, YVA, file O.3/3485 (ID Item 3557007).

<sup>1269</sup> Bauer, *The Death of the Shtetl*, 188 n.39; Testimony of Josephine Fiksel, SFV, Interview code 9757.

<sup>1270</sup> Account of Maria Fischer Zahn, in Carole Garbuny Vogel, *We Shall Not Forget! Memories of the Holocaust*, 2nd ed. (Lexington, Massachusetts: Temple Isaiah, 1995), 278–81. See also the testimony of Maria Zahn, SFV, Interview code 22028.

<sup>1271</sup> Testimony of Fryderyka Cassidy, SFV, Interview code 34645.

Lipińska in the village of Urlów, near Zborów. Because of raids on the Polish population by Ukrainian nationalist partisans, Lipińska and her young charge had to relocate to Czchów, near Brzesko.

I was born and lived in Lwów before the war. My name was Ruta Linder. My parents, Sara and Sender Linder, were pharmacists. Several years before the war, they settled in Pomorzany, where they worked in their own pharmacy. ...

In 1941, we found ourselves in the ghetto [in Brzeżany]. After three months, my mother decided that we had to get out of the ghetto. ...

In order to survive, my parents had to turn me over to some Polish family, because I was frequently sick and my cough could have given us away.

We made our way to Pomorzany. Here, my parents gave me over to a Polish family they knew. Unfortunately, I ran away from there to my parents. Another time, an acquaintance, Father [Stanisław] Kostołowski, placed me at the home of a lady he knew, Malwina Lipińska, in the village of Urlów in the Tarnopol province.

There, I stopped being Ruta Linder and began life as Maria Kamińska. The way it happened was as follows. Mrs. Lipińska was reading aloud a list of those who had been shot to death, and I happened to remember precisely this name and surname. I received a false certificate of my christening, I had to learn prayers other than the ones Mama had taught me, and I ceased being a child. From then on, fear that someone might recognize me was constantly with me. I lived like other country children. I took the cows to pasture and fed chickens and turkeys. I longed so much for my parents that I tried to kill myself by hitting my head against a wall, but I only managed to get my head banged up and not to kill myself.

We live in a Ukrainian village, and the followers of Bandera began to bother us. Surprisingly, the ones who helped Mrs. Lipińska were the Germans. There were German officers (Austrians) quartered with us. They gave us a truck and transported us with all our household belongings to Czchów on the Dunajec River in the province of Krakow.

We moved in with the sister of Mrs. Lipińska, Mrs. Maria Barącz. I was there as a relative. I called both ladies "Auntie," and everybody knew that my parents had perished during a bombardment. Mrs. Barącz had a very nice home in which there was also a pharmacy. The front rooms were occupied by Germans as their living quarters. It was extremely crowded in the house, because Mrs. Barącz's entire family had sought shelter under her wings. I remember that all the time I slept in a small child's bed. Behind the hose, in the woodshed, a Jewish man was hiding under the firewood.

The girls of this family belonged to the Home Army. It was a heroic family and very noble. Unfortunately, both sisters are no longer alive. I am still in touch with their daughters and grandchildren. At one time, I wanted to arrange for them to receive the medal of the "Just Among the Nations of the World," In response, I heard, "You know, Marysia, that is completely unnecessary. For us, the biggest reward is that you are alive." ...

In July 1945, my parents were repatriated to Bytom, and they then retrieved me from Czchów.<sup>1272</sup>

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<sup>1272</sup> Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 1, 84–85.

According to Polish eyewitness accounts, two Jewish women were sheltered on the parish farm in Pomorzany. During an attack on the village by Ukrainian nationalists in April 1944, in which 48 Polish inhabitants lost their lives, the Jewish women had to escape from their hideout when it was set on fire. They were shot dead by the Ukrainian assailants.<sup>1273</sup>

Rev. Canon Adam Łańcucki, the pastor of Brzeżany, near Tarnopol, provided a number of false identity documents that helped Jews survive the war.

Stanislaw [Stanisław] Codogni, a blacksmith by profession, lived with his family in the town of Brzezany [Brzeżany] in the Tarnopol district. Throughout the existence of the Brzezany ghetto, the Codognis kept their Jewish friends, the Bomzes, supplied with food and fuel. During the ghetto's liquidation (April–June 1943), Fishel and Ricka Bomze, their daughter, Chana Redlich, and her six-year-old son, Shimon, hid in the attic of their apartment in the ghetto. Even after all the Jews had been deported, they continued hiding in the attic, while Codogni continued to see to all their needs. In November 1943, when new people began moving into the ghetto, the refugees had to find a new hiding place. Under cover of darkness, Codogni's son, Karol, helped move Redlich and her son to a shelter Codogni had found for them on one of the farms in the nearby village of Raj. ... Redlich and her son stayed on the farm in Raj until the area was liberated in the spring of 1944.<sup>1274</sup>

Twelve-year-old Zula Helman also benefited from the assistance of Karol Codogni. She was the daughter of a lawyer from Brzeżany who perished together with a large group of Jews in the first days after the German army entered the city in 1941. Her mother and two younger sisters perished during the liquidation of the ghetto in 1943. Zula Helman managed to flee from the place of execution. She turned to the Codognis for help. Karol Codogni obtained a baptismal certificate for her from the local priest (Adam Łańcucki) and took her to an acquaintance of his in Lwów, where she worked as a nanny. Zula Helman survived the war.<sup>1275</sup>

Zofia Sniadecka [Śniadecka], a teacher from Brzezany [Brzeżany] in the Tarnopol district of Eastern Galicia, had been friendly with the Podhorcer family and the dentist Emil Ornstein before the war. Thanks to her fluency in German, Sniadecka was hired as a secretary with a German company that had warehouses in the Jewish quarter of the city. This enabled her to remain in contact with and help her Jewish friends. In the spring of 1942, Rosa Podhorcer approached her, asking her to help save her family. Sniadecka took the seven members of the Podhorcer family into her home, among them Emil Ornstein and his six-year-old son, Jacek. After she located a family of farmers that would agree to hide the Jews in their home, she transferred five members of the Podhorcer family to the farm and hid them in the hiding place the farmer prepared. Disregarding the danger to her life, she took the care of the family upon herself ... although she obtained false papers for Ornstein, she decided to hide him in her apartment because of his Jewish appearance. Sniadecka searched for a suitable hiding place for Ornstein's son Jacek for a long time until she found a place to

<sup>1273</sup> Jan Selwa, "Banderowcy w Pomorzanych... żyją jeszcze świadkowie," *Na Rubieży* [Wrocław], no. 4 (1994): 20.

<sup>1274</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 152.

<sup>1275</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 89.

hide him far from the city. In late March 1944, a member of the Podhorcer family, Ornstein's sister—who was in the advanced stages of pregnancy—suddenly showed up at Sniadecka's door. The farmer on whose farm they had been hiding refused to allow her to give birth in his home and she had come to Sniadecka to give birth in her apartment. Sniadecka called in a trustworthy midwife and little Danita was born. The baby remained with Sniadecka and the mother returned to the hiding place on the farm. [Sniadecka notified the parish of the child's birth and Rev. Adam Łańcucki registered her in the parish books and issued a birth certificate for her.<sup>1276</sup>] The Germans eventually discovered the Podhorcer family's hiding place and murdered them all. Sniadecka, who feared that the Germans would soon come to search her home, moved Ornstein to her brother's home and fled with the infant to stay with friends who lived outside the city. Sniadecka cared for the baby as best she could, but after she returned home the Germans demanded that she give up the Jews she was hiding. This happened on the eve of the liberation and only the entry of the Red Army into the city saved her life.<sup>1277</sup>

A young woman from Brzeżany, identified as Anna Herzog, was born in 1922 into an affluent and culturally assimilated Jewish family. During the German occupation, a Polish priest and friend of the family sheltered her. She posed as a Catholic Pole and played the church organ. She met and fell in love with a Pole whom she married after converting to Catholicism. She survived the war, as did her parents. They settled in Western Poland, where they continued to live as Catholics.

Anna Herzog was saved by a Polish priest. The priest, who came from a poor Brzeżany [Brzeżany] family, had studied in a theological seminary before the war, and Grandpa Herzog has helped subsidize him. When the situation of the Jews in the ghetto became desperate, Anna travelled under an assumed Polish name to the village where the priest lived and preached. He was ready to help, and Anna played the organ in his church. That's where she met Lech, with whom she fell in love. Before marrying him, Anna was converted to Catholicism by the priest. "I revealed my identity to Lech and he was moved to tears. Lech came from a rather poor mixed Polish-Ukrainian family. His mother told me to consider myself her daughter." Anna, her mother, and her father, not knowing the whereabouts of each other, survived the German occupation and were later reunited. Her mother, too became a Catholic, and although the father never converted officially, they lived as a devout Catholic family in postwar Poland.<sup>1278</sup>

Rev. Stefan Chabło, the pastor of Chodaczków Wielki, near Tarnopol, sheltered Tosia Stadler (later Ajzenberg, b. 1919) after she escaped from a work camp. At various times, she resided with a villager and the priest's sister. Rev. Chabło also rescued a Jewish child.<sup>1279</sup>

<sup>1276</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 562.

<sup>1277</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 561–62.

<sup>1278</sup> Shimon Redlich, *Together and Apart in Brzezany: Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians, 1918–1945* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 126–27.

<sup>1279</sup> Testimony of Tosia (Ajzenberg) Stadler, YVA, file M.1.E/1615 (Item 3542367).

Rev. Franciszek Jastrzębski, the pastor of Kuropatniki, near Brzeżany, sheltered two Jewish women who survived the war. One of them became the priest's housekeeper under a false identity. She had been directed to him by the aforementioned Rev. Chabło. The other woman, who was supplied with food by the priest's sister, was the daughter of a local Jewish landowner. The latter woman's sister also survived with the help of villagers.<sup>1280</sup>

The Helfgott family—consisting of Fiszel and Ettl (Edzia) and their daughter, Anita (later Ekstein, b. 1934), was rounded up and placed in the ghetto in Skole, near Stryj. Fiszel Helfgott was sent to work in a labour camp outside the ghetto. He befriended Józef Matusiewicz, a prewar Polish army officer who worked as a warehouse keeper in the camp. After his wife was seized in a round-up, Fiszel confided in Józef. Though Józef was practically a stranger, Fiszel asked him to save his 8-year-old daughter. Józef agreed to try, but his wife, Paulina, intially expressed reservations initially about endangering the entire family, especially their 18-year-old niece, Emilia, whom they had adopted. The Matusiewiczzes were deeply religious. Although childless, they had raised two other orphaned relatives. One of them, their nephew, Michał Sujata, had become a priest.

Shortly before Christmas 1942, Józef managed to sneak Anita out of the ghetto concealed in a large bag. He placed the bag in a horse-drawn carriage, covered it with straw, and drove to his home in the nearby town of Rozdół. A priest supplied the essential, forged birth and baptismal certificate for Anita, who passed as the Matusiewiczzes' niece, using the name of Anna Jaworska. Anita was instructed on how to behave as a Catholic, since she knew nothing about the Catholic religion when she arrived at their home. In February 1943, the Matusiewiczzes' home was raided by Ukrainian policemen searching for Jews. Fortunately, Anita was able to escape from the house and avoid detection. She returned to her father, who was then living in the labour camp.

In April 1943, Józef again spirited Anita out of the camp and took her by train to the village of Liczkowce, near Kopyczyńce, in Tarnopol voivodship, where his nephew, Rev. Sujata, was pastor. Anita lived in the rectory with the

<sup>1280</sup> Grzegorz Chajko, "The Clergy of the Archdiocese of Lviv of the Latins in Aid of the Jewish Nation during the Years of the German Occupation from 1941–1944: An Outline of the Events," *The Person and the Challenges*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2013): 143–55, at p. 153; *Wspomnienie z życia ks. Franciszka Jastrzębskiego 1890–1962*, Internet: <http://www.kresowianiezkuropatnik.republika.pl/wspomnienieks.html>. A number of Jews were rescued in Kuropatniki. The Kmiec family sheltered eight Jews. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 354–55. Dr. Józef Szelong of Tarnopol placed Malwina Margulies with a Polish family; afterwards, she was taken in by a Ukrainian family. See the testimony of Malwina Knabel-Margulies, SFV, Interview code 14445.

priest and his housekeeper, posing as the priest's niece. She received further instruction in the Catholic religion, but she was not baptized. "He was an angel to me," Anita recalled, "a wise man and always on the alert." During her stay in Liczkowce, two villagers were hanged from a tree with signs around their necks that read, "I helped a Jew." Anita remained in the rectory until the arrival of the Soviet army in March 1944, at which time she rejoined the Matusiewiczzes.

Since Anita's father had been killed and no relatives could be found, Anita remained with the Matusiewiczzes, who treated her like a daughter. She moved with them to western Poland when the Polish population was expelled from that part of prewar Poland, which was incorporated into the Soviet Union. After some time, fulfilling Anita's father's request, the Matusiewiczzes were able to locate an aunt, who took Anita and left Poland with her. They eventually settled in Canada. Józef, Paulina and Emilia Matusiewicz were recognized by Yad Vashem in 1998, but the priest who gave her almost a year of care was not.<sup>1281</sup>

Rev. Szczepan Ufryjewicz, the pastor of Budzanów, near Trembowla, in Tarnopol voivodship, is mentioned in several accounts. From the fall of 1942 until the entry of the Soviet army in March 1944, Szymon Löffelholz was sheltered in a village about four kilometres from Budzanów, by a villager named Milanowski, at the urging of Rev. Ufryjewicz. Milanowski worked at the local mill, which belonged to the priest.<sup>1282</sup>

After being evicted from their hideout, Józef Kleiner of Budzanów turned to his friend, Rev. Ufryjewicz, for help. The priest approached Stanisław Zaranek, a watchmaker, who agreed to shelter the three-member Kleiner family—Józef, his wife Yocheved (Joanna), and their son Adolf (b. 1927)—in the attic of his home. The Witomski family assisted in this rescue effort and later prepared another shelter (a dugout) for the Kleiners. Towards the end of the occupation, Rev. Ufryjewicz directed five more Jews to the hideout: Dr. Julian Silberman and his son Michał, Mieczysław Koller, a pharmacist, and his wife Helena, and Mizio Pohoryles, Adolf's former teacher. When the Soviet army entered the area, Ukrainian nationalists began attacking the Poles. The Poles who took refuge in the local church were joined by the eight Jewish fugitives.<sup>1283</sup>

<sup>1281</sup> Anita Ekstein, *Always Remember Who You Are* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2019); Account of Anita Ekstein in Schoenfeld, *Holocaust Memoirs*, 193–94; Testimonies of Anita Ekstein, SFV, Interview codes 18289 and 54077. Anita Ekstein misidentifies Rev. Michał Sujata as Kujata. The entry for the Matusiewicz family in *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 498, does not mention the assistance of Rev. Sujata.

<sup>1282</sup> Testimony of Szymon Löffelholz, August 1, 1946, JHI, record group 301, no. 1922.

<sup>1283</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 874–75; Testimony of Al Kleiner, SFV, Interview code 11394; Testimony of Ignacy Witomski, SFV, Interview code 31700.

Rev. Ufryjewicz also came to the assistance of a family of converts from Czortków, the Vogels, parents with three children (two daughters and a son). The father had been the director of the electrical works in Czortków before the war. In 1943, the family moved to the vicinity of Zabłotów, near Kołomyja, where they spent the rest of the German occupation under false identities as the Jaworskis. The father turned to his friend, Rev. Ufryjewicz, who directed them to Rev. Zygmunt Gendzieński, the pastor of Kobyłowlaki. Rev. Gendzieński provided the family with the necessary birth and baptismal certificates.

The Vogels survived with the assistance of a number of Poles who were aware of their Jewish origin. Their son, Tadeusz (b. 1926), joined the Home Army. When their existence as Poles was threatened by Ukrainian nationalist partisans, they moved to Zabłotów, where Rev. Michał Rozlepiło, a family friend, headed the local self-defence against Ukrainian attacks, which took tens of thousands of Polish lives.<sup>1284</sup> The following curt account, provided by the daughter of one of those saved, merges some elements of this complex story.

Not far from Trembowla, in the small town of Budzanow [Budzanów], a Roman Catholic priest, Father [Szczepan] Ufryjewicz, saved a whole Jewish family by baptizing them and giving them baptismal certificates, and forging his parish register in such a way that he created for them a complete set of Christian forebearers. With the false identities that he had created they were able to move from place to place, away from those who might know their real identities, and thus to survive.<sup>1285</sup>

A family of faux converts, the Urbachs from Łódź, passing as the Urbans, consisting of Jan and Maria and their son, Jerzy (b. 1933), sought refuge in Budzanów. They lived there openly. Jerzy received his First Communion from Rev. Ufryjewicz, who likely was aware of the family's Jewish origin. At one point, fearing arrest as a Pole, Jan Urbach took refuge in the rectory. He then moved to another locality where he obtained employment, while Maria and her son remained in Budzanów until, fearful of Ukrainian attacks, they left for Tarnopol.<sup>1286</sup>

<sup>1284</sup> The account of Tadeusz Jaworski, an acclaimed filmmaker who settled in Canada, is found in Beata Gołębiewska, "Filmowa wędrówka przez życie: Wojna i nowa tożsamość," Internet: cultureave.com, also posted at: <https://gazetagazeta.com/2018/09/filmowa-wedrowka-przez-zycie-wojna-i-nowa-tozsamosc/>; Joanna Sokołowska-Gwizdka, "Filmowa wędrówka przez życie: Wojna, Bułan i rzeź na Wołyniu," Internet: cultureave.com, also posted at: <https://gazetagazeta.com/2018/10/filmowa-wedrowka-przez-zycie-wojna-bulan-i-rzez-na-wolynium-4/>.

<sup>1285</sup> Gilbert, *The Righteous*, 56, based on the account of Grażyna Cooper.

<sup>1286</sup> Jerzy Urban and Marta Stremecka, *Jerzy Urban: O swoim życiu rozmawia z Martą Stremecką*, Part 1 (Warsaw: Czerwone i Czarne, 2013); Testimony of Jerzy Urban, SFV, Interview code 42587. Jerzy Urban claims no one in Budzanów was aware of his family's Jewish origins. Since he was a boy at the time, he could not have known this as a fact, nor would he have

The Budzanów Memorial Book provides additional information about the rescue activities of Poles from that town, which was located in an area populated largely by Ukrainians. Budzanów was home to a convent of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, where Sister Stanisława (Teresa Rusinek) sheltered two Jewish teenagers who survived the war.<sup>1287</sup> “Only a handful managed to escape. And many of these Jews were caught by Ukrainians and murdered. A few managed to return to Budzanow [Budzanów] and hid in the homes of their Polish friends, or in the Klasztor [klasztor] (monastery).”<sup>1288</sup>

Rev. Franciszek Bajer, vicar of the parish in Założce, near Zborów, Tarnopol Voivodshop, extended help to the Schorr family.

When war broke out, 12-year-old Sophie Schorr was living with her parents, Otto (a physician) and Mary, in the town of Załoszce [Założce]. ... In 1941, the Nazis invaded [Soviet-occupied Eastern] Poland and the Schorrs were forced to move into a small apartment in the “old town.” Their landlady was Maria Szawłowska.

As the situation steadily worsened, the Schorrs decided to send Sophie away to safety. With the help of his friend Franciszek Bajer, a young Catholic priest, Otto managed to obtain Christian birth certificates for Sophie and Mary. Sophie Schorr-Reiner later wrote that Bajer became the family’s “guardian angel,” helping them continually throughout their trials.

The Schorrs then approached their acquaintance Artur Bukartyk, a local district attorney, to help them find a family that would agree to shelter Sophie, who was now 15 years old. Bukartyk himself had been adopted into a family as an infant, and his sister, Romana (Roma) Iżycka-Fedorska, agreed to take in Sophie. Roma lived in Lwów, and as a social worker before the war was now deprived of work. She was in her late forties, newly married to Witold Fedorski and supporting both her daughter and her mother. Fearing the antisemitism of some of her family members, Roma told them that Sophie was the daughter of an imprisoned Polish officer, and that her mother had been threatened by Ukrainians and had sent Sophie away. A few months later, Mary appeared at the Fedorskis’ doorstep. Sheltering both Mary and Sophie would have been tremendously risky, because despite the similarities in their looks, they had different names according to their “Aryan papers,” and the Germans often carried out surprise checks in the area. Roma decided to find Sophie another place to stay. She placed her on a train to Kraków, then to Ojców, where the daughter of Romana’s friends, Joanna Morawska, lived. Sophie was presented to Morawska as a Catholic girl, and remained with her until late 1944.

Meanwhile, Otto was in a labor camp in Załoszce, but his job as a physician gained him permission to treat patients outside the camp because of the shortage of medical

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been advised of the nature of the arrangement his father made with the local priest, who was engaged extensively in helping Jews.

<sup>1287</sup> “Pomoc Żydom w czasie wojny: Zgromadzenie Sióstr Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego à Paulo—szarytki,” undated typescript.

<sup>1288</sup> I. [Itzhak] Siegelman, *Sefer Budzanow* (Haifa: Irgun Yotzey Budzanow in Israel, 1968), 313.

professionals in town. During such a trip one day in 1942, someone told him that the camp was to be liquidated, and warned him not to return. He escaped to the woods and made contact with Bajer, who prevailed upon Maria Szawłowska, the Schorrs' former landlady, to harbor him. Schorr was hidden in Szawłowska's attic, a small triangular space where Schorr could only sit or lie down. He stayed there for a year, with Szawłowska bringing him food twice a day and changing the slop bucket every day. Bajer provided Schorr with constant moral support, and encouraged Szawłowska to continue her good "Christian deeds." At the end of the war, Otto had to learn to walk anew as the severely constricted space had damaged his legs.

After liberation, the family reunited and left Poland, first for Munich, where Sophie obtained a degree in medicine, and then to the US, where they settled in upstate New York. They stayed in touch with the Fedorskis, and Roma's daughter visited them in their new home.<sup>1289</sup>

The assistance to Jews provided by Rev. Bajer is described by the owner of the house in which the priest lived with his widowed mother. The account also mentions the assistance of Rev. Jan Kucy, pastor of Kokutkowce.

I know for certain that Father Franciszek [Bajer] helped Jews. Perhaps I will begin with Chaja or Chajka, a Jewess who lived in the Old Town and owned a small general store. ... The winter of 1943–1944 was terrible. The ghetto in Założce was already liquidated and the remainder of the Jews, who were not hiding with Poles, wandered through the forests where they were preyed upon by Ukrainian peasants with pitchforks, or the terrible butchers from the UPA [Ukrainian Insurgent Army], or the Ukrainian auxiliary police. Those caught were killed on the spot.

It was on such a night, when one would not turn out a dog, that someone knocked on our window. It was Chaja together with two of her daughters, Ryfcia and Gitla. One of them was about twelve years old; the other younger. They were frozen to the bone, in dire poverty, hungry and covered with lice. The priest took them in and hid them in the attic and later in a special shelter in the cellar. In doing so he risked his own life, the life of his [widowed] mother, and my life as well as that of my son and my two daughters. I agreed to this—commending my soul to God. [The home in question belonged to the narrator.] Our entire family would recite the rosary on a daily basis with the priest and pray that the Virgin Mary would protect us from Ukrainian denouncers and also that she would protect Chaja and her children. The Most Holy Mother heard our prayers and all three Jewesses survived. After the Soviets arrived, Father Franciszek provided them with false birth certificates so they could pass for Polish women. They left the Soviet paradise and came to Poland. They lived for a while in Bytom and later immigrated to the United States.

I know for certain that earlier Father Bajer had issued such certificates to many other Jews, especially young Jewish women, who then voluntarily, under false names, registered for work in Germany. ...

... On many occasions I opened the front door at night to allow in persons who were very obviously Jewish. ...

<sup>1289</sup> Iżycka Family, RD.

... When the numbers got too large, some of these Jews were directed to [Rev. Jan Kucy] the pastor of the neighbouring parish in Kokutkowce who also issued such certificates to Jews.<sup>1290</sup>

**R**ev. Jan Dziuban, pastor of Barysz, near Buczacz, Tarnopol voivodship, assisted the family of Dr. Max Anderman to survive the war. Rev. Dziuban was killed by Ukrainian nationalists at Easter time of 1944.

Dr. Max Anderman was of one of the few Jewish physicians in Buczacz, Eastern Galicia, who was allowed to practice outside the ghetto after the German occupation began. This came about because of the intercession of Dr. Anderman's Ukrainian friend, the district physician, Dr. Banach. In the course of 1942, as the danger facing the Jews in this city mounted, Banach arranged a special work permit for Anderman in Barysz, a large village near Buczacz, where he served a rural population of Ukrainians and Poles. Dr. Anderman, who moved to the village with his family, established friendly relations with priests in the area—especially the Polish Catholic priest [Jan] Dziuban. When the Jewish community in Buczacz was liquidated, Dr. Anderman realized that his family would face the same bitter fate and, on Father Dziuban's recommendation, turned to Franciszek Najbar and asked him to arrange shelter for himself, his wife, and their four-year-old son. After Franciszek consulted with his wife, Maria, the Najbars young peasants who owned a modest farmstead, agreed to accommodate the Jewish refugees in their loft. When Anderman asked how he could reward them, they answered that if the Germans discovered them they would share the same fate and if they survived they would discuss a reward at an appropriate time. The Najbars took in the Andermans unconditionally and concealed them for ten months despite the danger. They met all their wards' needs and Maria, who had a young child of her own, provided the Andermans' young son with the daily milk ration that he required. In the spring of 1944, the Red Army liberated Buczacz and the Andermans returned to their home. The Najbars sought no remuneration for their act of rescue, which they undertook out of virtue and humanitarianism. When Ukrainian nationalists burned the Najbars' house after the war, the Andermans came to their rescuers' assistance and accommodated them in their own home. Later, the two families—independently of each other—moved to Wrocław [Wrocław] (within Poland's new borders) ... the Andermans immigrated to Israel.<sup>1291</sup>

**A**fter escaping from the ghetto in Buczacz, Bleema Fenster (later Betty Katz, b. 1930) moved from place to place. On two occasions she turned to unknown priests for help. A priest in Buczacz provided her with a false birth and baptismal certificate and allowed her to stay in the rectory for several days, during which time he taught her the prayers she needed to know to pass as a Catholic. After that document was seized from her, Bleema approached another priest

<sup>1290</sup> Account of Wiktoria Procyk, February 17, 1996 (in the author's possession). See also Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 156 (Rev. Jan Kucy).

<sup>1291</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 537–38.

near Buczacz, from whom she received the birth and baptismal certificate of a deceased person. She survived with the help of several Poles.<sup>1292</sup>

Katarzyna Srebro was one of several Poles in Żyznomierz, on the outskirts of Buczacz, who helped a group of Jews hiding in nearby forests by providing them with food and occasional shelter. Caught in a German raid, in which several Jews were killed and a Polish farmstead was burned to the ground, Katarzyna was taken to the jail in Buczacz.

When her daughter, Karolina Lechka, learned that her mother was to be hanged for helping Jews, she turned to Rev. Ludwik Staufer, the administrator of the Catholic parish in Buczacz. Rev. Staufer, who was aware and supportive of the rescue efforts, appealed to the German authorities for clemency, as Katarzyna was an elderly widow. Remarkably, she was released after a few weeks. Katarzyna's daughter, Karolina, and her three granddaughters, Helena, Kazimiera and Józefa, from the Lechki family, were recognized as Righteous by Yad Vashem.<sup>1293</sup>

A number of Jews from Buczacz and other nearby localities took refuge in Puźniki, a Polish village in a largely Ukrainian area; the village was inhabited by about 1,000 Poles. The local pastor, Rev. Kazimierz Słupski, sheltered several Jews and helped many others. Rozalia Bauer, a Jewish pharmacist from Buczacz, who was passing as Teresa Krzyżanowska, stayed at the presbytery for more than three years without paying any remuneration. For part of this period, the Germans installed an officers' school on the ground floor of the presbytery, thus making the rescue more precarious. Several Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary, whose superior was Sister Aniela Wesołowska, also resided in the presbytery and assisted with the rescue. Whenever the danger heightened, Bauer would put on a nun's robe.

Rev. Słupski also provided a hiding place for Adolf Korngut, a high school teacher from Buczacz.<sup>1294</sup> Dr. Bernard Seifer from Buczacz also frequented the presbytery. Dr. Seifer was sheltered by the Franciscan Fr. Wincenty Alfons Dwucet in the village of Panowice; his son was sheltered by the Kret family in the village

<sup>1292</sup> Testimony of Betty Katz, SFV, Interview code 15424.

<sup>1293</sup> Testimony of Iuzefa Krutnik, SFV, Interview code 37920; Karola Lehka and daughters, RD.

<sup>1294</sup> Adolf Korngut (1907–1973) was a teacher at the State Humanistic High School in Buczacz. In 1935, he married Bolesława Keffermuller, a Catholic Pole and fellow teacher. Although of Jewish origin, he appears to have assimilated into Polish society and converted. After the war, Adolf and his wife settled in Kluczbork, in Opole Silesia, where he was the principal of a high school. See Jerzy Duda, "Z Buczacza do Kluczborka: Historia kresowej, nauczycielskiej rodziny," *Indeks: Pismo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego*, no. 7–8 (October, 2013): 99–101.

of Gutyszyna (which was arranged by Fr. Dwucet).<sup>1295</sup> Rev. Słupski approached trusted parishioners, asking them to take Jews into their care. Jews living in the forest would often come to the presbytery, where they were fed by the nuns and given food to take away with them. Rev. Słupski and Sister Aniela Wesołowska were awarded by Yad Vashem in 2018.

During the war I administered the parish of Puźniki (Buczacz County) ... Being an eye-witness of the Gehenna of the Jewish people in the land along the Dniestr River during the anti-Jewish action [Aktion], I not only felt a deep sympathy for the Jews but also tried to alleviate their sufferings and ordeal as much as I could. I approached my trusted parishioners with a request to take Jews into [their] safekeeping. I also kept Jews at my presbytery. Thus, when visiting a chemist's in Buczacz, while buying medicines for partisan fighters, I made the acquaintance of Mrs Rozalia Bauer, a Jewish pharmacist, who asked me to find a hiding place for her among my parishioners. Before I could arrange for a safe place, she knocked at my door in the Puźniki presbytery one night in October [1941] and asked for shelter there and then. A harsh anti-Jewish action was on in Buczacz at the time in which Jews perished. I admitted her without hesitation. I could not do otherwise. She stayed with me for more than three years, until the Red Army came in 1945 [sic, 1944]. There was no fee, of course. There were nuns from the Congregation of the Family of Mary at my presbytery. Whenever the situation was dangerous Mrs. Bauer donned a nun's frock. There were many dangerous moments over the year, especially when, for a certain period, the Germans installed their officers' school on the ground floor of the presbytery. Spies and informants were rampant, too. At the most dangerous moments I always made it a point to face the danger dauntlessly. I would lead Sister Rozalia, broom in hand, to do some cleaning in the church. On one dangerous occasion, seeing the peril which constantly hung over my head (for providing a haven for Jews), the woman wanted to give herself up into German hands out of her own volition. I refused categorically. I reminded her then that I was an instrument in the hands of the Lord though which He meant to save her. And so it was. She stayed with me happily until the end.

I also provided a hiding place for Mr Adolf Korngut at the presbytery, a philologist and professor in a Buczacz secondary school. He was of Jewish extraction and, as we know, the Nazis did not fail to murder such people either. When "Jewish actions" in Buczacz were intensified, the professor fled to Puźniki and found refuge in a small room next to my dormitory. During hunts for Jews and various searching operations, he went down to a shelter under the staircase. A Nazi major had his quarters in a ground floor room underneath Professor Korngut's. He often drank too much, and one night, quite drunk, he fired his pistol into the ceiling. The bullet pierced through the bed on which Mr Korngut was sleeping, but luckily did not wound him. Doctor Seifert [Bernard Seifer], a Jewish specialist in internal diseases from Buczacz, also frequented my presbytery. He had his retreat with the Kret family in my parish, near the woods, at a place called Gotyszyn [Gutyszyna, on the

<sup>1295</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 484. Fr. Wincenty Alfons Dwucet administered the parish in Hnilcze, but resided in Panowice. Dr. Bernard Seifer was a controversial member of the Judenrat (Jewish council) in Buczacz. See also Omer Bartov, *Anatomy of a Genocide: The Life and Death of a Town Called Buczacz* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018), 171–74.

outskirts of Barysz]. Very frequently and covertly, other Jews from the woods would come to the presbytery, including children. There, they were fed by our Sisters and provided with bread and other food for their return way, while Mrs Rozalia Bauer dressed their wounds and dispensed medicines.

There were frequent searches for Jews in the village. My parishioner from Zalesie near Monasterzyska, Jan Baszczij, former head of the hamlet, kept Jews from the Buczacz Judenrat at his home. They approached him when the final action was about to begin and they were next on the list for extermination. He prepared a hideout dug under the house for them. His house stood out of the way near a creek. Alas, when the Jews became inured to their situation they started venturing into the yard by daylight. Mr Baszczij also kept buying poultry for them in the village. That reckless behaviour gave rise to suspicion among local Ukrainian nationals who began to watch Baszczij's farmstead. The hiding Jews were spotted and given away by Ukrainians: they called the Ukrainian police who arrested the Jews and extradited them to the Germans in Monasterzyska. Jan Baszczij was also arrested and transported to a jail in Czortków. The Ukrainian police took a rich booty—several sackfuls of gold. Jews from the Judenrat were very rich. A death sentence loomed over Baszczij's head. I succeeded in rescuing him through a person who was very influential with the Germans (in Czortków). Alas, he perished at a later date at the hands of Ukrainian nationalists, all the same.<sup>1296</sup>

Rev. Słupski urged his parishioners to help those in need. Confirmation of his caring attitude appears in several testimonies. Antonina Działoszyńska, a very poor widow with two young children, sheltered two fugitives from Tłumacz: Adela Krum, who pretended to be the wife of an imprisoned Polish officer from Buczacz named Kowalik; and her young daughter, Mira, who went by the name Marysia (later Mira Ledowski). They had been moving from village to village, begging for food and sometimes hiding in forests before they arrived in Puźniki. Mira recalled that Działoszyńska invited them into her small cottage near the church in April 1944. “She sat us by the table, and there we saw the seventh, eighth and ninth wonder of the world—a huge bowl of steaming hot potatoes. We hadn’t seen hot food for a long time. After the meal my mother thanked her and wanted to leave, but Mrs. Działoszyńska insisted on us staying, and we finally slept amongst people, and not under the earth.” A devout Catholic, Działoszyńska believed that the Blessed Virgin Mary had protected the Jewish mother and her child and brought them to her home, so she had a duty to protect them from misfortune. She turned to Rev. Słupski to issue false documents for her charges. They lived openly, not in hiding, posing as relatives of the Działoszyńskis, and attended Sunday mass in the local church. When German troops were stationed

<sup>1296</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 337–39.

in Puźniki in July 1944, the Krums stayed for several weeks with Działoszyńska's sister, Maria Komarnicka, who lived in a nearby hamlet.<sup>1297</sup>

A number of other Poles from Puźniki came to the assistance of Jews. The Koryzna family, consisting of Stanisław, his wife, Wiktoria, and their four children, rescued Shoshana Lederer (b. 1941 as Rojza Szechner, known as Róża), from Monasterzyska.<sup>1298</sup> This child's presence was also known to Rev. Słupski, the local pastor. Renata Tannenzapf (later Renate Krakauer), who was born in Stanisławów in 1941, was entrusted by her parents to the care of a villager by the name of Maria (Marynia) Koryzna. Renata's parents, Charlotte and Wilhelm (William) Tannenzapf, came to Puźniki later to join their daughter. They were sheltered by Joanna (Joasia) Krowicka, in a neighbouring cottage.<sup>1299</sup> Renata lived in the village openly, and Rev. Słupski was aware she was Jewish.

Once outside the ghetto walls, my mother ripped off her blue-and-white Star of David arm band and ran down the cobblestone street [of Stanisławów], fully expecting a bullet in the back. By this time I was well trained to be quiet. ... We reached the safety of the apartment of a former neighbour, who pulled us in quickly, no doubt fearing for her life. That night I was nestled in between my mother and Pani (Mrs.) Poliszowa on her bed.

My happiness didn't last long. The next day, my mother handed me over to Józia, who had been a maid in her brother's house, to take me to her widowed sister in Pozniki [Puźniki], a neighbouring village. Marynia and her two young sons were my new family for the next eighteen months. With my blond hair, blue eyes and button nose, I fit in easily as the baby sister. Suffering from malnutrition and one childhood illness after another, it took a while for me to become a healthy normal toddler.

Marynia treated me like her baby girl and I even began to call her Mama. I can imagine that her two boys, aged six and three, must have felt some resentment at this little Jewish impostor suddenly parachuted into their poor little home. But in the same way that my own preschool daughter used to trail her adored older brother, I can see myself following the boys around, perhaps to their annoyance, on my newly sturdy legs. They knew I was Jewish. .... the boys soon began to show their affection for me. The first and last serving in the communal bowl on the table was always reserved for me whether it was potatoes, pierogi or cabbage soup. At night they squeezed over on the bed they shared to make room for their new "little sister," Tusia. I'm sure that it made the little boys feel important to be my protectors. They could have but didn't betray me to the Nazis and Ukrainians who came

<sup>1297</sup> "The 'Righteous Among Nations' Have Been Awarded," October 21, 2008, Internet: <http://naukawpolsce.pap.pl/en/news/news,287259,the-righteous-among-nations-have-been-awarded.html>; Działoszyńska, RD; The Działoszyński Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-dzialoszynski-family-0>. Antonina Działoszyńska and her two children were recognized by Yad Vashem in 2008.

<sup>1298</sup> The Koryzna family was recognized by Yad Vashem in 1988 and 1989. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 376–77; Koryzna, RD.

<sup>1299</sup> William Tannenzapf and Renate Krakauer, *Memories from the Abyss / But I Had a Happy Childhood* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2009), 31–42. See also Krzysztof Strauchmann, "Uratowała Żydówki, rodzina złożyła jej hołd," *Nowa Trybuna Opolska*, October 24, 2008.

on regular inspections of the village. And on Sundays, I can see us all trooping off to church as a family, the cute little blond girl holding the hand of each brother. The priest knew I was Jewish, and people found out after the war that he had been hiding a Jewish woman.

Unbeknownst to me, both my parents had escaped to the village before the ghetto was liquidated, one hidden in Marynia's hayloft and the other in the attic of her neighbour [Joasia] on the other side of the creek. From their vantage points, they were able to see me through the cracks, running around barefoot all summer ....

There was great animosity between the Polish and Ukrainian people in this part of Poland. The Ukrainians had nationalist aspirations and had allied themselves with the Germans in the war. This left the Poles to face two enemies—the Nazis and their Ukrainian neighbours. One day [in September 1943] Ukrainians from a neighbouring village attacked Pozniki, which was a Polish village, by torching the straw roofs. All the homes went up in flames except Marynia's. How was this one cottage spared? The peasants must have muttered and whispered that it was some kind of Jewish black magic.

The village priest knew that his people were frightened, uneducated and superstitious. ... But the priest also believed that they were God-fearing people, so on the following Sunday he preached about the protective hand of the Lord, who shields the innocent from danger. Anyone who betrayed an innocent was courting the wrath of God. The villagers understood the veiled reference to the Jewish child hidden among them and they kept silent.<sup>1300</sup>

The Koryznas' neighbour, Jędrzej Łacina, rescued a Jewish woman named Blima and her daughter, Bela. The rescue effort of the Komidzierski family, who hid Blima's husband, ended in tragedy when the Germans found the hiding place and shot him as he was trying to escape.<sup>1301</sup> More than 100 Poles were murdered by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in their attack on Puźniki on February 13, 1945.<sup>1302</sup>

The Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary, who had a small convent in Puźniki headed by Sister Aniela Wesołowska, came to the assistance of Basia Geler Mandel, a fugitive from nearby Buczacz.

Basia and [her fiancé] Meier hid in the woods for another five months. They knew that they could be captured or killed at any time. The couple agreed that if they were discovered and had to separate to escape, they would meet up at a specific bunker in the former Jewish ghetto [in Buczacz]. They hoped that by then it would be safe to go back. The Nazi presence there was likely to have diminished since the ghetto had been cleared out. Eventually, their plan was put into action.

<sup>1300</sup> Tannenzapf and Krakauer, *Memories from the Abyss / But I Had a Happy Childhood*, 113–16.

<sup>1301</sup> Krzysztof Strauchmann, "Uratowała Żydówki, rodzina złożyła jej hołd," *Nowa Trybuna Opolska*, October 24, 2008; Testimony of Teofila Koryzna Kamińska, *Polscy Sprawiedliwi*, Internet: <http://www.sprawiedliwi.org.pl/pl/media/77/>.

<sup>1302</sup> Henryk Komański and Szczepan Siekierka, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie tarnopolskim 1939–1946* (Wrocław: Nortom, 2004), 170–71.

“We were spotted again and shot at. We had to run in different directions. I lost my balance on a steep cliff and rolled down it. I landed near a lake and hid behind some bushes. I stayed there until it was night. I did not know where to go. I was completely lost, and it had started to rain. I was drenched, but I kept on walking. I saw a church. I was desperate, so I took a chance and knocked on the door.

Some nuns answered it. They looked at me and knew I was Jewish, but they decided to help me. They took me in that rainy night and hid me for nearly a week. This placed them at great risk, and they were afraid to let me stay longer. The nuns dressed me in a nun’s habit before I left and pointed me in the direction of the old Jewish ghetto. I had to make it back. If Meier was still alive, I would find him there. ...

As I walked, I carried a crucifix the nuns had given me. ... I made it back to the bunker where I was supposed to meet Meier. He was there waiting for me. There were also others hiding there. ... There were fifteen of us in that bunker. One was a year-and-a-half-old girl. All of us survived ...”<sup>1303</sup>

**E**wa Trauenstein (née Grus, later Turzyńska) and her son, Leon, were sheltered in Tarnopol voivodship successively by three Polish priests: Rev. Mikołaj Ferenc, a Capuchin until 1943 and administrator of the Roman Catholic parish in the village of Markowa, in the county of Podhajce, until that village was attacked by Ukrainian nationalist partisans on January 15, 1944, and Rev. Ferenc was killed together with 56 Polish villagers;<sup>1304</sup> Rev. Antoni Kania, the pastor of Huta Nowa, near the town of Monasterzyska, in the county of Buczacz; and Rev. Grabowski, with whom Ewa and Leon Trauenstein stayed briefly, in a nearby village, until the arrival of the Red Army.

Rev. Kania, a Home Army chaplain, found hiding places for several Jews, among them Dr. Leon (Leizor) Bandler from Monasterzyska, who posed as the village wagon driver in Huta Nowa. Dr. Bandler settled in Wrocław after the war. Yad Vashem recognized Reverends Ferenc and Kania as Righteous Among Nations in 2013.<sup>1305</sup>

Ewa Grus was born in 1913 and given up for adoption. Her new parents, Leon and Gusta-wa Segal, named her Lusía and took her to live with them in Rozwadów. They loved her very much and took care of her every need. When she finished her studies, she joined her father, Leon, working in his pharmacy. In 1933 she married Moshe Trauenstein, who was much older than she was. In 1935 they had a son whom they named Leon, in honor of Lusía’s by then deceased adoptive father.

<sup>1303</sup> Elaine Landau, *Holocaust Memories: Speaking the Truth in Their Own Words* (New York: F. Watts, 2001), 31–32.

<sup>1304</sup> Komański and Siekierka, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie tarnopolskim 1939–1946*, 263–64.

<sup>1305</sup> Ewa Turzyńska, *Sądżonym mi było żyć...* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma, 2009), 143–63, 175–82; Testimony of Ewah Turjinskah, SFV, Interview code 4929.

When they learned that the Germans were about to bomb Rozwadów, Lusia and her mother, husband, and son ran away eastward with other Jews escaping the city. They tried to live in Lwów (today Lviv) for a while, attempting to live normally: Lusia worked in a pharmacy, and Moshe sometimes brought milk and potatoes from a friendly farmer in Zimna Woda.

Eventually life in Lwów became difficult, and the family wandered on. They moved to Gustawa's relatives in Różyszczce [Rożyszczce]. Again Lusia found a job in a pharmacy. ...

Moshe Trauenstein, Lusia's husband, volunteered for the Judenrat (Jewish council), which soon ran into difficulties that resulted in all of its members being shot. Lusia decided she would not return to the ghetto, and she had her mother and son hide in the basement of the pharmacy. ...

One day the officer [who she had helped with drugs] returned and said that the family had to leave town. He provided them with identity papers and money but told them they had to find their own transportation. After he left, a woman Lusia recognized from the period of Russian occupation walked in. Her name was Leokadia Krajewska, and when Lusia shared her concerns, Krajewska promised to try to find transportation for her and her family, which she managed to do. Her brother, Edmund Krajewski, came to drive the Segal-Tauersteins [sic] to safety. The Krajewskis also gave them some money and took Lusia's real papers for safekeeping.

Again they tried their luck in Lwów, but things did not work out for them there. Lusia went to Markowa to try to find Mikołaj Ferenc, a local priest who had promised her husband that one day he would help him out. Ferenc agreed to help, and Lusia and her son stayed in his house. Lusia's adoptive mother, Gustawa, passed away during this period. Lusia and Leon spent about seven months in Ferenc's house. Lusia helped around the house, and Leon tried his best as well.

In January 1944 Banderovists [Bandera followers] (members of the military wing of the Organization of Ukranian Nationalists) came into Markowa and murdered all the men, including Ferenc. It was then up to Lusia and Leon to find a new place to hide. They passed through several houses where people put them up until the Nazis came hunting for Jews. ...

The next stop on the grueling journey was Nowa Huta and the home of Antoni Kania, a priest. Kania knew Lusia and Leon were Jewish, but he took them in anyway. The house was full of people who had escaped the destroyed village, and there was much housework to be done. Life was difficult, but it went on. Leon's legs healed. Lusia decided she would go to Lwów to see about her papers. Kania put her in touch with a Jewish doctor he had helped previously. The doctor [Dr. Leon Bandler] aided her in moving about safely. She managed to find Leokadia Krajewska, who was living in her barn because her house had been burned down. When the house burned, Leokadia had kept Lusia's papers on her body, thereby rescuing them from the fire. The reunion was joyful and full of memories, but there was still the question of getting back to Rozwadów. Fortunately, a Soviet officer who had a venereal disease struck a deal with Lusia—she would help him take care of his health, and he would provide fake documents for her and her son to get to Rozwadów. Lusia and Leon arrived there safe and sound and survived the remaining weeks of the war.<sup>1306</sup>

<sup>1306</sup> Mikołaj Ferenc, RD.

Rev. Stanisław Mazak, the pastor of Szczurowice parish, near Radziechów, in Tarnopol voivodship, helped Jews and encouraged his parishioners to extend aid to them. He was personally instrumental in saving the lives of several Jews. Rev. Mazak was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile.<sup>1307</sup>

Stanislaw [Stanisław] Mazak, a Roman Catholic priest, was the spirit behind the campaign to save a group of Jews from the village of Szczurowice in Radziechow [Radziechów] county, Tarnopol district. In his sermons in the local church, Father Mazak would call upon the faithful to take part in saving the persecuted, trying to convince them to do what they could, even at the cost of self-sacrifice. And indeed, the much-admired Father Mazak's flock responded to his appeal and extended its assistance to the Jews hiding in the area. Under Father Mazak's influence, even farmers who did not personally hide Jews in their homes volunteered to help them, providing food and keeping their hiding places secret from their Ukrainian nationalist neighbors. Mazak himself visited the hiding places, cheering up the Jewish fugitives and providing them with medicine as needed, all without asking for or receiving anything in return. In one case, the priest provided Scharlota Weksler [Wechsler] and her son with Aryan papers, accompanied them to Cracow [Kraków], and after learning that the mother had been sent to forced labor to Germany moved her son to a Catholic children's home in Warsaw, where his life was saved. In early 1944, Ukrainian collaborators learned of Father Mazak's efforts to save Jews and sentenced him to death. After he was warned of the danger to his life, the priest managed to flee from his village. He hid out in the nearby city of Lopatyn [Łopatyn] and after the war moved to Upper Silesia.<sup>1308</sup>

The Marciszczuk family lived in a village near Szczurowice. Their son, Piotr, recalled Rev. Mazak's involvement in the rescue of Mendel Friedman and his son Izaak, and Klara Hart and her son Aleks.

During one round-up, a few people were able to escape to the woods. We learned that they were near our house. Father began taking food out to them in the evenings.

One day, somebody knocked on our window. It was a group of Jews—people my father was acquainted with. Mendel Friedman, his son Izaak, Klara Hart, and her five- or six-year-old daughter asked the Marciszczuks for shelter. “Our family expanded,” writes Piotr.

The Germans were spreading fear. “They often drove by to ask whether we were hiding Jews. ‘If we find any, then you’re all going to the grave along with them,’” they threatened. Fortunately, they didn’t search the house. Had they done so, they would easily have found what they were looking for: “at that time, the Jews were staying in the attic (right over the Germans’ heads), because we hadn’t prepared a proper shelter, yet.”

After these visits, an underground shelter was constructed. The situation remained precarious, however: a portion of the Ukrainian population became engaged in hunting Jews (“so as to loot their possessions and kill them off”).

Fifteen-year-old Piotr Marciszczuk served as a courier between those in hiding and a Roman Catholic priest named Mazak. Among other things, he conveyed information and

<sup>1307</sup> See also Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 331–32, 336, 353; Engelking, *Na łące popiołów*, 73; Paldiel, *Sheltering the Jews*, 91.

<sup>1308</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 500.

news. “We all rejoiced at any adversity the Germans faced.” But just before the liberation, tragedy struck. The Marciszczuk’s home was burned to the ground ... by Jews.

It was an accident. Someone knocked a lamp over in the shelter. The kerosene spilled, a fire broke out. Those inside managed to escape but “everything burned down.” All they were able to salvage was a pig and a horse. The Marciszczuks received assistance from family and from the priest. “Whatever father was able to obtain, he shared with the Jews [we were hiding].”

The Russians soon arrived on the scene, but not before Ukrainian nationalists had a chance to exact revenge upon the Marciszczuks. To punish them for hiding Jews, they killed Piotr’s father. The rest of the family, together with the Harts and Friedmans, took refuge in Łopatyn, which was already under Red Army control. For everyone involved, it was the start of a long journey. The Jewish families emigrated to America. The Marciszczuks, meanwhile, left for the so-called Recovered Territories of Poland.<sup>1309</sup>

In addition to Rev. Mazak, Yad Vashem recognized five Polish families from Szczerowice as Righteous Gentiles: Bednarczyk, Jaśkiewicz, Łukasiewicz, Marciszczuk, and Miniewski.<sup>1310</sup> Franciszka Łukasiewicz, one of those awarded, recalled the encouragement and assistance she received from Rev. Mazak in sheltering the Sterling family.<sup>1311</sup>

**M**ichał Czuba, a graduate of a Catholic seminary who lived in Radziechów, Tarnopol voidvodship, helped the Wajzman family to survive the war. Although some reports allude to him as a priest, Czuba’s status is not clear. He was awarded by Yad Vashem in 1989.

In 1941, the Wajsmans, their two sons, and their daughters, Helen and Ziona, escaped from Lwow [Lwów] to the town of Radziechow [Radziechów] in the Tarnopol district, where they were interned in the local ghetto. At her parents’ initiative, 13-year-old Ziona escaped from the ghetto and found shelter with peasants in the surrounding villages. A few months later, however, the Germans raided the area and Ziona had to be moved to another village. Although Ziona had Aryan papers, the local peasants were afraid to hide her and took her back to the deserted ghetto. Not knowing what to do Ziona made her way to the home of Polish acquaintances, where to her enormous surprise she came across her mother and sister, who were hiding there too. Although the hiding place was designed for one person only, room was made for Ziona, and later also for the girls’ father. Although the Polish landlord feared for his life, Michał [Michał] Czuba, the landlady’s brother and a graduate of a seminary, persuaded him to let them stay. Czuba himself took responsibility for looking after the Jewish fugitives and saw to their needs during the ten months of their stay. Although the Wajsmans paid his family for their upkeep, Czuba himself refused to take

<sup>1309</sup> The Marciszczuk Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-marciszczuk-family>.

<sup>1310</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 307, 469.

<sup>1311</sup> Stanisław Bijak, “Bohaterowie są potrzebni,” *Pielgrzym* [Toronto], vol. 7, no. 11 (November 1990): 8.

a cent. With the advance of the Soviets in 1944, all Poles were ordered to leave the area, but Czuba, disregarding the danger, stayed behind in order to look after the Wajsmans. When the Germans converted the house into a military post office, the Jews found a new hiding place in the deserted ghetto, where they stayed with Czuba until the Red Army liberated the town. After the war the Wajsmans emigrated.<sup>1312</sup>

Rev. Józef Pochoda, the pastor of Białobożnica, near Czortków, had to hide when word reached the Ukrainian police that he had baptized two Jewish children. His property was seized by the Ukrainian police. Rev. Marian Niewieściuk from nearby Chomiatówka was arrested as a hostage in his place and jailed in Czortków.<sup>1313</sup>

Feiga Pfeffer's brother was sheltered in a priest's house in Przemyślany, Tarnopol voivodship, for several months after his escape from a train transporting Jews to Bełżec. The priest, who was afraid to keep him longer, gave him some money when he left.<sup>1314</sup>

After escaping from the Janowska camp in Lwów, a group of Jews made their way to the forests near Przemyślany. A village priest, whose rectory they entered, provided them with large quantities of food over several days. After gaining enough confidence in them, the priest directed the Jews to a large Soviet partisan group he was in contact with, which included Poles and Jews. Jakub Birkenfeld, one of the Jewish fugitives, described the priest as "an extremely noble person" and "an angel from heaven."

Ukrainian partisans later abducted the priest, took him to a forest where they hanged and then quartered him.<sup>1315</sup> This appears to have been Rev. Stanisław Kwiatkowski, the pastor of the town of Świrz, who was apprehended on February 14, 1944, while returning from the funeral of Rev. Józef Kaczorowski, who had been murdered by Ukrainian nationalist partisans in the village of Wołków a few days earlier. According to Polish accounts, Rev. Kwiatkowski was tortured before being put to death. Two other Poles who had accompanied the priest were also killed.<sup>1316</sup>

<sup>1312</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 161.

<sup>1313</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 157.

<sup>1314</sup> Testimony of Feiga Pfeffer, JHI, record group 301, no. 1356.

<sup>1315</sup> Testimony of Jakub Birkenfeld, JHI, record group 301, no. 3746, reproduced in Jerzy Diatłowicki and Janusz Roszkowski, eds., *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945: Opór i walka z faszyzmem w latach 1939–1945*, vol. 2 (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma and Stowarzyszenie Żydów Kombatanów i Poszkodowanych w II Wojnie Światowej, 2010), 100–1.

<sup>1316</sup> Komański and Siekierka, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie tarnopolskim 1939–1946*, 302, 306.

Władysław Szela and his wife, from the town of Dunajów, near Przemyślany, obtained a false birth and baptismal certificate from the local Catholic pastor, Rev. Kazimierz Łoziński, for seven-year-old Janina Bleishtif (b. 1933), the Jewish girl whom they were sheltering. The Szelas subsequently moved with her to Lwów for about a year, and then to Czudec, near Rzeszów. Janina survived the war. The following passage comes from the account of Janina's husband, Sender Szwalbenest.

I will tell how the Poles saved my wife's life.

When she was seven years old, her parents placed her under the care of a certain Polish couple. Their surname is Szela ... The Szelas unselfishly procured a birth certificate for her at a Catholic parsonage and took her from Dunajów, Tarnopol Voivodship, to Lvov [Lwów] where she stayed with them in hiding about a year. When the Germans searched the houses for Jews, Mr. Władysław Szela sent her with his wife to Czudziec [Czudec], Rzeszów Voivodship, to his family and there she stayed until the liberation.<sup>1317</sup>

During the deportation of Jews from Skała Podolska, in Tarnopol voivodship, a Polish nun identified as Maria K. hid three members of the Frenkel family in the bell tower of the Catholic church—Fryda (Frieda) and her daughters, Miriam (Mira) and Rita, as well as the dentist Szwarcbach (Schwartzbach) and his sister. They remained there for nine weeks until they were discovered by Ukrainian policemen who were conducting a thorough search in the town for Jewish fugitives. In exchange for some gold, the policemen allowed the Jews to escape. They then went to hide in the forest. Fryda Frenkel found her husband, Julius, who was sheltered by a Pole identified as Adam S. However, he later perished. Fryda and her two daughters survived.<sup>1318</sup> The Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived (of Stara Wieś) had a children's shelter in Skała Podolska, a small town on the River Zbrucz.

Another memoir mentions the assistance provided to Lotka Sternberg and other Jews by an unidentified priest from Skała Podolska.

Lotka [Sternberg] was passing as a Christian in Lvov [Lwów]. The Polish priest who had given religious instruction to the Catholic children in the Polish elementary school before the war, and who had since then sheltered several Jews, had taught Lotka Catholic prayers and liturgy every night for four weeks. He had gotten her "good" Aryan papers—those of somebody who had died—and had made the arrangements for a middleman to take her

<sup>1317</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 406.

<sup>1318</sup> Testimony of Rita Frenkiel (Frenkel), JHI, record group 301, no. 2884; Boaz Cohen and Beate Müller, "A Teacher and His Students: Child Holocaust Testimonies from Early Post-war Polish Bytom," *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 46, no. 1 (2016): 68–115, at p. 91.

to live with a Polish couple as their niece in return for money sent with him by Lotka's parents.<sup>1319</sup>

According to Kalman Harnik, a native of Brody, in Tarnopol voivodship, a number of residents of that town, among them a priest, Rev. Emil Kobierzyński, came to the aid of Jews.

In order to save the children one had to hand them over to stranger gentiles. This is where I feel that it is my duty to mention some of the righteous Christians, those who helped Jews escape, or kept and saved Brody's Jewish children for years. They were undeterred by the dangers and the death penalty they had to face. The following is just a partial list of these people:

Yatsneti Miklashevski [Jacenty Miklaszewski] (a clerk in the tax office, who frequently did favors and charities), Timchishin, the former deputy governor of Brody, Homnyuk, Professor Buchkovski [Buczowski], Kist, Dr. Zavotski [Józef Zawadzki] (the regional physician who went from one bunker to another to provide cure to many of the Jewish sick people and smuggled a substantial amount of money from the outside, everything under a life threat), and Mironko Borchak Lukanich (Ukrainian printer who was very truthful in his relations with the Jews, his father was a pig merchant), Kumornik [*komornik*]—the executer [bailiff] of the court, and the Polish priest of the Christian community whose name escaped me.

My three years old daughter was saved by the Mikloshevski [Miklaszewski] family. They hosted her for four and half years. They treated her like their daughter.<sup>1320</sup>

Rev. Emil Kobierzyński, the pastor of Brody, actively encouraged his parishioners to assist Jews. At the urging of Rev. Aleksander Chodyko of Białystok, he looked for shelters for the Rivkind family and several other Jews.

In September 1939, at the start of the war, Avraham Itzhak Rivkind [Rywkind], his wife, Chaya, and their children, Menachem-Mendel and Raaya, all living in Białystok [Białystok], fled eastward to Brody ahead of the advancing Germans. Brody was then occupied by the Russians and remained in their control until the German attack on the Soviet Union. When the Germans struck again, in June 1941, Menachem-Mendel, at the time in his thirties, was married to Lonia, the daughter of the chief rabbi of Białystok, Rabbi Gedalia Rosenman. Acting swiftly to assist his son-in-law in Brody, Rosenman turned to the Catholic bishop [actually, the dean] in Białystok, Aleksander Chodyko, and asked for his intercession. Chodyko in turn approached a number of clerics in the Brody region and appealed to them to make an effort to save the Rivkind family. However before any of the clerics could act

<sup>1319</sup> Fanya Gottesfeld Heller, *Strange and Unexpected Love: A Teenage Girl's Holocaust Memoirs* (Hoboken New Jersey: KTAV Publishing House, 1993), 113.

<sup>1320</sup> Kalman Harnik, "The Last Days of the Community," in Aviv Meltzer, ed., *Ner Tamid: Yizkor leBrody* (Jerusalem: Organization of Former Brody Residents in Israel, 1994), 165–66, translated as *An Eternal Light: Brody in Memoriam*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/brody/Brody.html>.

on the bishop's appeal, on November 2, 1942, the Germans and Ukrainians staged one of their murderous raids on the city's Jews. Avraham Itzhak Rivkind and wife Chaya were among the victims as was their daughter, Raaya. Only their son, Menachem-Mendel, and his two cousins from the Cygielman family were able to escape by finding temporary shelter and survived the bloody raid. ... Brody was one of the many Jewish communities in eastern Poland (today in Ukraine) that was totally obliterated by the Germans and their Ukrainian collaborators.

... when during 1942 Father Emil Kobieżyński [Kobierzyński], in Brody, in response to Bishop [Canon] Chodyko's appeal, began to make inquiries among his parishioners to help the remaining member of the Rivkind family, Menachem Mendel, and his two cousins, Dr. Julian Cygielman and his brother Avraham, he was able to persuade one of his church members, the Polish-born Marian Huzarski to consider the matter favourably. Huzarski lived on the outskirts of Brody, in the nearby village of Sydonowka [Sydonówka], a distance of three kilometres—a village containing a mixed Polish-Ukrainian population. After receiving the priest's request, Marian Huzarski returned home and gathered his family for a serious discussion about how to respond.

There is no written record of this crucial family consultation attended by all the immediate members of the Huzarski family, including Marian, wife Alfreda, and their two sons, Fryderyk, aged 22, and Zbigniew, aged 19. ... The family consultation ended in a unanimous decision to shelter the fleeing Jews, people whom they had never seen before.

After the war, Zbigniew wrote that on November 25, 1942, he or someone else in the family informed Rivkind of the family's decision and set up a meeting for the next day in Brody. The two Huzarski brothers, Zbigniew and Fryderyk, arrived at dusk and took the three fugitive Jews to their village home through fields and side roads. The three new arrivals—Dr. Julian Cygielman, his brother Avraham, and Menachem-Mendel Rivkind—stayed there for a full 17 months, until the area's liberation in July 1944.

The two Cygielmans and Rivkind were very religious and made an effort to strictly observe the Jewish rituals, even in the unfavourable conditions of their new setting. This included daily prayers, with the donning of the obligatory tefillin (phylacteries) and tallit (prayer shawl) for morning services and eating only kosher food as prescribed by Jewish religious law. ... In consideration of their charges' religious sensibilities, the Huzarskis, themselves religious, purchased special utensils and mother Alfreda cooked their wards' food as prescribed by the Jewish religion. In fact, during prayers, which were at times uttered with intensity and raised voices, the Huzarskis were forced to ask the supplicants to lower their voices for fear that outsiders might overhear them, with all the risks involved for all. Not at all oblivious to their hosts' own religious obligations, the three Orthodox Jews celebrated the Christian festivals with them.

The fall of 1943, a year after the arrival of the three Jews, ... led to the burning of Polish homes in the region, including Huzarski's village of Sydonowka. Many Polish inhabitants took to fleeing to the forest at night, returning to their homes only during daylight hours. Over time, the frequency of raids by Ukrainian nationalists in the village intensified, a situation that greatly concerned the Huzarskis—themselves Poles.

In light of this troublesome development, the Huzarskis prepared an underground shelter at the edge of the forest near their home, filling it with all the necessary items to accommodate their three charges. After transferring Rivkind and the Cygielman brothers to the new hiding place, the Huzarski family continued to supply them with all their needs on

a daily basis, resolving not to abandon them even after the majority of the Polish peasant population of the village had deserted their homes.

In March 1944, the Red Army approached Brody. Out of fear of the Ukrainians, the Huzarskis advised the three Jews to flee toward the approaching Russian army. In June 1944, during the final German retreat, the Ukrainians set the Huzarski home on fire. The Huzarskis fled to neighbors in the forest, and on the following day the Red Army took over. The Huzarski family had escaped in good time and had headed westward to Lancut [Łańcut, a town in south-central Poland].

Rivkind and the two Cygielman brothers made their way back to liberated Bialystok. As a professional textile engineer, Menachem-Mendel Rivkind was inducted into the Red army with the rank of captain and appointed to manage the large textile firm in the city. Once he had located his rescuers, he invited them to Bialystok and ensured their employment in the factory that he managed. In 1946 when he decided to leave Bialystok, Rivkind transferred to his rescuers his big house, which had earlier been occupied by his father-in-law, Rabbi Rosenman, and left for Israel [Palestine]—as did the Cygielman brothers.<sup>1321</sup>

Initially, the refugees hid in a specially-prepared place in the stable with an emergency exit. As raids on the village by Ukrainian nationalist partisans intensified, and a growing number of Polish farms were burned down, Huzarski and his sons prepared an underground shelter for their three charges at the edge of the forest. The brothers Fryderyk and Zbigniew Huzarski were active in the Home Army.<sup>1322</sup>

**R**enata Präminger (later Irena Szczurek) was taken out of the Brody ghetto by her nanny, Maria Hromiak, as a young child. At the request of her father, who continued to visit her, Renata was baptized as Irena Hromiak, with the assistance of two trusted friends. She survived the war as her nanny's purported daughter.<sup>1323</sup>

Irena Szczurek was born in Brody in 1938. Her nanny, Maria Hromiak, lived with the Szczurek family for 13 years, dedicating herself to the loving care of Irena. In January 1942 a ghetto was established in Brody, and the Szczureks were imprisoned in it. Maria found a job and took care of her beloved former employers by providing them, and other Jews in the ghetto, with provisions.

In August 1942 the Brody Ghetto was liquidated. Maria managed to rescue Irena from certain transfer to Belsen and sneak her into her own home. She also tried to save Irena's parents, but eventually they were denounced by an ill-wisher and killed.

Maria Hromiak kept Irena with her throughout the war, despite the vast danger to herself. Even her own relatives threatened her, but she resisted the perpetual fear because of her love for the girl. She gave Irena her own last name and acted for all intents and

<sup>1321</sup> Paldiel, *The Righteous Among the Nations*, 173–76.

<sup>1322</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 281–82; Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 189.

<sup>1323</sup> Kołacińska-Gałązka, *Dzieci Holocaustu mówią...*, vol. 5, 267–68.

purposes as her adoptive mother, bribing suspicious policemen, constantly changing her address, and avoiding discovery until the liberation.

After the war Maria remained Irena's "second mother," as the girl called her, although life was very difficult. All of the Szczureks' possessions were gone, and Maria was forced to work as a manual laborer at a cement factory in order to keep herself and her adoptive daughter afloat. She never established a family of her own, dedicating herself to Irena.<sup>1324</sup>

**E**ugenia (Gina) Hochberg (later Gina Lanceter, b.1927) was able to survive thanks to the help of a number of people, including the Catholic priest who came to her assistance and nursed her back to health after she jumped from a deportation train headed to the Bełżec death camp in May 1943. She was shot by a German guard as she jumped from the train and lost consciousness; fortunately, all she suffered was just a flesh wound. This happened near the village of Zaszaków, north of Lwów, in the parish of Kościejów.

A Polish railroad employee came across the injured girl, dressed her wound, fed her, and gave her some clothes. She made her way to a church in a nearby village. A compassionate priest sheltered her until she recovered and provided her with a false birth and baptismal certificate. He purchased a ticket for her to return to Brody and escorted her to the nearby train station. With the help of Christians there, she remained in hiding in Brody until the Red Army drove the Germans out.<sup>1325</sup>

Crowds of Jews, surrounded by armed guards with dogs, were led out of the ghetto towards the railroad station some two kilometers from the center of town. During this forced march, those who could not keep up with the pace were beaten and bitten by the dogs. Those unable to go on, were shot on the spot. Squeezed into packed freight cars which were directed towards Belzec [Bełżec] and, later on, towards Majdanek near the city of Lublin was the human cargo destined for destruction. In one of them was the family Hochberg. They made a desperate decision to push their daughter Ginia through the narrow bars of the tiny window, imploring her to save herself, crying out: "You have got to survive!" The German guard shot after and hit the escaping girl. She lost consciousness, but fortunately it was a flesh wound. After a while she came to in a pool of blood. Two villagers were in the process of stripping her clothes, thinking she was dead. Realizing she was alive did not prevent them from taking all her clothes. They were going to hand her over to the police when a Polish railroad employee intervened, stating that the area was under the jurisdiction of the railway department and that he would take custody of the girl. He escorted the wounded, chilled girl into a booth, where he dressed her wound, gave her some food and clothing and released her. Ginia made her way to a church in a nearby village, where a compassionate priest helped the unfortunate girl. He gave her shelter until she recovered and provided her with a false birth and baptism certificate.<sup>1326</sup>

<sup>1324</sup> Maria Hromiak, RD.

<sup>1325</sup> Testimony of Gina Hochberg Lanceter, SFV, Interview code 3529.

<sup>1326</sup> Bolesław Kulczycki, "Genocide in Brody," JewishGen KehilaLinks, Internet: [https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Brody/boleslaw\\_kulczycki\\_memoir.htm](https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/Brody/boleslaw_kulczycki_memoir.htm).

Another Jewish woman who jumped out of a death train headed for Bełżec and survived with the help of a priest was Felicia Singer. She approached the priest in the village of Rzyczki, near Rawa Ruska. The local pastor there at the time was Rev. Tomasz Marszałek.

During the war, Jadwiga Walkow [Wałkow] (later Szejnbaum) lived in Kamionka Strumilowa [Strumilowa] in Eastern Galicia. She was a nurse by profession and during the occupation she worked in the local hospital. A Jewish doctor, Henryk Singer, worked in the same hospital. When the liquidation of the local ghetto drew near, a local Volksdeutsch helped Dr. Singer, his wife, Felicia, and her brother (who was a lawyer). For Felicia and her brother he arranged false papers and gave them an address in Lwow [Lwów]. He directed Dr. Singer to Jadwiga (partly because of Dr. Singer's marked Semitic appearance) to find shelter for a while. "Since this 'while' became longer, I had to look for another apartment," wrote Jadwiga Szejnbaum in her testimony. Jadwiga moved to a safer apartment in which she hid Henryk behind a closet. In March 1943, Felicia joined Henryk in the hideout. Felicia had previously been arrested in Lwow—despite having Aryan papers—and then transferred to Belzec [Bełżec]. Luckily, she managed to escape from the transport near Rzeczkza [Rzyczki]. She found shelter with the local priest, who then informed Jadwiga and asked her to come to Rzeczkza to pick up Felicia. Shortly before the liberation, Felicia's brother, who came by foot from Lwow, joined the Singers.<sup>1327</sup>

In the Tarnopol region of Eastern Galicia, two Polish villages were wiped out because, with the encouragement of Catholic priests, their inhabitants offered refuge to Jews and Soviet partisans.

Fifteen Jews escaped from the Sasov [Sasów] labour camp at the end of June 1943 after learning that the Jews in the labour camps at Olesko and Brody had been exterminated and received food and shelter from peasants in the Polish village of Dzwonica. ... The 70 to 80 Jews who had managed to get away [from Sasów] encountered in the forests an equal number of Jews who had escaped from other camps and ghettos, but despite their relatively large number they were able to survive thanks to the Polish peasants from Huta Pieniacka and Huta Wierchobuska [Werchobuska or Werchobudzka].

The two Polish villages were surrounded by hostile Ukrainian settlements and to defend themselves against the attacks of Ukrainian nationalists the Poles had organised in each village a defence body armed with a few rifles. Despite the dangers they were running, the Poles, encouraged by their Catholic priests, provided the Jews with food, for which the Jews paid if they had the means, and when the cold weather came they allowed them to sleep in their sheep-pens and barns. The Ukrainians from the neighbouring villages reported what was happening to the Germans and the Zolochew [Złoczów] Kreishauptmann (District Chief) warned the headmen of the two villages that unless they stopped sheltering the Jews, the inhabitants would meet with the same fate as other enemies of the German Reich. The Poles did not, however, change their attitude to the Jews and only asked them not to appear in the villages in daytime.

<sup>1327</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 782.

... the Polish underground learnt that the Germans were preparing a punitive expedition against the village. The Jews took the warning seriously and ceased sleeping in the village, but the Poles did not ... But three days after the departure of Krutikov's [Soviet] partisans a force of Germans and Ukrainians captured the village, crammed all the inhabitants into a barn and their cattle into stables, and burnt them all alive. ...

Three weeks later, on 23 March, a force made up of Ukrainians from neighbouring villages attacked the village of Huta Wierchobuska. Warned of their approach, three-quarters of the peasants fled into the woods and forests. Those who stayed tried to defend themselves, but were quickly overpowered and met with the same end as the inhabitants of Huta Pieniacka.<sup>1328</sup>

**D**avid and Golda Chartan, their son Boris, Golda's father Hirsch Milgrom, and Boris's cousin Junap Oleska, who hailed from Podkamień, near Brody, were sheltered by Jan (Antoni) and Maria Marciniak on their farm in the nearby village of Palikrowy. The Marciniaks confided in a priest who used to visit them from the Dominican monastery in Podkamień. Maria perished in March 1944 during a Ukrainian partisan attack on the village shortly before the Soviets arrived.<sup>1329</sup> Shmuel Leib Karp was hidden by a priest at his rectory in Podkamień.<sup>1330</sup>

**Y**itzhak Sarid, a native of Podkamień, hid from the Germans together with his family by moving from place to place. For a period of time, they were sheltered in the cellar of the Dominican monastery in Podkamień. After their hiding place was exposed, they hid in a burial chapel in the nearby Catholic cemetery. Subsequently, they were sheltered by local farmers.<sup>1331</sup>

In the summer of 1942, Witold Charasz, a native of Brody, found refuge in the Dominican monastery together with his wife. They were placed there by a Pole who vouched for Witold as a Polish officer hiding from the Germans. Afterwards, Witold and his wife were transferred to the house of the organist, Karol Ptaszek, where they were joined by Witold's sister, Danuta, and his brother,

<sup>1328</sup> Reuben Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe (with a historical survey of the Jew as fighter and soldier in the Diaspora)* (London: Paul Elek, 1974), 450–53. See also Komański and Siekierka, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie tarnopolskim 1939–1946*, 66–71 (Huta Pieniacka), 499–500 (Huta Werchodudzka).

<sup>1329</sup> Testimony of Boris Chartan, SFV, Interview code 15082.

<sup>1330</sup> Regina Hader Rock, "From Hiding Place to Hiding Place," in Amihai, Stockfish, and Bari, *The Community of Rohatyn and Environs*, 250 ff. Regina Hader was sheltered in Podkamień by the Dżugała and Pizio families. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 204–5.

<sup>1331</sup> "Yocheved Sarid About Her Husband Yitzhak (born 22/9/1922 in Podkamien) and His Family," Virtual Shtetl, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Internet: <https://www.sztetl.org.pl/en/article/podkamien/16,accounts-memories/14371,yocheved-sarid-about-her-husband-yitzhak-born-22-9-1922-in-podkamien-and-his-family/>.

Henryk. The four Jews remained under the care of Karol and his wife, Helena, until the arrival of the Soviet army at the end of March 1944.<sup>1332</sup>

Earlier that month, Ukrainian nationalist partisans attacked the monastery, where several hundred Poles from the surrounding area had taken shelter, and rampaged through the village murdering any Pole they encountered. Several hundred Poles were killed in Podkamień and nearby villages.<sup>1333</sup>

After escaping from a German labour camp in Tarnopol in March 1944, Joachim Schoenfeld and his companion made their way back to their hometown of Lwów with the help of an unidentified priest. Along the way, they begged for bread at the homes of Polish peasants. In Lwów, they hid in a cellar with the assistance of a Pole until the Red Army arrived. Their Polish benefactor, Stanisław Tarnawski, was killed by Ukrainian nationalists when he went to visit his sister in a village near Lwów.<sup>1334</sup>

Jan Misiewicz was recognized by Yad Vashem for having rescued thirteen Jews in the town of Mikulińce, near Tarnopol. However, he did not act alone. Some of the Jews were hidden in an underground bunker, while a group of five was concealed in the spire of the Catholic church, where Misiewicz's father was a deacon, or perhaps a caretaker. Misiewicz also enlisted a friend, Michał Ogórek, to bring food to the Jews.<sup>1335</sup> This arrangement lasted for some two years. It is inconceivable that the parish priest would have been unaware of it.

There [sic] first furtive handshake, one midnight 40 years ago in a town patrolled by Nazi troops, risked both their lives—the young Polish Jew on the run and the young Roman Catholic with a conscience.

On Tuesday, the Redondo Beach man who once knocked on the right door for help and the Polish man who answered the knock clasped hands again—openly this time—as they were reunited in a ceremony honoring the Pole, Jan Misiewicz, for concealing Leon Kahane and 10 other Jews from Nazi sweeps that sent 6 million others to death camps.

Every night for seven months, as German and Russian troops battled around them, Misiewicz and a friend, Michael Ogurek [Michał Ogórek], carried food and reassuring words to the Jews. Five were hidden in a makeshift room in the cross-tipped spire of a Catholic church where Misiewicz's father was deacon—and six more, including Kahane, were in a bunker beneath a German soldier's [sic] outhouse.

<sup>1332</sup> Testimony of Henryk Charasz, SFV, Interview code 14823; Józef Burda, "Wydarzenie w klasztorze dominikanów w Podkamieniu w latach 1943–1944," *Nasza Przeszłość*, no. 93 (2000): 289–340, at p. 328.

<sup>1333</sup> Komański and Siekierka, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie tarnopolskim 1939–1946*, 87–89.

<sup>1334</sup> Schoenfeld, *Holocaust Memoirs*, 152.

<sup>1335</sup> See also *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 521; Jan Misiewicz, RD.

From September 1943, until the Russian advance in April 1944, Misiewicz and his friend, now dead, were the lifeline for the 11.

And some, like Kahane, now 60 and a rabbi, have survived to thank him. ...

Kahane's family had already moved several times by the time they came to the town of Mikulince [Mikulińce], where Misiewicz lived. And there, Kahane heard rumors that the Misiewicz family would help Jews in trouble. ...

Still, on Yom Kippur, 40 years ago, Kahane had to take a chance that the gossip was true. His family had been dispersed after the last arrests, and he and his brother were hiding in the forest outside of town, fasting until nightfall to observe the religious holiday.

Then they split up to find food, and Kahane never saw his brother again. But he did find Misiewicz, who became more than a brother.

"I crossed through the Catholic cemetery and went to the gate," Kahane recounted. There he saw a Ukrainian soldier, suborned to the Germans, peering in the Misiewicz's window. "I knew if I made just one little noise, I'd be discovered, he (Misiewicz) would be caught, an entire neighborhood would be destroyed."

So he hid for hours until the soldier left, and at midnight, he knocked furtively on the door.

"This man's hand, this man's smile greeted me," he said Tuesday.

From that night, he spent seven months in the dank, cramped darkness of the bunker under the latrine, with only Misiewicz and Ogurek to trust. The pair, knowing that they were being watched came by with food and news; they even banked the hidden entrance with cattle manure to mask the scent of meals they brought. ...

But Misiewicz, who was "surprised" by Tuesday's ceremony, said that as a good Catholic, he could have done nothing else. "When I saw that the Jewish people were hunted everywhere, I knew what the end was going to be for these people," he said, as Kahane translated.

His family, headed by his father, "a very religious man," decided "without hesitation" to help, "in spite of the fact that I heard troops were shooting people in every corner of town."

It was as simple, Misiewicz said, as "loving my neighbor as myself."<sup>1336</sup>

With the help of his friend Tomasz (Tomek) Ziemia from Bursztyn, near Stanisławów, Pinkhas (Paul) Trepman acquired the identity papers of Jan Krzus, a deceased Polish man. Ziemia had obtained the document "free of charge from his parish priest who knew very well what purpose it would serve." Trepman used these documents to travel to Warsaw, where he passed as a Catholic Pole.<sup>1337</sup>

<sup>1336</sup> Patt Morrison, "This Time They Could Shake Hands Openly," *Los Angeles Times* (1983), reproduced in Preshel, *Mikulince: Sefer yizkor*, 99 ff., translated as *Mikulince Yizkor Book*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Mikulintsy/Mikulintsy.html>.

<sup>1337</sup> Paul Trepman, *Among Men and Beasts* (South Brunswick, New Jersey and New York: A.S. Barnes, 1978), 68–69.

Henryk Kronstein, who owned an estate in Lubieńce, obtained Aryan papers for his entire family from Monsignor Aleksander Cisło, dean and pastor of Stryj, in Stanisławów voivodship, who was a good friend of the family. The family consisted of Henryk and Mira Kronstein, their son John (Jacob) Kronstein and his wife Bella, their daughter Helene Kronstein Schatzker and her son Joseph. They relocated to Warsaw under their new identities.<sup>1338</sup>

Anna Heller Stern, a native of Bolechów, near Stryj, survived with the assistance of false documents that were supplied to her by an unidentified priest.

She shared, too, her own remarkable story of hiding ... she showed the picture of the Polish priest who had saved her life by making false papers for her. ... she showed us the false baptismal certificate, the one that had given her the name *Anna*, which she'd kept ever since. Matt took a picture of the document. Anna Kucharuk, it said.<sup>1339</sup>

Mila (Amalia) Sandberg (later Mesner) of Zaleszczyki, then a young woman, was interned in the ghetto in Kołomyja together with her parents and sisters. There they received help from Poles, as well as from a former Jewish employee of their father's who sent food to them by way of a Catholic priest from Zaleszczyki, likely the pastor, Rev. Andrzej Urbański. After the ghetto in Kołomyja was liquidated, Mila, her sister Lola, and their cousin, Jasia Elberger, jumped out of a train destined for Bełżec and reached the ghetto in Chodorów.

There they turned to Albin Thiel (Tyll), a Pole they had befriended. Albin approached Rev. Ludwik Peciak, the dean and pastor of Kołomyja, who agreed to issue false birth and baptismal certificates to enable the sisters and their cousin to pass as Catholic Poles. Mila, who passed as Albin's wife, her sister Lola, who passed as Mila's cousin, and their cousin Jasia, who passed as their servant, all survived the war with the help of Albin and a number of other Poles.

Rev. Peciak extended assistance to other Jews as well, among them Iser and Toni Reisman. The Germans caught and murdered the Reismans. Rev. Peciak's signature on their documents may have led to his arrest on November 11, 1942, by a Ukrainian policeman who delivered him to the Gestapo. Rev. Romuald Chłopecki, the vicar, and Rev. Wojciech Kośmider were also arrested at that time. Rev. Peciak was imprisoned in Lwów, then sent to the Majdanek concentration camp and subsequently to the Flossenbürg concentration camp, where he per-

<sup>1338</sup> Schoenfeld, *Holocaust Memoirs*, 312; Feuerstein and Kronstein Families, Internet: <https://kehalalinks.jewishgen.org/drohobycz/families/isaac-feuerstein-family.html>. While the family was in the Stryj area until late 1942, Joseph Satzker's governess, Aniela Kazimierowicz, helped them to survive.

<sup>1339</sup> Daniel Mendelsohn, *The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 390.

ished on April 16, 1943. Rev. Chłopecki perished in Majdanek in March 1943; Rev. Kośmider perished in the Gross-Rosen concentration camp in April 1944.<sup>1340</sup>

At home, our Jewish cook and Catholic maid were both loved and respected by us, the children. Our Polish friends invited us to their Christmas dinners. Mrs. Nedilenko used to send us a plate of Christmas goodies, and my mother reciprocated with an equally elaborate plate of sweets on Purim. In our home, I don't ever recall hearing a derogatory remark about other people's religion or customs. Overall, we were quite at ease in the homes of our Polish friends and did not feel out of place among them. It would be difficult to overestimate how this ease in our relationships and familiarity with Polish life helped to ensure our survival later on, when we had to pass for Catholics and live under assumed Polish names. ...

We hid in the forest until the next morning, when we met some Jews on their way to work. They told us that we were near Chodorów, that the ghetto there was still open, and that we could temporarily hide there. In the Chodorów ghetto, the people welcomed us with warmth and sympathy. They seemed to be better off than the people in the Kolomyja [Kolomyja] ghetto. We were fed and put to bed. They even arranged for a telegram to be sent to Albin [Thiel], with a coded message stating that we were alive. Albin arrived the next day with some clothes, money, and our papers. When he arrived, we all broke down sobbing. He cried with us. He loved my parents and mourned their fate.

The Catholic church in Kolomyja was located on Sobieski Street. Albin went to see the parish priest and told him: "I have to save the lives of a number of Jews. Will you help me?" The name of the priest was Father [Ludwik] Peciak. His reply to Albin was: "You provide me with the names of people living in Kolomyja from the town registry, and I'll get you copies of the birth certificates." It was only later that we learned that Father Peciak had made out numerous birth certificates to help many people.

After spending a day with us in Chodorów, Albin returned to Kolomyja and vacated his living quarters. He then went to the ghetto, to our place, and retrieved some of our clothing. Next, he contacted a friend in Lwów, who lived with his mother, asking him to put us up at his place. His friend consented, but to no more than three persons. Albin then returned to Chodorów with clothing, money, and identity papers, and took Lola [her sister] and I by train to his friend's house in Lwów, while Jasia [her cousin] remained behind in Chodorów. The trip was traumatic for Lola and I; just a few days ago another train had been taking us to the Belzec [Belżec] death camp. ... Sometime later, Albin fetched Jasia and smuggled her into our place. ...

Early in the spring of 1943, Albin's assignment arrived. It was with the Liegenschaft in Ernsdorf near the town of Bobrka [Bóbrka]. The job came with a furnished apartment, and this was where he moved in with his "wife," Maria Kabanowska-Thiel (Lola), his wife's cousin, Stanisława [Stanisława] Schmiedel (me), and his maid, Aniela Wojciechowska (Jasia). Shortly after, he arranged a job for me, first as a secretary and later as a statistician in the Liegenschaft offices. Being an employee of the Estate Administration, I received rations.

<sup>1340</sup> Marek Kozubal, "Ks. Ludwik Peciak: Zapomniany sprawiedliwy," *Rzeczpospolita* [Warsaw], August 18, 2016; Krętosz and Pawłowiczowa, *Słownik biograficzny duchowieństwa Metropolii Lwowskiej obrządku łacińskiego ofiar II wojny światowej 1939–1945*, 111–12.

We were no longer hungry. I worked for the Ernsdorf Liegenschaft, which administered some twenty estates. ...

At about this time, the Germans issued an order that everyone had to obtain an ID card called a Kennkarte, a document proving there were no Jewish ancestors in the family. To obtain a Kennkarte, one had to show copies of birth certificates going back three generations. Kolomyja, from where we had to get duplicates of the birth certificates, had already come under Soviet control, and the SS had executed Father Peciak: obtaining the necessary papers seemed impossible. But Albin solved even this problem. He went to the Bishop's palace in Lwów, where the archives of all parishes of this jurisdiction were kept. He explained the obvious difficulties of obtaining documents from Kolomyja and requested copies of the birth certificates from the archives. He succeeded in getting them for all of us. We were also fortunate that the documents showed no traces of Jewish ancestry. All we had to do then was provide photographs and proof of residence. ...

Father Peciak was the parish priest of the church on Sobieski Street in Kolomyja. It was his invaluable assistance to Albin that saved our lives. Unfortunately, I have no further information that would shed light on the heroic work of this saintly man, who died a martyr's death at the hands of the Gestapo.

I know that Albin sought his help in procuring copies of birth and baptismal certificates for many Jews. Jasia, Lola, and I were among the lucky ones he had helped, Albin having access to the City Hall registers. Father Peciak asked him to obtain a list of names of persons born in Kolomyja of the approximate age of those he intended to save. Albin passed the list of names to Father Peciak, who then issued copies of the birth certificates. I know Albin received many such life-saving documents from Father Peciak. Among those who obtained such papers were our friends, Iser and Toni Reisman. Sadly, the Reismans were later caught by the SS and murdered. The irony is, that it may have been Father Peciak's own signature on the Reismans' documents that led to his arrest and execution. Father Peciak truly merits the epitaph: "Perished for the cause, faithful to God's commands." ...

On the first floor in our house was my father's office, where his right-hand man, Gedalia Barad, ruled. He was an accountant ... Shortly after the invasion by the Red Army, our mill was nationalized. ... Barad continued to look after the financial affairs of the mill. He even remained in this capacity for a short while under the German occupation. Barad was still there in the fall of 1941, when we were in Kolomyja and hungry. Through a local priest who served as an intermediary, he arranged for the delivery of flour to us. I still recall how deeply we were moved by this gesture of good will.<sup>1341</sup>

**R**ev. Michał Białowas, the administrator of the parish in Kołomyja after the arrest of Rev. Peciak, furnished a false birth and baptismal certificate for Janina Ludmiła Lutnik (her new name), as well as other Jews. The child was sheltered alternatively by Szczepan (Stefan) and Zofia Lutnik of Kołomyja, Szcze-

<sup>1341</sup> Mila Sandberg-Mesner, *Light from the Shadows* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, 2005), 30, 79–82, 90, 104–5, 106.

pan Lutnik's sister-in-law, Janina Kozulkiewicz, in Śniatyn, and the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary in Kołomyja.<sup>1342</sup>

The aforementioned Rev. Andrzej Urbański, the pastor of Zaleszczyki, helped to rescue the town's rabbi. Initially, the rabbi was hidden by a woman who lived near the church. He would visit the priest dressed as a woman. Afterwards, he stayed with Rev. Urbański, disguised as a priest. Rev. Urbański counselled Genowefa Linkiewicz, during confession, to continue providing for the fourteen Jews who were hiding in a cave near the Linkiewicz family's cottage in Hińkowce.<sup>1343</sup>

Gustaw Bernhaut, a lawyer and former judge, and his wife, Salomea, were deported from the ghetto in Kołomyja. They managed to jump from the train taking them to a death camp. They arrived in Chodorów, a town southeast of Lwów. There they turned to the catechist, Rev. Konstanty Kruczek, a good friend of Gustaw's, who helped them establish themselves as Catholics. Their son, Joseph (b. 1922), was able to escape from the Kołomyja ghetto for the safety of the home of Zofia Pietroń, the family's former housekeeper. Soon after, he joined his parents in Chodorów. Joseph's father died from injuries he sustained when he had jumped from the train. He was buried in a Catholic cemetery.

Rev. Kruczek helped Joseph, passing as Jarosław Urbański, to secure a job at a sugar mill run by the priest's friend. He also helped the family to find lodging. Zofia sold off belongings left with her for safekeeping and brought the proceeds to the Bernhauts in Chodorów. Tragedy struck after Joseph took in six Jewish fugitives and the premises were raided by the Ukrainian police. Joseph managed to escape and returned to Kołomyja, where he was again sheltered by Zofia. Later on, he escaped to Romania. Joseph returned to Poland after the war before immigrating to Australia.<sup>1344</sup>

The Sisters of St. Joseph (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Świętego Józefa), who worked as nurses, helped rescue the Jewish hospital staff in two towns of Eastern Galicia. In Sokal, north of Lwów, Sister Waclawa Hrycaj and Sister Ottona Golańska assisted Dr. Dawid Kindler, his wife, Laura, and their sons, Simche (Simcha)

<sup>1342</sup> "Lutka Janina NN," Missing Identity Project, Internet: <http://missing-identity.net/lutka-janina-nn-poland-kolomyja-ukraine/>.

<sup>1343</sup> Borwicz, *Vies interdites*, 141–42; Klara Spector, "The Story of the Cave in Hinkovtza," in G. [Gavriel] Lindenberg, ed., *Sefer Tluste* (Tel Aviv: Association of Former Residents of Tluste and Vicinity in Israel and the USA, 1965), 169–71, translated as *Memorial Book of Tluste*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Tovste/Tovste.html>; Józef Juzwa, "Ostatni proboszcz zaleszczycki ksiądz Andrzej Urbański," *Kwartalnik Cracovia Leopoldis*, no. 2 (2012). See also Antoni Linkiewicz, RD.

<sup>1344</sup> Testimony of Joseph Urbanski, SFV, Interview code 4439.

and Eli (Eliasz or Oleś). For a brief period of time, Eli (b. 1938) was sheltered at an orphanage run by the Sisters in nearby Łaszczów. Once he disclosed his identity to the other wards and would not stop crying, it became too dangerous to keep him there. In 1944, Sister Ottona Golańska escorted the dentist Beres Pelc, dressed in a nun's habit, to a safe house in the village of Munina, near Jarosław, where he spent the remainder of the war.<sup>1345</sup>

After the liquidation of the Sokal ghetto, the Kindler family was taken in by Franciszka Hałamaj and her daughter Helena, who sheltered sixteen Jews in total (one of whom died in hiding). Franciszka's son, Wilhelm, supplied barrels of oil, which his mother bartered to feed this large number of charges. In the final months of the war, Franciszka also provided shelter to a German soldier who had defected—an act that nearly led to her execution.<sup>1346</sup>

The Sisters of St. Joseph who worked at the hospital in Skałat, in Tarnopol province, among them Sister Amalia Cisek, Sister Aleksa Żółtek, and Sister Kryspina Rajner, provided food and temporary shelter to two Jewish doctors, Dr. Fryderyk Sass and Dr. Leon Guttman, who were employed at the hospital, and to their families. The nuns helped arrange the escape of these doctors and their family members from Skałat. Dr. Sass and his daughter survived the war in Lwów, where they were assisted by Sister Helena Ratajczak. Dr. Guttman, his wife

<sup>1345</sup> Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, 127; Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach*, 230 (testimony of Sister Bernarda Sochacka), 244; Agata Mirek, "Udział siostr zakonnych w ratowaniu ludności żydowskiej w Polsce w latach 1939–1945 na przykładzie wybranych zgromadzeń," in Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 135–60, at p. 148; Account of the Sisters of St. Joseph, June 12, 2009; "No. 4 Street of Our Lady" (documentary film, 2009).

<sup>1346</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 266–67 (Franciszka Halamajowa, Helena Liniewska-Halamajowa); The Halamaj Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-halamaj-family>. See also Moshe Maltz, "Pages about Pain and Death of the Jewish Settlement in Sokal," in A. [Avraham] Chomel, ed., *Sefer Sokal, Tartakov, Varenz, Stoyanov ve-ha-Seviva* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Sokal and Surroundings, 1968), 277–316, translated as *Memorial Book of Sokal, Tartakow and Surroundings*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokal/sokal.html>, as well as accounts by Dr. Dovid Kindler. The local pharmacist provided medicine for Dr. Kindler's son and for at least one other Jew while they were in hiding. To the dismay of the rescued Jews, Yad Vashem declined to recognize Franciszka Hałamaj's son, Wilhelm. See Judy Maltz, "Who Is 'Righteous' Enough for Yad Vashem?," *Haaretz*, January 27, 2014. A family of three Jews, Beile Gittel Linsker and her two daughters, was sheltered by Franciszka Hałamaj's former housekeeper, Tekla Weksler, who lived next door. See Gitl Linsker, "One of the Righteous Among the Nations," in Chomel, *Sefer Sokal, Tartakov, Varenz, Stoyanov ve-ha-Seviva*, 363 ff. During their stay in the Hałamaj home, a newborn was killed to prevent him from giving away the hiding place, and another young girl who wouldn't stop crying was poisoned, but survived. Unfortunately, there were many such painful acts of desperation.

and daughter were placed with a Polish family in a village near Skałat, where they survived the war. The nuns also sheltered Jewish children in Skałat.<sup>1347</sup>

Memorial books record the assistance provided by priests in the voivodship of Volhynia (Wołyń), in eastern Poland. Catholic Poles constituted a small minority among the Ukrainian population, and were themselves subjected to a savage campaign of ethnic cleansing by Ukrainian nationalist factions. This campaign took the lives of tens of thousands of Poles in Volhynia in 1943. Subsequently, it spread to Eastern Galicia.

Poles living in the cities had fewer opportunities to assist Jews in finding shelter. The German and Ukrainian administration watched them very closely. Polish Catholic priests formed a group apart in this respect. Thus in Rovno [Równe] a priest by the name of Sirkiewicz [actually, Ludwik Syrewicz, the dean and local pastor] together with a notary Szumski handed out birth and baptism certificates to the hiding Jews. A priest from Janowa Dolina (his name is unknown [actually, Rev. Jan Leon Śpiewak]), who distributed baptism documents, was arrested and, as a punishment, sent to the Kostopol ghetto where he worked at hard labor together with the local Jews. The members of his flock brought him food which he shared with the ghetto residents. In Vladimirets [Włodzimierzec] the priest Dominik Wawrzynowicz volunteered to sell church treasures to help the local Judenrat to pay ransom imposed by the Germans. He also preached the duty to help the Jews. In his efforts he was assisted by priests of congregations of the villages in the district. The priest Ludwik Wołodarczyk [actually, Włodarczyk, the pastor of Okopy] from the villages across the Słucz River rendered considerable assistance to the refugees from Rokitno and the environs.

One of the survivors related a story of his meeting with a Polish priest, which took place in a small church one kilometer from Trilisitse [Trylisica, near Szczurzyn, Łuck county]. The witness decided to appeal for help to the old priest serving in the church. The priest invited him in, knelt, prayed and having finished he asked him what he wanted. The Jew asked for help and based his request on the New Testament. Thereupon:

He embraced me, kissed my head and both of us started crying. I felt that my pain was his pain too. He offered me money but I refused to take it. He promised me work—to copy his book on honeybees breeding. He cheered me up and promised to find out what had happened to my family in Lutsk [Łuck].

Beside priests, the testimonies mention also working-class Poles who rescued Jews. ...

Assistance rendered by Polish peasants was more frequent. ... Large numbers of cases of assistance are documented to have occurred in remote Polish villages in the northeastern and, particularly eastern parts of the region across the Słuch [Słucz] River ... Hundreds of Jews hiding there were given food and shelter.<sup>1348</sup>

<sup>1347</sup> Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, 127; Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach*, 211 (testimony of Sister Kryspina Rajner), 244; Agata Mirek, "Udział sióstr zakonnych w ratowaniu ludności żydowskiej w Polsce w latach 1939–1945 na przykładzie wybranych zgromadzeń," in Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 135–60, at p. 148; Account of the Sisters of St. Joseph, June 12, 2009.

<sup>1348</sup> Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews, 1941–1944*, 248–50.

The aforementioned Rev. Dominik Wawrzynowicz, the pastor of Włodzimierzec, who enjoyed excellent relations with the Jews before the war, also faithfully preserved valuables that many Jews had entrusted to him. Sender Appelboim (Apelbaum) writes: “The Polish priest from Vladimertz [Włodzimierzec] endangered himself by saving Jews. In church, he told his congregants that it was their duty to save Jews, to hide them, give them food and offer help. Some of his people followed his direction.” In his 1966 testimony, he urged Yad Vashem to recognize Rev. Wawrzynowicz as Righteous among the Nations.<sup>1349</sup> Rev. Wawrzynowicz was overlooked by Yad Vashem.

Rev. Jan Leon Śpiewak became the pastor of Janowa Dolina in August 1941. According to Polish sources, the Germans arrested him in May 1942 for providing false birth and baptismal certificates and other forms of assistance to Jews. He was held in the Kostopol ghetto, and then sent to a hard labour camp in Ludwipol. He managed to escape when Soviet partisans attacked the camp at the end of 1942 or in early 1943. Afterwards, he had to hide from the Germans. He fled to Huta Stara, where he became the pastor and chaplain of a Home Army unit named “Bomba.” Both Rev. Śpiewak and the leaders of that unit were apprehended by the NKVD in December 1943. He was sent to Lubianka prison in Moscow and was released in April 1944.<sup>1350</sup>

Rev. Józef Kuczyński was the pastor of two parishes, Dederkały and Szumbar, near the prewar Polish-Soviet border. When the Germans arrested the Jewish wife of a Ukrainian named Serwetnik, both husband and wife having converted to Catholicism, Serwetnik was told by the authorities that they would release his wife if the pastor issued a statement confirming that she had been a practicing

<sup>1349</sup> Sender Appelboim, “In the Forests and Villages with the People of Raflovka [Rafałówka] and the Surrounding Area in the Years 1942–1944,” *Memorial Book for the Towns of Old Rafalowka, New Rafalowka, Olizarka, Zoludzk and Vicinity*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/rafalovka/Rafalovka.html>, translation of Pinhas and Malkah Hagin, eds., *Sefer zikaron le-'ayarot Rafalowka ha-yeshenah, Rafalowka he-hadashah, Olizarka, Zoludzk veba-sevivah* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Rafalovkah ha-yeshanah, Rafalovkah ha-hadashah, Olizarkah, Z'alutsk veba-sevivah, 1996), 48–53; Gutman and Krakowski, *Unequal Victims*, 245; Testimony of Sender Apelbaum, YVA, file O.3/2882 (Item 3557420). When Rev. Dominik Wawrzynowicz moved to Lower Silesia after the war, he received many letters of thanks and packages from Israel—addressed to “Their Priest”—from former Jewish residents of Wodzimierzec. See Róża Wawrzynowicz-Billip, “Jak to dobre myśli się sprawdzają,” *Gazeta Otwocka*, no. 12 (2010): 26.

<sup>1350</sup> Leon Popek, *Janowa Dolina* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Krzemieńca i Ziemi Wołyńsko-Podolskiej, 1998), x n.2. See also Marek A. Koprowski, *Mord na Wołyniu: Zbrodnie ukraińskie w świetle relacji i dokumentów*, vol. 2 (Zakrzewo: Replika, 2018), 271–72; Marek A. Koprowski, *Wołyń: Krwawa epopeja Polaków*, vol. 1 (Zakrzewo: Replika, 2018), 346.

Catholic before the Germans invaded the area in June 1941. Such an offer was extremely unusual. Rev. Kuczyński willingly obliged. Serwetnik's wife was released and survived the war under the priest's protection. The couple relocated to Poland after the war.<sup>1351</sup>

Rev. Jan Szarek, the pastor of Wyrka, near Stepań, counselled Felicja Onuchowska to continue sheltering the two Jews whom her family had taken in, namely, Abraham Tchor and his cousin, Batya Becker Scheinboim.

Abraham Tchor was born in Stepan [Stepań], Poland (now Ukraine), in 1927. When war broke out in 1939, the Soviets occupied Stepan, and in 1941 the Germans took over the town. They built a ghetto for the Jews of Stepan and the surrounding villages; in total some 3,000–4,000 people. There were sporadic killings, but the methodic annihilation of the ghetto began only in 1942. This was when Abraham and his father Michael managed to escape. A few days later, they were captured hiding in a grove by Ukrainian policemen and taken to a killing site. Abraham's father was shot, but the 15-year-old managed to run away.

Abraham remembered that his father had known a villager in Siedlisko, 18 kilometers away. Traveling at night, he made it to the village and found the house of Lucjan Onuchowski, who lived with his wife Fela [Felicja] and teenage sons, Cyprian and Bronisław. When Abraham knocked on the door, the family was very frightened; they began crossing themselves and asking him what had become of his parents. He told them he was alone. They took him in, fed him and decided to hide him. The next day, Lucjan told the boy: "Whatever happens to us, will happen to you as well."

One day, as Abraham was in his underground hideout, a woman knocked on the door. It was Abraham's cousin, Batja. She had come from the forest where she was hiding with a group of Jews to ask for some food. The Onuchowskis suggested she remain in their house along with Abraham. For the remainder of the war, Lucjan also provided food to the group in the forest. All this was done out of good will, and because the Onuchowskis remembered the kindness and friendliness of Abraham's father.

In 1944, the situation worsened. Ukrainians began attacking Poles, robbing and killing them. Soon, they had taken over the entire region, and Polish families were fleeing to zones occupied by Germans. The Onuchowskis decided to run as well. Abraham escaped together with them, but in the mayhem he was separated from Batja and his rescuers. He tried to join the local partisans, but was refused because of his youth and because he possessed no gun.

After the area was liberated in 1945, Abraham returned to Stepan in the hope of finding someone alive. He did not find anyone, or his rescuers, although he kept searching for them. In 1946 he moved to Israel, where he was reunited with Batja. Their continued search for the Onuchowskis proved unsuccessful, even with the help of a friend of Abraham's wife Henia in Poland, who posted ads in local papers.<sup>1352</sup>

<sup>1351</sup> Józef Kuczyński, *Między parafią a łagrem* (Warsaw: Editions Spotkania, 2017), 14. See also Koprowski, *Mord na Wołyniu*, vol. 2, 112–15.

<sup>1352</sup> Onuchowski Family, RD.

Batya, with her mother and her little sister Brendala, Bronia Sheinboim with her children, Henia Tchor, Batya Tchor, Sonia from the Tchor family with her baby, all escaped the carts that went to Karchovla [Korczewie], ten kilometers from Kostopol, the place of killing of the Jews of Stepan [Stepań] and the area.

Most of them jumped from the carts and tried to flee to the forests, knowing that death was near. They were caught in the shooting of the Ukrainian policemen and some were caught and returned to the carts that led them to their deaths. ...

After additional searches and living together with eighteen Jews from her area in the depths of the forest in inhumane conditions, with fear and terror always, Batya was left alone. She finally got to a righteous non-Jew, a Pole by the name of Lutzian Onochobaski [Lucjan Onuchowski], from the Polish village of Sadlisko [Siedlisko]. He hid her. The woman being very religious asked the priest from Virka [Wyrka], a nearby Polish village, and he suggested to her to help the Jews even though it was dangerous. ...

In 1943, when the Ukrainian uprising began in Stepan and the area against the German authorities and attacks on Polish villages began in order to annihilate the Polish residents, Batya and Mosik wandered together along with other Poles to nearby towns and cities. There Batya met two Jewish girls from Stodin, by the names of Fayeh and Etta. Together along with five Poles from the area of Recholovka [Rafałówka] (a railroad station), they turned to the direction of the forests, in order to join the partisans. On the way, they ran into shooting by the Ukrainian nationalists and most of the group was killed.

Batya returned to Recholovka, and with the girl from Stodin [Stydyń] by the name of Ita Shinis, they traveled as Poles to Germany by Sarny and Rovno [Równe]. They fixed their papers and were on their way.<sup>1353</sup>

**H**alina Mirska (later Lasota) describes, in her memoir, how various people, including the aforementioned Rev. Ludwik Syrewicz, helped her survive the German occupation. After escaping from the ghetto in Równe, Volhynia, with her mother in 1941, 11-year-old Halina was taken in successively by Kazimierz Milewski; then for two months—in November and December 1941—by Rev. Syrewicz, who issued her a false birth and baptismal certificate; by unknown benefactors and by the family of Zielonko, a railway worker who took her to Warsaw.

In Warsaw, Halina lived with the Rauch family. She was helped by the sisters Ania and Lonia Burzyńska. In May 1943, she was taken to the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul on Tamka Street. Afterwards, one of the nuns, Sister Maria Stanke, sheltered her at the hospital of the Transfiguration of Our Lord, where she worked as a nurse. Her next place of residence was with the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary on Hoża Street in Warsaw, where she was accepted by Mother Matylda Getter.

Halina was transferred to the nuns' orphanage in Płudy, where a number of Jewish children found shelter. She recalled being treated fairly, on a par with all

<sup>1353</sup> Batya Scheinboim, "Escape from the Murderers," in Yitzhak Ganuz, ed., *Our Town Stepan*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/stepan/Stepan.html>, translation of *Ayaratenu Stepan* (Tel Aviv: Stepan Society, 1977), 294–95.

of the other children. She had fond memories of her instructor, Sister Ludwika Peńsko, who cared for her lovingly.

When the Soviet front approached, the Germans evacuated the institution. After escaping from a transport train headed for Germany, Halina, then 14, found herself in the town of Sierpc. She was taken in by a woman by the name of Czerwińska, who then passed her on to the Kłobukowski family, who treated Halina like a member of their family. She remained with them until 1946.<sup>1354</sup>

The following account, which mentions the assistance of an unidentified priest in Warsaw, also refers to the Rauch family, mentioned above, and the assistance of an unidentified priest who was likely a chaplain at a convent.

In 1943, Mariam Feier placed her four-year-old daughter, Warda [passing as Krystyna Wojciechowska, later Shenbaum], in a Polish children's home in Warsaw. A priest who worked in the home, realizing that Warda was Jewish, feared for her safety, since German policemen frequently came to inspect the home looking for Jewish children. The priest turned to his friend, Teofilia [Teofila Burzyńska] Rauch, who lived with her daughter [in] Zalesie, not far from Warsaw, and asked her to take Warda in. Rauch agreed and, for almost two years, looked after Warda and saw to all her needs as if she were her own daughter. After the war, Mariam Feier returned from Germany, where she had been sent as a forced laborer, and began looking for her daughter through the press. When Rauch found out that Warda's mother was looking for her, she was extremely ambivalent about contacting her, but in the end, for religious reasons, decided to return Warda to her mother without asking for any remuneration.<sup>1355</sup>

Romualda Mansfeld-Booth (née Estera Goldynsztajn or Ester Goldenstein) was born in Brody in 1939. She turned up among Polish orphans who took refuge in the city of Równe, Volhynia, fleeing Ukrainian assaults on Polish settlements. She was taken in by Maria Titarenko at Easter, 1943. Her new “mother” took her to Rev. Ludwik Syrewicz, pastor of the local church, who baptized her and provided a birth and baptismal and birth certificate.<sup>1356</sup>

Another person whom Rev. Syrewicz aided was Leah Bodkier, a young Jewish woman who escaped from the massacre of the Równe Jews and was concealed, with her little sister, in the attic of Jerzy Nowakowski's mother's home. Rev. Syrewicz agreed to baptize Leah as Krystyna Broniewska so she could marry Jerzy, a Polish Catholic, and pass as a Catholic Pole. He then referred them to the

<sup>1354</sup> Halina Mirska Lasota, *Ucieczka od przeszłości* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, 2006), 18–29. See also the testimony of Halina Mirska, SFV, Interview code 38197.

<sup>1355</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 664.

<sup>1356</sup> Kołacińska-Gałązka, *Dzieci Holocaustu mówią...*, vol. 5, 259; Maria Kalas, “Moja babcia Maria Titarenko,” *Wołanie z Wołynia*, no. 5 (September–October 2014): 13–20, at p. 17.

priest in nearby Żytyń, Rev. Ludwik Warpechowski, who married the couple on December 30, 1941.<sup>1357</sup>

The Równe memorial book states that Rev. Ludwik Syrewicz taught his congregation “moral and humane teachings.” Many Jews were able to survive in other cities, where they were not recognized as Jews, with the birth and baptismal certificates he issued free of charge.<sup>1358</sup> The Germans arrested Rev. Syrewicz in January 1944 and imprisoned him in the Gross-Rosen and Dachau concentration camps. He survived the war.

Chana Comins (Cominetsky, née Bebczuk), who together with her young child survived in the forests near Równe with the help of Poles, mentions an unnamed priest from Równe who hid Jews in a church.<sup>1359</sup>

**R**ev. Ludwik Wrodarczyk, from the Order of Oblates of Mary Immaculate, was awarded posthumously by Yad Vashem at the behest of the brothers Alex (Joshua) Levin and Samuel Levin (Levinson), whom he had sheltered in the village of Okopy, in Volhynia. Rev. Wrodarczyk incurred the wrath of Ukrainian nationalists, who tortured and killed him in December 1943.<sup>1360</sup> He was recognized as a Righteous Gentile by Yad Vashem in 2000.

On August 26, 1942, at the time of the liquidation of the Rokitno ghetto (Sarny County, Volhynia District), the local Jews were ordered to gather at the train station. The German and Ukrainian police surrounded the assembled Jews. Many began to flee, whereupon the SS and police opened up with automatic fire. In the resulting panic, many Jews succeeded in fleeing to the forests and surrounding villages. Among those who escaped were the two Samuel brothers, 17-year-old Lewin and 10-year-old Alexander, who tried to find a hiding place in one of the [Ukrainian] villages but were repelled by the farmers. After wandering for a long time, they reached the [Polish] village of Okopy and knocked on the door of a house at the edge of the forest asking for food. This time they were lucky. They were taken inside by a man and a woman who warned them that a roundup of Jews was being carried out at that very time in the area. The woman, the teacher Felicja Masojada, was the mistress of the house, and the man was the local priest, Ludwik Wrodarczyk, who happened to be visiting at the time. They decided to hide them in the house until the danger was past. While the murderers scoured the area, the teacher and the priest hid the brothers in a closet. Once the roundup was over, they gave them food and sent them

<sup>1357</sup> Jeffrey Burds, *Holocaust in Rovno: The Massacre at Sosienki Forest, November 1941* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 84.

<sup>1358</sup> Moshe Gildenman, “The Attitude of the Non-Jewish Population Toward the Jews,” in Aryeh Avatihi, ed., *Rowneh: Sefer zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Rowno in Israel, 1956), 518 ff., translated as *Rovno: A Memorial Book to the Jewish Community of Rovno Wolyn*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/rovno/rovno.html>.

<sup>1359</sup> Chana Comins: Oral History Transcript, January 28, 1980, Wisconsin Historical Society, Internet: <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/HolocaustSurvivors/pdfs/Comins.pdf>, 17.

<sup>1360</sup> Krętosz and Pawłowiczowa, *Słownik biograficzny duchowieństwa Metropolii Lwowskiej obrządku łacińskiego ofiar II wojny światowej 1939–1945*, 292–95.

to hide in the forest, explaining that it was safer than in the village. After they settled in a cave in the depths of the forest, Masojada's house remained for them a kind of aid station to which they returned to receive food and a change of clothing. Felicja and Ludwik were exceptional in this rural community for their high moral values and their profound social commitment. They also assisted other escaped Jews who happened to come to their village, and they paid for this with their lives. Felicja Masojada was murdered in June 1943 by Ukrainian ultra-nationalists. In December 1943, the priest Wrodarczyk was also murdered by them on suspicion of collaboration with Jewish partisans and anti-Fascists activists.<sup>1361</sup>

Alex (Joshua) Levin (b. 1935) wrote about his and his older brother Samuel's (b. 1928) escape from the Rokitno ghetto in August 1942.

We managed to escape from Rokitno. We didn't know where to go at first, but soon headed deep into the woods. We wanted to get as far away from that murderous place as possible. The forest was dense and thick and frightening or two boys already deeply traumatized, but we soon found some small relief. In the woods we came across other escapees. At first we met one person and then a few more until there were a significant number of us together in the woods. The adults talked to each other in whispers. ... There was hurried discussion among the adults. Finally, they agreed. "We're in more danger if we all stay together," they said. "Let's break up into small groups. That way it will be harder to find us."

For the next two weeks or so, Samuel and I wandered alone, moving toward the Polish villages of Natreba and Okopy. The woods in that area were denser and the swamps there provided better cover. I remember occasionally meeting people along the way who warned us that we should only go into the villages in the case of extreme emergency. If we did come close to any villages, they said, we should still stay as close to the woods as possible in case we ran into the police. ... When we did go to try to find or beg for food we mostly went into the Polish villages because they were more generous to us than the Ukrainians were.

Our journey over those couple of weeks was very hard and dangerous, but there were some memorable acts of kindness and courage that stand out. The two names in particular that are forever etched into my heart are Ludwik Wrodarczyk, a Polish Catholic priest, and Felicia [Felicja] Masojada, a Polish teacher from Okopy. When we arrived at their door after the massacre in Rokitno, they hid us in a closet and gave us some clothes and enough food to last a little while. We found out later that these wonderful people, truly good souls, paid a high price for their compassion—they were executed by Ukrainian Nazi collaborators. ... In 1998, Samuel and I initiated the process to have Wrodarczyk and Masojada declared Righteous Among the Nations by the Jewish Holocaust memorial organization Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. The presentation was made in 2000.

During this time we ended up staying for a while at a farm belonging to a Polish peasant. He fed us and in return we had to work for him.<sup>1362</sup>

<sup>1361</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 594–95.

<sup>1362</sup> Alex Levin, *Under the Yellow & Red Stars* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2009), 21–22.

Jews who mention Rev. Wrodarczyk with deep gratitude include Chaim Bar-Or, Yissakhar Trosman, and Moshe Trosman.<sup>1363</sup> Here is the account of another Jewish survivor, Yosef Segal:

In the Polish village of Okopi [Okopy], some tens of Jews were saved thanks to two special individuals. They are worthy of being considered part of the Righteous of the world. They are: the Catholic priest [Rev. Ludwik Wrodarczyk] and the village teacher [Felicja Masojada]. The priest used to give sermons to his followers telling them not to be involved in the extermination of Jews. He asked them to help the Jews to survive until their redemption. At that time justice will prevail and the evil Nazis and their helpers will be wiped off the face of the earth. The village teacher also had compassion for the unfortunate Jews. Their suffering touched her heart and she helped in any way possible. She was killed by a Ukrainian gang on the way from the village of Rokitno while she was helping a Jewish family. The priest was burned alive in his church. The memory of these two saintly beings stands as a ray of light in the darkness of the Nazi rule.<sup>1364</sup>

The next account depicts the tragic plight of ordinary civilians caught between warring sides and local insurgents.

Escapees from Rokitno went ... to the area of the three Polish villages [Okopy, Budki Borowskie, and Dołhań] ... The Polish peasants, who had been living there for generations, saw in the Jews poor creatures persecuted by the enemies of the Poles: the Ukrainian nationalists and the Germans. All of them were basically friendly to the Jews, especially the Catholic priest, Ludwik Wolodarczyk [Wrodarczyk], and the local schoolteacher, Felicja Masojada, who organized a Polish resistance group that established contact with the Soviet partisans ... The three villages (and the fourth, Natreba, which was part-Polish) were on the edge of the thick forests in that area, and many Jews hid there. They spent the nights in the makeshift dugouts in the forest and begged for food—and sometimes worked for it—during the day. ... These Polish villagers were pro-Soviet for the simple reason that there was no one else who could save them from the *Bulbovtsy* [Ukrainian nationalist partisans]—and indeed, the *Bulbovtsy* in the end burned their villages and murdered many Poles; the rest fled into the forests and joined the Jews who were hiding there. During 1943, Ukrainian nationalists murdered tens of thousands of Poles in Wolyn [Wołyń] ... The four Polish villages mentioned, and both Wolodarczyk and Masojada, were among the victims.<sup>1365</sup>

The rescue activities of Rev. Wrodarczyk—through his sermons, in private conversations with his parishioners, and by sheltering Jews in the parish rectory

<sup>1363</sup> Interview with Moshe Trosman, Yissakhar Trosman, Chaim Bar-Or, and others, YVA, file O.33/8458 (Item 9391291).

<sup>1364</sup> E. [Eliezer] Leoni, ed., *Rokitno-Wolyn and Surroundings: Memorial Book and Testimony*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/rokitnoye/rokitnoye.html>, translation of *Rokitno (Volin) ve-ha-sevivah: Sefer edut ve-zikaron* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Rokitno in Israel, 1967), 334.

<sup>1365</sup> Yehuda Bauer, "Sarny and Rokitno in the Holocaust: A Case Study of Two Townships in Wolyn (Volhynia)," in Steven T. Katz, ed., *The Shtetl: New Evaluations* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2007), 273.

in Okopy, near Rokitno, and feeding them in their forest hideouts—are also documented by Polish authors.<sup>1366</sup>

Jakub (Jakow) Solcman, a Jewish pharmacist from Rokitno, arrived at the parish rectory after escaping from a German execution site. Rev. Wrodarczyk placed Solcman with a parishioner who sheltered him for a short period of time. Afterwards, Solcman joined the Communist partisan group “Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła” (Poland Has Not Yet Perished), where he was in charge of the sanitary unit.<sup>1367</sup>

Another person rescued by Rev. Wrodarczyk was Benedykt Lusthaus, who had converted to Catholicism before the war. He escaped to Eastern Poland after the German invasion of Poland in September 1939. With the arrival of the Germans in that part of Poland in June 1941, he turned to Rev. Jan Lewiński of Sarny, Volhynia, for guidance and assistance. Rev. Lewiński enlisted the help of Rev. Antoni Chomicki, the pastor of Klesów, who in turn directed Lusthaus to Rev. Wrodarczyk. He remained in Okopy until April 1943, serving as the parish organist.

Lusthaus recalled Rev. Wrodarczyk’s openness and kindness towards everyone, regardless of their religion or ethnicity. Because of increasing attacks on Polish settlements by Ukrainian nationalist partisans, Lusthaus joined the Soviet partisans together with a number of Poles from the area. Hanka Halicz, his future wife, also assisted in his rescue. After the war, Lusthaus became a renowned botanist at the University of Łódź, where he was known as Benedykt Halicz.<sup>1368</sup>

Eleonora Kos, who escaped with her parents from the ghetto in Rożyszcze, Volhynia, was sheltered by two Polish families. She recalled the assistance

<sup>1366</sup> Bronisław Janik, *Niezwykły świadek wiary na Wołyniu 1939–1943: Ks. Ludwik Wrodarczyk OMI* (Poznań: Misjonarze Oblaci Maryi Niepokalanej, 1993), 167–68—see also *Niezwykły świadek wiary na Wołyniu 1939–1943: O. Ludwik Wrodarczyk*, 3rd rev. ed. (Poznań: Misjonarze Oblaci Maryi Niepokalanej, 2014); Leon Żur, *Polacy i Ukraińcy: Którędy do pojednania* (Suwałki: Hańcza, 2007).

<sup>1367</sup> Kazimierz Lubowicki, “Ratował Żydów—zamordowali go Ukraińcy,” *Życie Konsekwowane*, nos. 3–4 (131–32) (2018): 156–61, at p. 160. See also Krzysztof Juszczyk, “Zgrupowanie partyzanckie ‘Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła’ (wrzesień 1943–sierpień 1944),” *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici: Historia*, vol. 21 (1986): 149–177, at p. 155; Henryk Grabowski, *Szlaki bez drogowskazów: Z Wołynia przez Polesie Lubelskie* (Pruszków: Ajaks, 2001), 60; Czesław Dołęga, *Z dziejów zgrupowania partyzanckiego “Jeszcze Polska nie Zginęła”* (Warsaw: Bellona, 2008), 70.

<sup>1368</sup> Krętosz and Pawłowiczowa, *Słownik biograficzny duchowieństwa Metropolii Lwowskiej obrządku łacińskiego ofiar II wojny światowej 1939–1945*, 293; Kazimierz Lubowicki, “Ratował Żydów—zamordowali go Ukraińcy,” *Życie Konsekwowane*, nos. 3–4 (131–32) (2018): 156–61; “Benedykt Halicz,” Wikipedia, Internet: [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedykt\\_Halicz](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedykt_Halicz); Benedykt Lusthaus, Photograph 67822, USHMM, Internet: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1160999>.

that Rev. Stanisław Dąbrowski, pastor of the village church in Wiszenki, gave to Jews and Soviet prisoners of war. Rev. Dąbrowski gathered abandoned Jewish children and, from the pulpit, urged his parishioners to take them in.<sup>1369</sup> Esther Pop (née Tesler), who obtained a birth and baptismal certificate from a Catholic priest under the name of Janina Skalska, received assistance from various villagers in the vicinity of Rożyszcze.<sup>1370</sup>

After escaping from the ghetto in Kowel, Volhynia, with her young son, Bronia Eckhaus first turned to Rev. Antoni Dąbrowski, the vicar at the local parish, who comforted her, fed her, and provided her with guidance where she ought to go, as it was too dangerous for her to remain in Kowel.<sup>1371</sup> She found shelter with Polish families in nearby rural settlements and assistance from Józefa Wołoszyńska of Kowel.

During the war, Jozefa Woloszynska [Józefa Wołoszyńska] lived with her family in Kowel, Volhynia. The family had moved to Kowel in 1933 when Jozefa's husband took a job in the local post office. During the occupation, the Woloszynskis' house was close to the ghetto. In July 1942, when an Aktion began in the ghetto, Bronia Eckhaus, along with her one-year-old son, hid in a hideout on a roof together with a dozen or so other Jews. At nightfall, Bronia climbed down from the roof with her son and they hid for a few days in a ransacked, empty house. When she thought that the Aktion was over, she left the hideout. She went into a church where she met a priest who fed her and advised her to look for shelter in the neighboring villages. He even gave her names of Polish and Ukrainian villages. Bronia took his advice and wandered from village to village carrying the child in her arms until she arrived in the village of Elizarow [Elizarów or Olizarów]. There, she met a woman from Kowel, Josefa [sic] Woloszynska, who had come there to buy food. Jozefa immediately recognized that Bronia was Jewish. She gave Bronia her address in Kowel and Bronia came there a few times whenever her situation became desperate. She was warmly received and Jozefa always fed her and offered her advice. In March 1943 Jozefa had a heart to heart talk with Bronia and told her that the Germans were beginning to withdraw and that the Russians were getting closer. She advised her not to give up and return to the villages. She then gave her food and a coat for the child—taken from her own young child. Jozefa walked with the fugitive for a few kilometres and wished her well. "She gave me hope, courage and belief in the future," Bronia recalled.<sup>1372</sup>

<sup>1369</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 730–31.

<sup>1370</sup> Testimony of Esther (Tesler) Pop, YVA, file O.3/3878 (Item 3557404).

<sup>1371</sup> See also the testimony of Bronia Eckhaus-Waserman, JHI, record group 301, no. 6948, noted in Michał Czajka, ed., *Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz: Archiwum ŻIH IN-B, zespół 301, Nr. 6001–7297 / Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue: Jewish Historical Institute Archives, Record Group 301, No. 6001–7297*, vol. 7 (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2011), 269. Rev. Antoni Dąbrowski, a Home Army chaplain, was arrested by the NKVD in Lublin in January 1945 and executed by the state security police a few months later. See Tadeusz Wolak, "Biografia ks. kapelana Antoniego Dąbrowskiego ps. 'Rafał' (1910–1945)," *27 Dywizja Wołyńska AK—Biuletyn Informacyjny*, no. 2 (106) (April–June 2010): 22–29.

<sup>1372</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 894.

The wife of a Jewish mill owner left her two-year-old daughter in some shrubs near the parish rectory in Luboml, Volhynia. The pastor's housekeeper found the child. Rev. Stefan Jastrzębski, the pastor, turned to three nuns from the Order of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus to care for her. The child was baptized and named Teresa. She had to learn Polish and Catholic prayers in order to pass as a Polish child because Yiddish was all she knew. On the suggestion of the local reeve, the child was officially registered as a foundling. After several months of living with the nuns, who shared just one room, the child was adopted by the wife of a forester. After the war, the mother came to reclaim her daughter.

Rev. Jastrzębski, the dean of Luboml, was known for his interventions on behalf of Jews, who dreaded bands of roving marauders based on experiences occasioned by the entry of Bolshevik troops during both the Polish-Soviet War of 1919–1920 and the Soviet invasion of eastern Poland in September 1939.<sup>1373</sup>

The Sisters of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus provided temporary shelter to Jews in the basement of their convent in Włodzimierz Wołyński, Volhynia. They also assisted Jews that were hiding among Poles. With the help of Rev. Leon Kapturkiewicz, they sheltered two Jewish girls in their small convent.<sup>1374</sup>

Stanisław Wiczyc, and his wife, Barbara, were both doctors, originally from Częstochowa. They survived the German occupation in Uściąg, on the Bug River, near Włodzimierz Wołyński, in a conspiracy that involved several Poles. Rev. Stanisław Symon, the administrator of the local parish, assisted them and protected their cover as Catholic Poles. The Yad Vashem description of this rescue, as is all too often the case, greatly underplays what was done to help the Wiczyks along their way.

At the beginning of the war, two young Jewish doctors, the couple Stanisław and Barbara Wiczyc from Częstochowa, were fugitives in the city of Lwów ... With the occupation of the city by the Germans in June 1941, which was accompanied by a cruel pogrom against the Jews [carried out by Ukrainians], Stanisław came to the conclusion that the way to survive was to be swallowed up in the Christian population. However, all his efforts to receive employment as a doctor in Lwów under a false Christian identity were unsuccessful because he was recognized as a Jew. A senior Ukrainian doctor [Panchyshyn], aware of his distress, advised him to try his luck in the outlying rural areas. He gave him a letter of recommendation, without mentioning that he was Jewish, and directed him to the town of Łuck (capital of Volhynia District) in the hope that he would find work there. Stanisław left his wife in Lwów and went to seek a safe haven for them both. In Łuck he stayed with a Polish family and by chance met there a relative of the housewife, a middle-aged woman called Maria Belszan. From the first instant, Maria demonstrated a wish to help him in his

<sup>1373</sup> Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach*, 210–11; Berl Kagan, ed., *Luboml: The Memorial Book of a Vanished Shtetl* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav Publishing House, 1997), 290.

<sup>1374</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 1025; Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, 131; Account of Mother General Cherubina Radzewicz.

new locality. From Łuck he was directed to the county town, Włodzimierz Wołyński (called Ludmir by the Jews, today Volodimir-Volinski [Volodymyr-Volynskiy], Ukraine), where it was possible that he might find employment. Belszan, who was from that town and was about to travel there, suggested that he accompany her so that she might help him if necessary. On the way there, she gained Stanisław's trust and he revealed to her that he was Jewish and that he wished to settle somewhere and then send for his wife. It emerged that Maria Belszan has [sic] suspected from the outset that Stanisław was Jewish and when she saw his great need she had decided to help him survive. Maria Belszan was a devout Catholic, the wife of a Polish soldier who had been exiled to Siberia. When Stanisław asked her what motivated her to help him, she replied that her religion commanded her to help people in need without reference to creed. She took him under her protection, and Stanisław was hired as a doctor in the nearby town of Uściług (today Ustilug [Ustyluh] in Ukraine). She presented him as a relative, and through her social relations she opened doors for him that allowed him to bring his wife from distant Lwów. Maria provided her with a forged identity document, and created around them a circle of loyal, influential people, who were able to protect them from the suspicions that abounded.<sup>1375</sup>

Additional information about the rescue was provided by the Wiczyks' daughter, Janine, and her husband, Richard Dreyfus.

Maria [Belszan] also recruited Frank [Franciszek] and Maria Jachimek, another devout Catholic family, to help with the operation. They went back to Lvov [Lwów] to get Barbara [Wiczyc], who had just finished medical school. ... they put her in a cart and buried her in hay. ... Maria [Jachimek] also got in touch with the village priest, Father Stanislaw [Stanisław] Symon, to enlist his help. He and Maria helped Stanislaw and Barbara get their all-important identification cards from the Nazis. ...

Before getting the identification cards, Stanislaw and Father Symon had already struck a very close friendship. ... Stanislaw's Jewish identity was unknown to Father Symon until one day, while the two were walking together. He said, "Father Symon, I am a Jew." ... And Father Symon said, "It's O.K. I love you. I will take care of you, I will be part of this conspiracy. I will vouch for your identity," which periodically was questioned by the [sic] some of the townspeople.

During their time hiding there out in the open, Stanislaw and Barbara stayed busy. He ran a medical clinic, while she worked at a post office and cleaned as a domestic. Barbara even played the organ at Sunday Mass, which was attended by Germans. She could not practice medicine ... because it was felt that if a husband and wife were both doctors, they would be more likely to be discovered and sent to the concentration camps. ...

In order to acknowledge the courage, love and humanity that they received from the rescuers, the Wiczyks tried to honor them through Yad Vashem ... Yad Vashem only accepted Maria Belczan [sic] into its exclusive list in 2001. "We actually went to the Yad Vashem and we pleaded on behalf of all of them." Richard [Dreyfus] says ... But there is no doubt in the experiences, hearts and minds of the Wiczyc family that all of them were involved in

<sup>1375</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 533–34.

the small “conspiracy” of Catholics who risked their lives to save a Jewish family during World War II were, indeed, righteous and heroic.<sup>1376</sup>

In his Shoah Foundation testimony, Stanisław Wiczek disclosed that Maria Beszan passed him off as her husband’s relative and that Maria Jachimek vouched for his wife, Barbara Wiczek, as her cousin in order to obtain an identity document (Kennkarte) for her. He also identified Jan Trywiański as another member of the conspiracy of rescuers. Stanisław joined the Home Army in mid-1943 and became head of the self-defence group that was organized in Zosin to fend off attacks on Poles by Ukrainian nationalists.<sup>1377</sup>

A number of Jews, among them the lawyer Jacek Grębicki (then Grisza Grinberg) and his brother, were sheltered by the Strójwąg family in the hamlet of Władysławówka, near Włodzimerz Wołyński, where their presence was an open secret. Since the Polish rescuers were extremely poor, Rev. Franciszek Jaworski, the local pastor in Swojczów, implored his parishioners to provide assistance to the fugitives.<sup>1378</sup>

After escaping from the ghetto in Kowel, Volhynia, in the summer of 1942, Eve Wagszul (later Rich and then Blumberg, b. 1924) found herself in a labour camp she again escaped from to the safety of a convent at an unspecified location. The Carmelites had no convent in that area, so the attribution to that effect in the following account is inaccurate. Eve was one of several Jewish girls hidden in the cellar of the convent. After several months, it became too dangerous to continue sheltering the girls. The nuns provided them with crucifixes, prayer books and peasant blouses to help them blend in. After leaving the convent, the girls wandered in the forest begging for food. Later they were imprisoned in the Majdanek concentration camp. Eventually, Eve ended up as a farm worker in Bavaria.<sup>1379</sup>

And it didn’t take long before we were arrested, and we were taken to some ... labor camp ... it was very easy to walk out and to escape. And I remember walking away from the labor camp with some ... at the time I called him older man because I was like fourteen or fourteen and a half years old, and they told us that not too far there’s some religious

<sup>1376</sup> Daniel Cooney, “Hidden in Plain View,” *Faith, The Magazine of the Catholic Diocese of Erie*, July–August 2011, 20–23.

<sup>1377</sup> Testimony of Stanisław Wiczek, SFV, Interview code 50923.

<sup>1378</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 1026–27; Testimony of Jacek Grębicki in Edmund Mazur, “Po prostu człowiek: Materiały dotyczące pomocy niesionej Żydom w czasie okupacji hitlerowskiej w Warszawie,” *Palestra*, no. 11 (1968): 65–104, at p. 84. The Strójwąg family was recognized by Yad Vashem.

<sup>1379</sup> See also the testimony of Eva Blumberg (née Hava Wugshul), SFV, Interview code 18666.

installation. It's a convent and they are helping a lot of people and I walked to this ... there was ... a gate and cemetery, a big cemetery plot and then we noticed nuns dressed in habits and we waited until not too many people were around. There were like four of us I believe, and we walked in and we told them that we needed help, that we have no place to go and they asked us if we were Jews and we told them. ... they told us they were crowded, that they had a lot of infants. They had a lot of sick people and they indeed did, but this Mother Superior ... Theresa was her name, Mother Theresa. By the way, they were Carmelites ... they took us in and they told us that we had to be very quiet and it was a basement where they put us and sometimes we did chores for them and they gave us some food and they really didn't know how long we could stay because they were constantly being watched ... we stayed there for several months and slowly they tried to explain to us that things are getting very bad and they are threatened they would kill them if they would find out how many Jews they had. They had quite a few later on we found out. We heard the babies cry at night. We saw corpses being taken out of very old people and finally they told us that we have to go.

Well, they gave us [a] cross and a prayer book. ... that prayer book that I still have ... I memorized all the prayers and when we parted they gave me a peasant blouse to wear so I wouldn't look suspicious. I would look like a peasant. And this was a very sad time to part with them because you had like a little security and I remember feeling good. They would take us into the chapel to pray, you know, and they would make us kneel and it just felt good after the prayer. You know, I kept saying to myself, God, there's nobody Jewish to pray with me, therefore I have to pray with them and when we parted it was very sad and it was like dying and I even told ... there was one nun that took a special liking to me and every time she looked at me she would cry and she wanted me so much to stay there because she kept saying that I looked less Jewish than the others ... it was very hard for this nun to part with me. She wanted me to stay but they were afraid and they let us go ... there's no one that extended a hand anymore like the nuns did. ... They were very, very good to me, to us and I want you all to know that they risked their own lives. They didn't have much food and they shared it with us.<sup>1380</sup>

Rev. Władysław Bukowiński, the pastor of the cathedral parish in Łuck, Volhynia, sheltered Moshe Berezin in the diocesan seminary after his escape from the Łuck ghetto. Berezin later joined the 27th Division of the Home Army, where he was known by his nom de guerre, "Michał." Berezin was in charge of a special unit that included ten other Jews (4 men and 6 women). They ran the kitchen and mended footwear for the partisans. All of those Jews survived the war.<sup>1381</sup>

A Polish rescuer from Ośnica, near Łuck, in Volhynia, sought counsel with her confessor, the aforesaid Rev. Bukowiński, when her family was sheltering David Pristal (Princental).

<sup>1380</sup> Oral history interview with Eve Wagszul Rich, USHMM, Accession no. 1990.433.1, RG-50.030.0188.

<sup>1381</sup> Testimony of Moshe Berezin, YVA, file O.3/4812 (Item 3558711); Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, 386.

He [Pristal] then decided to seek out the Bron family, whom he knew, and who lived in the village of Ozhenitsa [Ośnica]. ... “my host and my rescuer agreed to let me stay in the house through the winter.”

There were times when the danger came very close. On one occasion a Jewish road-building contractor was caught in the house of a Polish woman, who was executed for the help she had extended to him. But other Christian families in Lutsk [Łuck] were hiding Jews; and this, David Pristal recalled, “undoubtedly encouraged the Bron family and raised their spirits considerably.” ... Mrs Bron was so anxious at the continual presence of a Jew in her devout Roman Catholic home. But one day, after she had asked a priest to visit her, she told David Pristal, with tears in her eyes: “Now I am totally relaxed, as the priest, Bukovinsky [Rev. Władysław Bukowiński], said I was doing a great act of kindness in hiding a Jew in my house. Now I have regained my peace of mind.”<sup>1382</sup>

After the Germans entered Łuck in the summer of 1941, Carolyn Feffer (née Safier) and her husband, Eugene Lebenstein, turned to the bishop of Łuck, Rev. Adolf Szelażek, an acquaintance of her husband’s, for documents that would help them pass as Catholics. The bishop gave them birth and baptismal certificates of deceased Poles. He was “extremely sympathetic.” The Germans seized her husband in a street raid and executed him. Carolyn placed her young daughter, Halina (then Barbara Olenyk), in a Catholic convent and continued to disguise herself as a Pole. After some Ukrainians recognized that she was Jewish, Carolyn applied for work in the Reich and succeeded in reaching Austria with her daughter.<sup>1383</sup>

The family of Edwarda (Eстера, Edzia) Finkielgluz (b. 1926), later Siekiera, and the Polish Hosticzko family—neighbours in Żytyń Wielki near Równe, in Volhynia—were good friends. After the Soviet invasion of September 1939, the Hosticzko family were endangered because of Józef Hosticzko’s service in the Border Protection Corps, so they moved to a farm in the village of Palcze, near Ołyka. After the German entry in June 1941, the Finkielgluz family was confined to the ghetto in Aleksandria, near Równe. Edwarda managed to escape. She arrived unexpectedly at the Hosticzkos’ home in Palcze.

After hiding with them for some time, Edwarda left for the nearby village of Chorłupy, where she worked on a farm belonging to Jan Szedziński, a relative of the Hosticzkos. She lived there openly under a Polish identity and attended church services in Ołyka with her hosts. In confession, Edwarda confided to the priest that she was Jewish. The priest told her not to take Communion, a sacrament reserved for Catholics, but protected her. The pastor at the time was Rev. Stanisław Woronowicz.

<sup>1382</sup> Gilbert, *The Righteous*, 10–12.

<sup>1383</sup> Testimony of Carolyn Feffer, SFV, Interview code 34750.

The Hosticzko family continued to visit Edwarda. Both families fled their homes when Ukrainian nationalist partisans started to attack and kill Polish villagers. Edwarda relocated with her employers to the town of Łuck, where the Germans were driven out by the Soviet army in January 1944. Edwarda and the Hosticzkos met up again in Warsaw after the war. When Józef Hosticzko was arrested for political reasons during the Stalinist period, Edwarda testified on his behalf.<sup>1384</sup>

Julia (Chaya) Zecker (b. 1928), later Miller, was placed with members of a Ukrainian Protestant sect in the village of Smyga after being spirited out of the Dubno ghetto by a Jewish smuggler. She remained there for about a month, until her hosts told her to leave because they were afraid to keep her any longer. Not knowing what to do, she decided to knock on the door of her family's former servant, Helena Niewiarowicz, who lived in the village of Strakłów, near Dubno, Volhynia.

In her testimony, Julia described Niewiarowicz as a nun who lived outside a convent. (She was probably a tertiary, a lay person affiliated with a religious community.) In any case, Helena kept Julia hidden in her small cottage throughout the German occupation. When she confided in a priest, he endorsed what she was doing. Julia's father also survived, and after the war they were reunited.<sup>1385</sup>

After being sheltered by two Polish sisters, Dora Chazan (b. 1929) was recognized as a Jew by a Ukrainian and arrested by the Germans in Łuck, Volhynia. She was eventually released after a Polish woman prisoner falsely claimed she was her aunt. Chazan then took refuge in a church. The priest, realizing that she was Jewish, placed her in a convent where she remained until the Soviet army arrived in 1944.<sup>1386</sup>

Polish accounts describe other rescue efforts in Łuck. The Benedictine Missionary Sisters, under the direction of Sister Marta, ran a shelter for children and the elderly. One of their charges was an 11-year-old Jewish girl with Aryan

<sup>1384</sup> "Trudging Through the Snow: The Story of the Hosticzko Family," PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/trudging-through-snow-story-hosticzko-family>; *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 278.

<sup>1385</sup> Testimony of Julia Miller, SFV, Interview code 43866.

<sup>1386</sup> Testimony of Dora Chazan, JHI, record group 301, no. 2900, noted in Czajka, Młodkowska, and Umińska-Keff, *Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz / Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue*, vol. 3, 345; Boaz Cohen and Beate Müller, "A Teacher and His Students: Child Holocaust Testimonies from Early Postwar Polish Bytom," *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 46, no. 1 (2016): 68–115, at pp. 106–8.

documents who was known as Krysia. She was baptized after the Germans retreated from the area and left afterwards with the nuns for western Poland.<sup>1387</sup>

Sister Flawia (Helena Lipka) took charge of a two-year-old Jewish girl who was left at their orphanage by her mother. She turned to Leandra and Tadeusz Mirecki, who were assisting Jews, to find a home for the girl. The Mireckis entrusted her to Jan and Maria Brzechwa, who baptized the girl and gave her the name of Teresa. The child survived the occupation and, after the war, relocated with her adoptive parents to Kostrzyn, on the Odra River.<sup>1388</sup>

Five Franciscan Sisters of the Suffering (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Franciszkanek *F*od Cierpiących), who worked at the hospital in Łuck, provided food to Jews. Dr. K. From, a native of Łódź who had fled to Łuck in 1939, continued to work at the hospital during the German occupation. He fled when German gendarmes came to arrest him and hid with a Polish woman for several days. Sisters Kazimiera Wirgowska and Wacława Mirota transported him secretly to the countryside. Unfortunately, he was killed in unclear circumstances shortly before the return of the Soviet army.<sup>1389</sup>

Peppy Rosenthal (née Naczycz), was an only child, born in 1935 in Rożyszcze, Volhynia. The family escaped as the ghetto was to be liquidated and was sheltered by three Polish families in succession. Peppy's mother got separated from the family and was never seen again. After their Polish benefactor was killed, Peppy's father took her to a Catholic convent in an unspecified location. (It may have been in nearby Łuck, where the Benedictine Missionary Sisters ran an orphanage.) He joined up with a group of Jews in the forest. Sometime later, the nuns gave Peppy to a Polish family, and her father reclaimed her after the Germans were driven out of the area.

My dad and his partner worked outside the ghetto, and they found out that the ghetto was going to be liquidated, and we couldn't tell any of his relatives, my dad couldn't. So he came back with his partner, and he must have paid off the guards. They let us cross the river, and my dad was carrying me on his shoulders, and the six of us escaped. And we went to stay with one of the people that worked for my dad's bus company. It was a Sunday. And they went to church, and we were looking out in the attic outside, and ... my mother tried to keep me away from the windows, so I wouldn't see ... And then we stayed there

<sup>1387</sup> Zygmunt Zieliński, "Activities of Catholic Orders on Behalf of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland," in Otto Dov Kulka and Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, eds., *Judaism and Christianity Under the Impact of National Socialism* (Jerusalem: The Historical Society of Israel and The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1987), 387, based on the order's wartime chronicle.

<sup>1388</sup> Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 155, 195, 322.

<sup>1389</sup> Kazimiera Wirgowska, *Ojczyzna moja, gdzie jesteście: Wspomnienia z Łucka 1939–1945* (Lublin: Norbertinum, 2009), 52–53.

till the ... they came back from church, and they wanted us to leave, because they were afraid, you know, that somebody's gonna find out that they're hiding us. So my father and his partner went to the country to see if he can find the, one of the conductors, and see if they'd let us stay there. And then my mother and my father's partner's wife and their son, the four of us, stayed there. And we went and we stayed with the ... where the pigs were staying. So if somebody came, then he can say that he didn't know we were there. So we stayed there, and he insisted that we leave. And my mother said she'll leave, and go and see if she can find my father, but would he just keep me safe, you know, hide ... for them to hide me some place. So she left, and I never saw her again. ...

Then they put us in a wagon and covered us with straw, the three of us: my father's partner's wife, their son, and myself. And they were taking us to the country, where my father was. ...So they left us there, and they dig [dug] out from under ... there was like hay and straw against the barn. And we dug out an entryway, and made the straw and hay hollow, so five of us could get in there. ... And we stayed with those people [Kowalczyk], I don't know how long, but I know it was one winter for sure, and it was a summer ... And they had children too. But he [Kowalczyk] was killed ... He was riding his bicycle from Lutsk [Łuck] ... we had to leave there ... they also had a hiding place underneath some flooring inside the house. But we didn't stay there very long, maybe sometimes in the wintertime, we would come in to warm up at night. One night, we came out of the hole, and they found a man from underneath the straw and there was a man in the barn hiding too. And my dad and his partner lied to him and told him that we were just there for the night, ... because they didn't want another person there. And I don't know whatever happened to that man. ...

When it was time for us—so they moved us in a wagon covered with straw. My father ... we separated at that time. I don't know what happened to the partner and his wife and son; they somehow survived. ... But I know my father and they took me to this convent, and my father left me there, and he joined the Partisans. But everybody was whispering that he was dead, because he had this fur coat, and he gave it away so it would look, you know, that he died, and so people wouldn't search for him, the Ukrainians. But he hid out someplace in the forest, with, with other Jews, and also with some Partisans. And I stayed in the convent for a while until they told, found me a place, and they told that I was an orphan. ...

They were very nice to me. I have special warm heart, ... in my heart, you know, about how they treated me, and they took—New Year's Eve, I remember them taking me to church. I didn't have any shoes on, so they wrapped my feet with towels and stuff. ... I wore a cross. ... I was raised Catholic. ... And you know, I remember when my Dad came back, and we moved into our house, my dad not once said, "Take off that cross," or, "Don't say that," or, "Don't go to church." He never said a word. And then all by myself, you know, I stopped doing those things.

They knew that I was Jewish. So I, I don't remember how long it was that I stayed at the convent, but I know it was wintertime, because I was cold, and I remember not having warm things. And then they gave me to this family that lived way, way far away from the road ..., so, and it was safe there. And if I saw a person walking towards the house, I would immediately hide. I had a special place where to hide. And I stayed there I know one winter, and a summer, not whole summer ... and sometimes when it was nighttime

I would go outside and play. Then one day I saw this man coming in the distance, and I went and I hid, and then, as he came closer, the woman recognized my dad. And she went and she got me ... my dad came and, you know, that was the first time I saw him in a long time. And we stayed together.

And some of those Jews went and they stayed at our house. They went as, as we were being liberated from the Russians, Jews came out from hiding, and they came and they stayed in our house [in Rożyszcze]. ... I remember that ... we traveled to Lublin. And we stayed there for a while ... then we went from there to Łódź. ... from Łódź we went to Danzig [then Gdańsk, Poland]. ... I didn't know how to write, read or anything. Then when we came back to Poland, ... I met some nuns, and they taught me the alphabet, and how to write, or read. ... they didn't push catechism on me, or any religion. ... And the Russians were so sympathetic to me. ... And the Catholics. ...<sup>1390</sup>

**K**rystyna Niekrasz was born in Rożyszcze, Volhynia, in 1941 as Ewa Putter. Her parents died in unknown circumstances. As an infant, Ewa was left with a note in the garden of a home belonging to the Zalech family. Mr. Zalech had worked as a caretaker in the school where Ewa's father was principal. The Zalech family took the child in.

A Ukrainian neighbour denounced them to the Gestapo, but a Catholic priest came to Ewa's rescue, swearing under oath that she was the child of a young unmarried woman from Rożyszcze whose identity he could not reveal. With the assistance of a Polish woman who worked as an interpreter for the Germans, her guardians obtained an official document stating that she was a Polish child who had been separated from her parents during the deportation of Poles to Germany for forced labour. Because their Ukrainian neighbours continued to harass them, the Zalechs moved to a village near Dęblin, on the Vistula River, and took Ewa with them. Ewa survived and continued to live with the Zalechs after the war.<sup>1391</sup>

**A**n unusual case is that of Zeev Portnoy (b. 1932). After escaping from the ghetto in Tuczyn, Volhynia, Zeev was given the identity of a Polish boy by a Polish benefactor. He then moved from place to place. He eventually became attached to a Hungarian military division, where he was fostered by a Hungarian officer. When his Jewish identity was discovered, a Polish priest in Turka, southeast of Lwów, came to his rescue. Zeev came across this unidentified priest once again, after he was released from detention.<sup>1392</sup>

<sup>1390</sup> Testimony of Peppy Rosenthal, July 1, 2009, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, University of Michigan at Dearborn, Internet: <http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/rosenthal/>.

<sup>1391</sup> Meloch and Szostkiewicz, *Dzieci Holocaustu mówią...*, vol. 4, 39–43.

<sup>1392</sup> Testimony of Zeev Portnoy, YVA, file O.33 V.T/182 (Item 3561018); Testimony of Ze'ev Portnoy, SFV, Interview code 36211.

Józef and Józefa Marć hid at least twelve Jews in the attic of their house in Jedlicze, near Krosno, among them many members of the Fries family. They also received assistance from the Zub family, especially from Rev. Stanisław Zub (later Zborowski), who lived nearby and regularly provided them with food. Many inhabitants of the village were aware of this rescue, yet no one betrayed them. In 1950, ten members of the Fries family declared in their statement: “We hid in the small town of Jedlicze, in the neighbourhood of the Zub family, and the entire Zub family, and Stanisław Zub in particular, assisted us at every turn, especially by providing us with food.”<sup>1393</sup>

Rev. Jan Zawrzycki, a school chaplain in Krosno and nearby Rymanów, saved about a dozen Jews. He hid Jewish children in the church belfry and found shelters for them in private homes and convents. One such child who was placed in a convent was Małgorzata Brenner (later Margalit Asher, b. 1939).<sup>1394</sup> Another child was taken in by the Sisters of St. Michael the Archangel (Michaelite Sisters) in nearby Miejsce Piastowe. At the request of Rev. Zawrzycki, Rev. Stanisław Lechowicz of Felsztyn issued a birth and baptismal certificate to that girl.<sup>1395</sup> Using the identity documents of the priest’s deceased grandmother (Anna Szafrańiec), Leontyna Bodner, from Krosno, and her two daughters, Anna and Gizela, moved to Warsaw where all three survived the war.<sup>1396</sup>

The assistance of Rev. Zawrzycki is gratefully described by a group of Jewish beneficiaries who settled in Israel.<sup>1397</sup>

Father Zawrzycki ... saved first of all the lives of Jewish children by hiding them in convents; often he personally went to the hideouts and Jewish bunkers and from there he took the children and put them in safe places, and it is thanks to this that those children lived and were delivered from Nazi satanism. Father Zawrzycki did this of his own accord, guided by the principle of unselfish love for his neighbour and fellow-man. As soon as he

<sup>1393</sup> Rączy and Witowicz, *Poles Rescuing Jews in the Rzeszów Region in the Years 1939–1945 / Polacy ratujący Żydów na Rzeszowszczyźnie w latach 1939–1945*, 92, 178–79; Ks. Stanisław Zub (Zborowski), Muzeum Polaków Ratujących Żydów podczas II wojny światowej im. Rodziny Ulmów, Internet: <https://muzeumulmow.pl/pl/ratujacy/podkarpackie/zub-zborowski-stanislaw-ks/>.

<sup>1394</sup> Testimony of Margalit Asher, SFV, Interview code 39430.

<sup>1395</sup> Zych, *Diecezja przemyska obrządku łacińskiego w warunkach okupacji niemieckiej i sowieckiej 1939–1944/1945*, 204.

<sup>1396</sup> Rączy and Witowicz, *Poles Rescuing Jews in the Rzeszów Region in the Years 1939–1945 / Polacy ratujący Żydów na Rzeszowszczyźnie w latach 1939–1945*, 174–77; Ks. Jan Zawrzycki, Muzeum Polaków Ratujących Żydów podczas II wojny światowej im. Rodziny Ulmów, Internet: <https://muzeumulmow.pl/pl/ratujacy/podkarpackie/zawrzycki-jan-ks/>.

<sup>1397</sup> For additional confirmation of the assistance rendered to the family of Bronisława (Bluma) Fischbein by Rev. Jan Zawrzycki, see the following testimonies: Testimony of Dora Cohn, SFV, Interview code 48253; Testimony of Dora Cohn, SFV, Interview code 52546.

learned that a hiding place where Jews were concealed had no guarantee of safety, Father Zawrzycki, often at night and under great danger to his own person, came on his bicycle and took them away, especially children who he saved in this way. Here in Palestine there is a whole group of people who owe their lives solely and exclusively to Father Zawrzycki. Bronisława Fischbein from Krosno, Franciszka Leizer from Cracow [Kraków], [M.] Rubin from Korczyna, J. Szapira from Warsaw, Anna Majerans and her three sons from Łódź. Others in Palestine and in Poland owe their lives to the aforementioned Father Zawrzycki.<sup>1398</sup>

A Home Army chaplain during the war and active in the anti-communist underground *Wolność i Niepodległość* (Freedom and Sovereignty) after the war, Rev. Zawrzycki was arrested by the State Security Office in December 1946 (released in March 1947), and again in October 1947. In May 1948, he was sentenced to ten years in prison. The sentence was commuted the following month, thanks to the intervention of Jews whom he had rescued. Rev. Zawrzycki was recognized by Yad Vashem in 2007 as a Righteous Gentile. According to Yad Vashem:

Local Jewish women, aware of his great character and his kind disposition towards Jews, brought him their children in the hope that he would save them. Zawrzycki hid the children in his church, and then relocated each of them to a neighboring monastery or into the care of trustworthy families.

Among those he saved were two young Jewish girls and their mother, who lived across the street from his house. He found the identification papers of a deceased Polish woman and gave them to the mother, and then used his driver to take them to the station, whence they made their way to Warsaw and survived the war. Other survivors aided by Zawrzycki included Bronisława Fiszbejn, Franciszek [Franciszka] Leizer and Anna Majerans.

Zawrzycki also collaborated with the *Armia Krajowa*, organizing a radio interception point in his attic. Together with his brother-in-law, he created caches for weapons and diversion supplies, including in the beehives by his house. He also secretly taught children in Rymanów.

In 1947, Zawrzycki was arrested for his wartime underground activity. The Jews he had saved during the war played an active part in liberating him the following year.<sup>1399</sup>

The Michaelite Sisters sheltered Jewish children in convents in several localities, among them Miejsce Piastowe, near Krosno and Godowa, near Strzyżów.

During the war the sisters hid several Jewish children among others, Lila Freighter and Zofia Goltweld, in the monastery in Miejsce Piastowe. Michaelite Sisters hid a Jewish girl, Maria Kaleta (Alfreda Baruszyńska) from Kołaczyce in their filial house in Godowa near Strzyżów. Barbara Kraciuk, the mother superior of the monastic house within the years

<sup>1398</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 340.

<sup>1399</sup> Jan Zawrzycki, RD.

1942–1945, took care of the baby. ... Alfreda Baruszyńska survived the German occupation, she was baptized in Miejsce Piastowe and after the war she was given to her parents.<sup>1400</sup>

The Michaelite Fathers (Congregation of St. Michael the Archangel) ran a residential school for boys in Miejsce Piastowe, where several Jewish boys were hidden, among them two sons of a teacher from Łódź. Józef Goldfeld and his son, well-known local Jews from the area, were employed in the Michaelite Fathers' tailor shop. The priests also supplied medicine, food and clothing to Jews interned in the labour camp in Rymanów, and they passed information between the prisoners and their families.<sup>1401</sup>

The story of Sylvin Rubinstein is particularly unusual. Sylvin left Russia with his mother and twin sister, Maria, after the Bolshevik Revolution. He and his sister became professional dancers. Billed as Dolores and Imperio, they headlined at music halls throughout Europe. They were performing in Warsaw when Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. They were consigned to the Warsaw ghetto, but Sylvin managed to escape. He was spotted by Major Kurt Werner, an anti-Nazi German officer who remembered Sylvin from an appearance in Berlin before the war.

Major Werner hid Sylvin for a time in Iwonicz-Zdrój. With the assistance of the Michaelite Fathers in Miejsce Piastowe, Sylvin obtained false papers under the name of Turski. He stayed with Michaelite Fathers for a time, in 1943, before leaving for Berlin, where he survived the war living in Major Werner's apartment. After the war, he continued his dancing career as a cross-dresser. His mother and sister perished in the Treblinka death camp. In 2003, a documentary film, "He Danced Life," was made of his life story.<sup>1402</sup>

Rev. Mieczysław Lachor, a vicar in Pstrągowa, near Strzyżów, and a Home Army chaplain, hid Krystyna Makut, a Jewish girl from Rozwadów, in his family's house in Przybyszówka. Maria Witer and Anna Drozd sheltered Krystyna's sister, Wanda, in Pstrągowa.<sup>1403</sup>

<sup>1400</sup> Rączy and Witowicz, *Poles Rescuing Jews in the Rzeszów Region in the Years 1939–1945 / Polacy ratujący Żydów na Rzeszowszczyźnie w latach 1939–1945*, 186.

<sup>1401</sup> Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945*, 76.

<sup>1402</sup> Kuno Kruse, *Dolores & Imperio: Die drei Leben des Sylvin Rubinstein* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2000); Sylvin Rubinstein, Virtual Shtetl, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Internet: <https://sztetl.org.pl/en/biographies/4489-sylvin-rubinstein>.

<sup>1403</sup> Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945*, 317; Rączy and Witowicz, *Poles Rescuing Jews in the Rzeszów Region in the Years 1939–1945 / Polacy ratujący Żydów na Rzeszowszczyźnie w latach 1939–1945*, 149–50, 180.

**B**asia, the 10-year-old daughter of Majerowicz from Krosno, who was passing as Jerzy Krawczyk, found shelter in an unspecified convent, where she survived the war.<sup>1404</sup> A number of Jews were treated at a hospital in Krosno that was staffed by the Sisters Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus (Zgromadzenie Służebnic Najświętszego Serca Jezusowego, commonly known as *sercanki*). Dr. Bogusława Gołachowska-Szczygłowska, who worked at the hospital, provided the following account.

A forester came to the hospital one day in December 1943 and told about a Jewish family living in the woods in a dugout they had built. He had been leaving potatoes and food for them, but now they were ill. They had fevers and diarrhea and he did not know how to help them. I conferred with the nuns who worked in the contagious diseases section and they all agreed without hesitation to accept them as patients in the typhus ward (the Germans never went there; a sign warned: Seuchengefahr—dangerous contagion). I filled out hospital admission forms for Stanisław Guzik, Janina Guzik, etc. (This was the most common surname in Krosno). That same day, the forester delivered them in a cart of hay. The nuns bathed them, shaved their heads and hung medallions around the necks of the children. They spent the whole winter recovering, with no one to bother them. Things only turned dangerous when the children, now healthy and with their red hair growing back, began sneaking out into the garden. That was when the director of the hospital, Dr Zygmunt Lewicki (head of the medical service of the Home Army resistance movement in the Krosno region), summoned me and said that we could not go on sheltering them because the whole hospital could suffer. We could already hear the artillery from the east. The Red Army was drawing near. Home Army soldiers led the “Guzik” family into the forest at night and ordered them to make their way eastward. I do not know what became of them. Nor do I know their surname. I hoped that they survived until liberation.

During the battle for Krosno in September 1944 a Jewish couple was admitted to the hospital. He was a physician (a morphine addict), already on his old age pension. When the Soviet bombs fell on the town, he thought it was a thunderstorm and decided to close the windows in the hospital barracks. A bomb blast tore off his arm. He died soon after. What happened to his wife? What were their names? I do not know. This was another case where the nuns admitted them without hesitation and cared for them tenderly.<sup>1405</sup>

**Z**ila Weinstein-Beer (b. 1939), later Cipora Re’em or Zippora Ram, was taken in by Maria and Stanisław Dudek of the village of Odrzykoń, near Krosno, and looked after as if she was their own child. She was able to pass, thanks to the solidarity of the villagers and the assistance of the local pastor, Rev. Ernest Świątek, who baptized her under a false identity and preached the duty of helping one’s neighbours.

Born in Krosno in 1939, Zippora Ram was the daughter of a Jewish timber plant owner, who employed many of the Polish inhabitants of the nearby village of Odrzyków [Odrzykoń].

<sup>1404</sup> Lauer, *Hiding in Plain Sight*, 145–46, 208, 228, 495.

<sup>1405</sup> Turski, *Polish Witnesses to the Shoah*, 177–78.

Zippora was very young when Stanisław Dudek took her into his home during the war. Most of the villagers knew where the little girl had come from, but kept silent, in part due to a sermon delivered by the local vicar, who preached the human duty of helping their neighbors.

Dudek and his wife Maria had no children of their own. They cared for the little girl with great devotion throughout the occupation. They looked out for her and did not let other children make fun of her or call her Jewish. Zippora was baptized by the vicar and raised as a Catholic.

At a certain point, the Krosno police ordered Dudek to bring the girl in to be checked. With tears in her eyes, Maria Dudek bid goodbye to her husband and adopted child, as the danger of discovery was immense. However, the German doctor conducting the “check-up” found the girl not to be Jewish.

After the war, Zippora was taken to Israel by a Jewish organization that took care of orphaned Jewish children. She was only eight or nine years old, and still wore a cross around her neck. She grew up with no recollection of the events of the war, or of her origins. It was only much later that her family decided to investigate her past. After a prolonged search, it was established that she had been saved in Odrzyków. Zippora made a trip to Poland in search of her roots.

When she saw the village and some of the people who still remembered her, many memories came flooding back. With the aid of the villagers, she pieced together the story of her survival and the Dudeks’ dedicated help. Unfortunately, neither Maria nor Stanisław were still alive at that time.<sup>1406</sup>

Zippora Ram herself gave the following account.

As early as fall 1940 my mother’s father, Suesman Katz, who owned a sawmill, approached one of his employees and asked him to hide me until the war ended. This employee was not able to assist, but he knew Stanisław [Stanisław] and Maria Dudek and helped my grandfather contact them. Sometime during the winter of 1940, a rendezvous was organized in the forest near Odrzykon [Odrzykoń]. I was handed over to the Dudeks, who raised me as their own daughter and baptized me as Cecilia [Cecylia] Dudek. I was nicknamed Cesia. It may be that my Jewish name was Zirl or Zila after my father’s mother and Cecilia was similar sounding.

I was born on 7.5.1939, or at least so I was told years later by my late half-brother who survived the war. In my childhood memories I live in a rural area with a Christian Polish family. I knew nothing about my Jewish origin or anything about the war that was going on, but I do remember that food was scarce and it was mostly potatoes that filled my hunger. I would shepherd the family’s geese during the day and sleep on the kitchen floor at night.

I have very vivid memories of two traumatic events. In the first a gun is aimed at my face and my command of church prayers is being tested. Only recently did I learn this was during a Gestapo interrogation to which I was taken with my Polish father, Stanisław Dudek. In the second memory it is winter and I am attempting to cross a river, but the strong current carries me away and I nearly freeze to death in the icy cold water. A mo-

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<sup>1406</sup> Dudek Family, RD.

ment before I die, I am pulled out of the water. Last year I realized this was not just an old vague memory, as I had the opportunity to meet Aleksander Blicharczyk, whose mother was the one who rescued me.

After the war was over I remember being taken away from my family to an orphanage in Krosno. I did not want to leave my Polish mother, who I now know was Maria Dudek, and we secretly decided that I will run away from the orphanage and she will pick me up and take me back to the village. This is why I remembered for years that Krosno was not far from the village, which in May 2009 turned out to be the lovely village of Odrzykon. The escape plan worked out well, but I was taken a second time, never to see my Polish mother again.

I was sent to an orphanage in Krakow [Kraków] and later travelled with a group of similar children to Israel in 1948, where I grew up without having knowledge of my biological family or a reason for being called Cesia Beer.

In 1956 my half-brother arrived in Israel and, for the first time, I was told all about my biological family. Up until May 2009, that was all I knew, but then, prompted by my children, I travelled back to Poland to look for traces of both my families. With the help of God and many good people I discovered numerous new details about my parents, siblings, and the wonderful Dudek family who took care of me during the war, while risking their own lives.<sup>1407</sup>

Rev. Lesław Kędra-Chodorski was a priest of the Polish Catholic Church (Kościół Polskokatolicki), which was not affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church. He also joined the Home Army. Rev. Kędra-Chodorski brought Nelly (Aniela) Arluk and another Jewish woman from Łódź to the village of Łęki Dukielskie, near Krosno, where his church was located. These two women were sheltered by Rev. Aleksander Piec, the parish administrator. Rev. Piec entered into a fictitious marriage with Nelly Arluk for the sake of her cover; the other woman posed as his mother-in-law.

Rev. Kędra-Chodorski also rescued Dr. Stefan Stiefel, who had been hiding in the shed of a Polish friend in Krosno. He arranged to bring Dr. Stiefel to the village dressed in a priest's cassock. Dr. Stiefel was passed off as a priest who had been expelled from the Poznań area, which had been incorporated into the Reich. Rev. Kędra-Chodorski obtained false identity documents for Dr. Stiefel under the name of Stefan Szymański, which he used until the end of the war. Dr. Stiefel was aided by a number of villagers who were in on the ruse, among them members of the priest's family and Jadwiga Niepokój, who helped to hide Dr. Stiefel's two sisters, Helena and Sala, and his father, Samuel. Dr. Stiefel later

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<sup>1407</sup> From a brochure published for the "Righteous Among the Nations" award ceremony held in Warsaw on June 14, 2010.

relocated to Kraków.<sup>1408</sup> Alicja Heiler (née Sala Stiefel, b. 1918) gave the following account of her brother, Dr. Stefan Stiefel:

My brother, Dr. Stefan Stiefel ..., who currently lives in Austria, hid from the round-ups at the house of the Sochański family. Immediately after the operation, he turned to his friend Father [Lesław] Chodorski-Kędra, a relative of the pianist Władysław Kędra. Chodorski belonged to the National Church. He agreed to give my brother a shelter at his house. What's more, he sent him a priestly robe to make his departure from Krosno to the countryside easier. And so, my brother left Krosno, at bright noon, dressed as a priest, accompanied by Jadwiga Niepokój and another friend named Cichocka. As they were walking down the street, women approached my brother to kiss his hand, a common gesture, unaware who that priest was! As it is customary in small villages that the newly arrived priest celebrates masses, Father Chodorski had to think how to get my brother and himself out of trouble. He explained that my brother was a priest, a refugee from Poznań, who suffered a nervous breakdown after Nazi persecution. My brother lived with Father Chodorski and his friends for some time. Later, provided with Aryan papers, he moved to Kraków.<sup>1409</sup>

Other clergymen of the Polish Catholic Church, or the Old Catholic Church (Kościół Starokatolicki), also came to the assistance of Jews. Rev. Antoni Ptaszek and his son, Rev. Kazimierz Ptaszek, were particularly active in Kraków. A number of Jewish testimonies—e.g., given by Celina Herstein, Ludwika Silber, Franciszka Berestyńska, Zofia Irena Müller, Helena Fedorowicz, and Berta Majerhoff—attest to the fact that the Ptaszeks helped as many as 43 Jews by furnishing false identity documents, sheltering Jews and finding shelters for them.<sup>1410</sup>

When some Jews arrived at the cottage of a Polish woman in Chobrzany, near Sandomierz, having been brought there temporarily by her brother, who had sheltered them in Zwierzyniec, near Szczebrzeszyn, the entire hamlet was

<sup>1408</sup> Testimony of Alicja (Steifel) Heiler, YVA, file O.3/3421 (Item 3557162); Testimony of Helena Stiefel, YVA, file O.3/1270; Elżbieta Rączy, "Ludność żydowska w Krośnie 1939–1946," *Biblioteka Krośnieńska*, no. 15 (1999): 28–29; Elżbieta Rączy, "Jews in Krosno Between 1939–1946," in William Leibner, comp., *Krosno by the Wislok River*, April 2014, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Krosno/Krosno.html>; "Parafia polsko-katolicka pw. Dobrego Pasterza," Łęki Dukielskie—650 lat historii, Internet: <http://www.stowlekidukielskie.dukla.org/Historia%20wsi/Historia%20wsi%20-%20Koscioly%20PNKK.htm>. A photograph of Dr. Stefan Stiefel dressed in a cassock can be found on the Yad Vashem website at: <http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/51619.html> (now inactive).

<sup>1409</sup> Testimony of Alicja (Steifel) Heiler, YVA, file O.3/3421 (Item 3557162).

<sup>1410</sup> "Three testimonies about the role of the priest Ptaszek in rescuing Jews, and a list of those he rescued," Ghetto Fighters House Archives (Israel), catalog no. 5996, registry no. 19627 collect; Testimony of Berta Majerhoff, JHI, record group 301, no. 2022; Testimony of Zofia Irena Müller, JHI, record group 301, no. 2023; Testimony of Helena Fedorowicz, JHI, record group 301, no. 2024; Testimony of Celina Herstein, JHI, record group 301, no. 3747; Testimony of Franciszka Berestyńska, JHI, record group 301, no. 3749; Testimony of Ludwika Silber, JHI, record group 301, no. 3750.

alarmed by the attendant danger. Luba Krugman Gurdus describes the calming effect of the stance taken by a priest, who was a complete stranger to them.

In order to throw off suspicions about our being Jewish, we accompanied Marysia [their hostess] to Sunday services. The compassionate, young priest sensed our problem and added a few words to his sermon on our behalf. He advised his congregation to respect their fellow men and not to condemn them too hastily for their beliefs and convictions. His effort proved beneficial, and the strained atmosphere around us eased.<sup>1411</sup>

No one betrayed the Jews throughout the duration of their stay in those parts.

Rev. Kazimierz Wiechecki, the pastor of Iwaniska near Opatów, approached the miller Gajewski to administer—for safekeeping—the property of the family of Ignacy Goldstein. The Goldsteins were thus able to access funds as needed for their upkeep. The village head, Stefan Mirowski, and the Polish police commander, Bakas, were equally sympathetic and helpful toward the Jews.<sup>1412</sup>

Zofia Zysman survived the war thanks to the assistance she received from a number of Poles, including Rev. Ignacy Życiński, the pastor of Trójca, near Zawichost, in the vicinity of Sandomierz, who sheltered her in the parsonage. Rev. Życiński was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile, along with two other rescuers, Maria Przysiecka and her son, Józef.

During the war, Maria Przysiecka and her son, Jozef [Józef], were living in Sandomierz. One day, Jozef met an old school friend, Zofia Zusman [Zysman], in the street. Zofia had arrived in Sandomierz from the neighboring town of Ozarow [Ożarów]. Jozef invited Zofia to come with him to his house. Zofia followed Jozef to his house, where she was warmly welcomed by Maria. At the Przysieckis, Zofia also met her prewar friend Itka. ... Itka was being sheltered in the Przysieckis' home and Zofia joined her. One evening in October 1943, when Zofia and Itka were climbing down to the cellar, they heard dogs barking outside followed by the clatter of Polish security officers pounding on the Przysieckis' front door. ... The intruders subsequently made an extensive search of the property, turning everything upside down, but discovered nothing. Nevertheless, following this incident, Przysiecka and her son came to the conclusion that it was too dangerous to continue hiding Zofia and Itka. Maria then turned to the priest Ignacy Zyczynski [Życiński], who knew that she was harbouring Jews. He told her to bring them to his house, where they could live in a garret. Under the cover of darkness, the fugitive Jewish girls moved to the rectory. In the meantime, Jozef prepared a new hideaway for them—in the woodshed. Zofia and Itka stayed there for the entire winter, lying huddled together and keeping absolutely still. ... In June 1944,

<sup>1411</sup> Luba Krugman Gurdus, *The Death Train: A Personal Account of a Holocaust Survivor* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1978), 105–6.

<sup>1412</sup> Testimony of Ignacy Goldstein, YVA, file O.33/1252 (Item 3555359); Laskey, *Night Voices*, 75–76; Testimony of Yitz'chak Goldstein, *The Ivansk Project e-Newsletter*, no. 3 (March–April 2004).

Zofia and Itka were once more taken to Zyczynski's home while Jozef began to construct a new shelter for them, this time in his garden. When it was complete, he ushered the girls into it. This was the last hideout used by Zofia and Itka on the Przysieckis' property because at the end of September 1944 the Przysieckis were ordered to evacuate their home. When they did Zofia and Itka had to look for a new shelter. They parted cordially with their courageous hosts and moved to Ozarow, where they found a new hideout. Itka later relocated to Zawichost, where the Germans caught and killed her. Zofia survived the war.<sup>1413</sup>

During an Aktion in Sandomierz, carried out by the Germans on a Sunday morning with their habitual brutality, Zysman witnessed the following reaction on the part of Poles: "I mingled with the Catholics who were coming out of church. I heard them moaning, weeping and screaming. 'Mother of God.' I did not cry—the tears in my eyes had dried up."<sup>1414</sup>

With the knowledge of the local priest, Jews used a church passageway that bordered onto the ghetto in Jedlińsk, near Radom, as a smuggling point to bring food into the ghetto.<sup>1415</sup> The pastor at the time was Rev. Franciszek Góralski.

After escaping from the Pionki labour camp in the fall of 1943, Michael (Majer) Rosenberg (b. 1926) survived with the help of Rev. Władysław Paciak, under the nose of the German police, who had installed themselves in the parish rectory in Tczów, near Radom. Passing as Marjan Różański, Michael stayed with two farmers in succession; the second farm was located in Rawica-Kolonia.

When I was 17, I walked into a German police station [in Tczów] and asked for papers ... I couldn't work without them. They called in a Catholic priest and he asked me to say a prayer. I still remember it in Polish. "Our Father, who art in heaven ..." The priest said, "Yes, he is Roman Catholic." They then took a photograph and gave me identification papers. It was a miracle that they didn't ask me to drop my pants and see if I was circumcised. If they had, I would have been put against the wall of the church and shot.

... Prior to escaping from the concentration camp [in Pionki], I had learned how to cross myself. But after passing myself off as a Catholic, it became necessary for me to go to confession. I was in fear. Not knowing how to make confession, I walked into the confessional box and said to the priest: "Father, I don't know what to do—I am a Jew."

<sup>1413</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 646–47.

<sup>1414</sup> Testimony of Zofia Zysman, JHI, record group 301, no. 2016. A number of other Poles provided Zofia Zysman with temporary shelter and other forms of vital assistance; the following rescuers were *not* recognized by Yad Vashem: Mrs. Brzezińska; Maria Ziemniak, the priest's housekeeper, and her brother Józef; Ola Ziemniak and her future husband, Jan Jasiński; Mr. and Mrs. Kwieciński; Mrs. Kowalska.

<sup>1415</sup> Account of Icek Heider, noted in Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part A, 825.

The priest opened the confessional window, looked at me, and said: “Son, don’t be afraid. I won’t betray you.” Then we prayed together. I still remember what we said together: “God bless Poland ... please help the oppressed.” ...

I wrote to the priest ... Then in 1953, a letter came back to Toronto: Address unknown. I haven’t heard anything since.<sup>1416</sup>

The interruption in corresponding with his “confessor” came at the height of the Stalinist terror against the Catholic clergy. Rosenberg’s visits with Rev. Paciak not only helped him pass as a Catholic, but also provided him with much needed solace. He expanded on his story as follows:

The German police officer had an office in the church rectory [in Tczów]. ...

In rural Poland, it is customary for the farmers to go to confession often. The farmer reminded me, I had not gone since my arrival and urged me to go that week. Again I was confronted with a serious dilemma. I did not know what to do. I had no clue what was expected of me or what the protocol was when confessing. ...

I entered the church and looked around trying to assess my surroundings. I had never been inside a Christian place of worship, but from what I overheard, I had a general idea what to expect. ... I knelt at the top of the aisle and crossed myself before proceeding down the outside aisle towards a cubicle. Inside, I could barely make out the silhouette of a man. I entered the empty side, closed the curtain, sat on a stool and waited. A few nervous minutes passed, while I became accustomed to the dark interior.

From the other side of the partition, a voice spoke. “Bless you my son.”

I waited, unsure what to say. The priest remained quiet, and the silence became heavy. Confused and frightened, I blurted out, “Father, I don’t know what to do—I am a Jew.”

Again there was silence. The confessional window separating the two cubicles opened, and the priest looked at me, saying, “Do not be afraid my son, I will not betray you.” We looked at each other for a few minutes, and finally he asked me if I knew any prayers.

I nodded.

He began to pray, “God bless Poland ... please help the oppressed ...” and I repeated the words after him. When he finished, we talked, and as I was leaving he said, “when the hyena leaves Poland, and if you do not find any of your family, I will sponsor you for baptism, if it is your wish.”

For as long as I lived on the farm, the priest kept my secret. “Come to me whenever your heart is heavy and we will talk,” he told me. Over the next fourteen months, we had many conversations on numerous subjects. At no time did he make any attempt to convert me to a Catholic, nor did he make any offer to help me to escape. [To where, one wonders.—Ed.]<sup>1417</sup>

<sup>1416</sup> “In the Shadow of the Holocaust: Six people whose lives were greatly affected by the Holocaust recently met at the Star to discuss their experiences,” *The Toronto Star*, December 3, 1992. See also the testimonies of Michael Rosenberg, SFV, Interview codes 2970 and 54355.

<sup>1417</sup> Abram, *The Light After the Dark*, 194–99.

After escaping from the ghetto in Połaniec, near Staszów, presenting herself as a Christian without a family, Miriam Korn (later Gutman, b. 1931) approached a random farmhouse begging for food. The family took pity on her and took her in. It turned that the husband was a Home Army member and meetings of the underground took place in this home. Miriam attended church services with the family and accompanied them when they went for confession before Christmas. Not knowing what to say to the priest in the confessional, she disclosed that she was Jewish. The priest behaved prudently. He stroked the girl's head (confessionals were not enclosed so this would have been visible) and told her to come weekly to. Miriam's cover was protected, and enhanced. Although she took communion (considered a sacrilege for non-Catholics), nothing was ever said. While staying at this home, a Jewish boy whom she knew came around begging for food. He did not divulge her origin.<sup>1418</sup>

In some cases, Jews betrayed their cover in the confessional inadvertently. After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto, David Kochalski (b. 1928), posing as a Catholic, sought employment as a farmhand in the vicinity of Warka and Garbartka, south of Warsaw. When he went to confession, unfamiliar with the rituals, the priest immediately detected that the boy was Jewish. The elderly priest befriended David, who visited the priest on Sundays when he stayed at the farm nearby.<sup>1419</sup>

Józef Sztarkier (later Josef Starger, b. 1931) was placed in a lay orphanage, known as Helenów, in Międzyzlesie, outside of Warsaw, by Kazimierz Młynarski, a steward at that institution. In addition to Młynarski, Józef's true identity was known to his wife, Janina, and at least one teacher. The children regularly attended mass on Sundays and received the sacraments. On one occasion, not knowing the rituals involved, Józef went to confession. The priest did not question him, but rather simply told him to tell him what sins he had committed.

At least one other Jewish child, Teresa, also resided at the orphanage. Józef remained there for about a year, after which he rejoined his parents, who were living in a cottage that Młynarski had arranged for them with financial assistance from Żegota, the Council for Aid to Jews. Józef's father, Maurycy Sztarkier, was given an identity document under the name of Franciszek Pawlak. Since his mother, Fryda, spoke Polish poorly, she pretended to be mute. The Sztarkier family survived the war, as did their older daughter.<sup>1420</sup>

<sup>1418</sup> Testimony of Miriam Gutman, YVA, file O.3/6747 (Item 3560370).

<sup>1419</sup> Oral history interview with David A. Kochalski, USHMM, RG-50.030.0001. Kochalski states that he never heard anti-Jewish comments from a priest.

<sup>1420</sup> Testimony of Josef Starker, SFV, Interview code 40214; Testimony of Kazimierz Młynarski in Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 166–67.

Rev. Ludwik Barski, the pastor of Ciepiałów near Iłża, provided false birth and baptismal certificates and temporary shelter to Jews.<sup>1421</sup> Two months after his death, on December 6, 1942, Ciepiałów and the nearby village of Rekówka were pacified by the Germans for the help extended to Jews by a number of Polish families. Thirty-four Poles were executed.<sup>1422</sup>

Rev. Józef Adamczyk, the pastor of Boże, near Białobrzegi, assisted in the rescue of three siblings who escaped from the ghetto in Białobrzegi and were sheltered by Stanisław and Wanda Skowroński. Rev. Adamczyk also helped a Jewish lawyer named Smoliński and his wife—who took up residence in the village posing as Catholic Poles—with their cover. Mr. Smoliński regularly took Communion at mass with no objection from the priest.<sup>1423</sup>

A forest inspector found an 8-month-old girl named Zelda in the woods near Dzierzkowice and notified the village elder. The girl's parents, Chemia and Sara Tenenbaum, had been deported to Kraśnik. Apolonia and Aleksander Ołdak took the child in and cared for her. In 1943 they adopted the foundling, calling her Basia (Barbara). Because some of the villagers were fearful of German repercussions and wanted the child to be surrendered, the local commander of the Peasant Battalions, who had found the child in the forest, requested Rev. Józef Baranowski, the local pastor, to baptize her, with the secretary of the commune office acting as the godfather. The protection of these various persons shielded the child from further adverse attention. After the war, Barbara Tenenbaum and the widowed Apolonia Ołdak settled in Israel.<sup>1424</sup>

<sup>1421</sup> Sebastian Piątkowski, “Aryan Papers’: On the Help Provided by Poles in Legalising False Identities for Jews in the Territory of the General Governorate for the Occupied Polish Regions,” *Polish-Jewish Studies*, vol. 1 (2020): 437–63, at p. 447; Henryk Bednarczyk and Helena Kowalska-Kutera, eds., *Ciepiałów dawniej i dziś* (Sycyna: Stowarzyszenie Oświatowe Sycyna, 2001), 163.

<sup>1422</sup> “A Crime in Stary Ciepiałów and Rekówka: The Story of the Kowalski, Obuchiewicz, Skoczylas and Kosior Families,” PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/crime-stary-ciepielow-and-rekowka-story-kowalski-obuchiewicz-skoczylas-and-kosior-families>.

<sup>1423</sup> “Priest Józef Adamczyk...,” Memory and Identity, Internet: <http://pamiecitozsamosc.pl/en/priest-jozef-adamczyk-stanislaw-barszcz-wanda-and-stanislaw-skowronszy>.

<sup>1424</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 561–62; Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 387; Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Polacy i Żydzi 1918–1955: Współistnienie, Zagłada, komunizm* (Warsaw: Fronda, 2000), 263–64; Kraśnik: Jewish Community: History, Virtual Shtetl, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Internet: <https://www.sztetl.org.pl/en/towns/k/688-krasnik/99-history/137536-history-of-community>.

Several accounts mention the assistance given by a priest in Krasnystaw. Monsignor Bronisław Malinowski was the pastor at the time in question. The following draws on Yad Vashem's recognition of Pelagia Łukaszewicz, who resided in Krasnystaw.

Jona Wiesenberg (later Teichman) was born in 1939 in Drohobycz to parents Artur and Fryda. Artur was a doctor, and as such was enlisted by the Russian army in 1939. He ended up in Anders' Army (the Polish armed forces in the east), which he deserted in 1943 for Mandatory Palestine. Meanwhile, Fryda and Jona remained in Drohobycz, which was occupied by the Germans in 1941. Soon after the arrival of the Germans, the Jews of the town were incarcerated in a ghetto. Fryda, however, managed to escape with her daughter and hide in the hospital where Artur used to work. Eventually the hospital refused to shelter the two of them any longer. Fryda took Jona to Warsaw, where they sought refuge until their financial resources were depleted. Fryda then rode around with her daughter on trains in order to find shelter, but was not successful.

One day, Jona fell seriously ill. Fortunately, on one of the trains they met a woman called Waleria (her last name is unknown), who offered her help. She took the Jewish mother and child to a nearby monastery, where Jona regained her health. With the help of the nuns at the monastery, Fryda found Pelagia Łukaszewicz [Łukaszewicz], who agreed to take Jona in as her adopted daughter for the duration of the war. By then, Jona was about three years old. Her mother explained to her that they needed to separate, so that she could be safe, and that she would be with a nice new family and would have food to eat and a brother to play with.

Pelagia "Lucia" Łukaszewicz was a charming, educated woman who was employed in a storehouse outside the village where she was living with her son Jacek and an adopted daughter. As the wife of a Polish officer who had helped the partisans and been taken prisoner by the Germans, Łukaszewicz was in danger, and was forced to leave Warsaw. Luckily, Jona looked like Polish, so her sudden addition to the family did not raise any suspicion. It also allowed Jona to roam free and play with Jacek.

Jona later recalled a life that was "completely pastoral: skiing, swimming in the river, walks in the forest, taking care of rabbits." She also remembered her "new mother" Lucia and her "brother" Jacek. Jacek's father was rumored to have been a partisan and killed at the beginning of the war, and as there were nighttime meetings in the house, the children were forbidden from leaving their rooms after dark. In fact, Jacek's father was freed after the war and returned home.

Fryda visited her daughter on occasion, but progressively less often, because Łukaszewicz was worried that Jona would inadvertently reveal her true identity to someone, perhaps one of the Germans who frequented the village. The goal was for Jona to treat Łukaszewicz as her real mother. In turn, Łukaszewicz took care of Jona as her own daughter, equal in every way to her son. Jona was christened and taken to church regularly for her protection. [Obviously, the priest would have been aware that a child christened at that age was a Jewish child.—Ed.] Gradually, Jona came to believe she was Łukaszewicz's daughter.

After the war, Fryda, who had managed to obtain Aryan papers and survive, returned to reclaim Jona. It was a traumatic experience for all involved, as a mutual love and devotion had developed between the little girl and her adoptive family. The danger in which Pelagia

Lukaszewicz had placed herself and her son had been immense, but she acted out of pure compassion for Jona. To separate from her now was understandably difficult and painful.<sup>1425</sup>

The following account from Krasnystaw is based on Yad Vashem's recognition of Jan Osiewicz.

In 1942, after the Jews of Krasnystaw (Lublin district) were deported, Ester Knobel's mother sent the teenager back to Krasnystaw to join her brother, who was hiding there. She equipped her daughter with jewelry that she could sell to keep herself and her brother alive. However, Ester was robbed *en route* and, although she reached her brother safely, she could not stay with him for long because she had no source of support. In her distress, Ester turned to Jan Osiewicz, a good friend of her brother's, who concealed her with his parents and with his married sister for some time. Eventually, Osiewicz found a job for Ester in a nearby village, where she remained until the liberation. Throughout that time, Osiewicz stayed in contact with Ester, sustained her morale, and represented someone on whom she could rely. Osiewicz also assisted Jakub Altman, who was hiding on the Aryan side of the town, and provided Altman's wife with papers [obtained from the parish<sup>1426</sup>] that enabled her to go to Germany in the guise of a Polish woman and find work as a waitress. All of Osiewicz's rescue actions were prompted by humanitarian principles and were without material reward.<sup>1427</sup>

After moving from place to place in Volhynia, and the neighbouring province of Lublin, Zofia Dulman arrived in Krasnystaw with her daughter, Danuta, in March 1944, posing as a Polish Catholic woman with the help of falsified documents. Zofia got a job at the local hospital, which was run by nuns. A priest who used to lead prayers there took an interest in the Dulmans. He taught Danuta religion in preparation for her First Communion. Zofia disclosed her secret to the priest when he asked to see her daughter's baptismal certificate, believing he had already suspected the truth. The unidentified priest was sympathetic and protective, and even rebuked some girls who worked in the hospital for implying that Zofia was Jewish. Zofia remained at the hospital until the end of the war.<sup>1428</sup>

When the ghetto in Zamość was being liquidated in the fall of 1942, Rachela Bromberg and her daughter Gabriela (b. 1938), then known as Rysia or Rywka, were hidden for a time by Józefa Wajland-Meyer in the cellar of her home. Gabriela's father, Michał Bromberg, made arrangements to shelter his daughter with Regina Jabłońska, an impoverished woman with four children of her own. He gave Jabłońska money to purchase a cottage in the nearby town of Izbica.

<sup>1425</sup> Pelagia Lukaszewicz, RD.

<sup>1426</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 389.

<sup>1427</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 567.

<sup>1428</sup> Memoir of Zofia Dulman, JHI, record group 302, no. 261.

But Gabriela's parents were seized before she could take her place in Jabłońska's new home. Gabriela remained in the Zamość ghetto with her cousin Olek.

An unidentified woman accompanied Gabriela and Olek on the forced march to Izbica, where local Jews were gathered on their way to the death camp. German guards shot the three of them as they tried to leave the large group of Jews near Izbica. Olek and the woman were killed while Gabriela, bloodied and unconscious, was left for dead. Miraculously, Jabłońska found her and took her to the parish rectory in Tarnogóra, where Rev. Michał Jabłoński removed the bullets from her leg with the assistance of his housekeeper. For almost two years, Jabłońska hid Gabriela in a small enclosure in her home. After the war, Gabriela was taken by an uncle, as her parents had perished.<sup>1429</sup>

**B**ronisława (Bronia) Eisner (later Sz wajca, b. 1932) recalls the assistance she and her mother received from a number of families and individuals—the Twardziks, the Syndutkas, Mrs. Dębińska, Mrs. Szwestkowa, Mrs. Kaźmierczak, Mr. Sitek, Mrs. Świtał, Mrs. Ronczoszkowa, and the Czaplak—both in Sosnowiec and in her native Katowice, after escaping from the ghetto in Sosnowiec in August 1943. Until the Red army arrived, Bronia Eisner stayed, longer than anywhere else, with the Czaplak, Polish-speaking Silesians whom she remembers fondly as “good people.” Among those who helped her and her mother was a Catholic priest, Rev. Józef Szubert.<sup>1430</sup>

We were also helped by Dr. Schubert [Rev. Józef Szubert], the parish priest of St. Mary's Church [Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary], the second oldest and most important Catholic church in Katowice after the Cathedral. Mama knew him already from before the war, although I don't know how. He assisted us financially. We used to go to the parish where Mama would give his two sisters manicures. They clipped out food ration cards for us, which we ourselves, didn't receive at all. Following all the holidays, they would give us cakes to take home. The priest's sisters brought me shoes and tights, as I remember.

<sup>1429</sup> Adam Jaworski, “Opowiedz to jeszcze raz,” *Kronika Tygodnia*, Internet: roztocze.net (Zamojski Dziennik Internetowy) April 26, 2007; Testimony of Józefa Wajland-Meyer, JHI, record group 301, no. 5951.

<sup>1430</sup> Rev. Józef Szubert's biography does not coincide entirely with the details provided in this account. The Germans arrested Rev. Szubert in May 1940. They sent him first to Dachau and then to Mauthausen. After his release in November 1940, Rev. Szubert lived in Katowice, in a building that belonged to Caritas, a charitable organization, as the Germans forbade him from engaging in pastoral activities. Bronisława Eisner and her mother, who was a prewar friend of Rev. Szubert's aunt, stayed in the Caritas building for about a month in 1942. It was dangerous to keep her longer because the Gestapo were stationed right next door, so another hideout was arranged with a Polish family that lived nearby. In 1947, Rev. Szubert was transferred to Godula, a suburb of Ruda Śląska. The Communist authorities imprisoned him in 1955–1956. He died in 1973. See his account in Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 600–1. See also the testimony of Bronisława Sz wajca, SFV, Interview code 48302.

They knew that Father was a Jew. Father Schubert did not insist on baptizing me; he declared it could wait until after the war, and then he did indeed try to convince me. Anyway, he continued to visit us many times. But one time he asked, “Bronia, would you like to learn the prayers?” I answered that I already knew them. I recited “Our Father,” “Hail Mary,” and “Angel of God.” I knew how to pray because Mrs. Czapla had taken me to church several times, and even before then, Zuza had taught me prayers—in Polish, of course. Dr. Schubert was very pleased and taught me several other things, gave me a little prayer book, and told me it would be good if I always carried it with me. He also presented me with a religious medallion, which I always wore from then on.

As fate would have it, Mama was quite soon able to repay the priest. Namely, he was arrested by the Germans and sent to Dachau. His terrified sisters pleaded with her to go there and give him a blanket into which they had sewn the names of some Germans who were willing to attest to his pro-German sympathies before the war. He was one of the few priests who had been willing to offer confessions to non-Polish-speaking Germans in their native language. [This latter claim is untrue.—Ed.]

The sisters gave Mama cigarettes and vodka to bribe the guard, and Mama went there and delivered the blanket. After a few days, the witnesses from the list he received were interrogated, and Father Schubert was allowed to return to his parish. He was very grateful to Mama. Where did she, being a Jew, muster enough courage to go deep into Germany and mill around a concentration camp to bribe a guard? She was always very brave. Before the ghetto was set up, she traded in food products between Sosnowiec and Katowice. She could always keep a cool head in difficult situations. I assume she must have had some Aryan papers, but I don’t know anything about it.

The priest, having been released from a German prison, after liberation, ended up in a Polish [Communist] jail. Someone reported that he had returned from Dachau suspiciously quickly, considering that so very few returned at all. Unable to help in any way at the local level, Mama this time set out for Warsaw to the Ministry of Religions. She told them everything about herself and about what Father Schubert had done for us and explained the circumstances of his release from Dachau. He was soon released from this second prison but was not allowed to return to his parish. He took over the parish in Godula, a district of Ruda Śląska. Grateful to us, he visited us nearly every month for many years. He passed away already a dozen years or so ago.<sup>1431</sup>

**A**fter his parents were deported by the Germans, David Danieli, a nine-year-old boy from Rybnik, knocked on the door of the Kapicas, his parents’ friends. They looked after him devotedly and saw to all his needs. The local priest baptized the boy and issued a birth and baptismal certificate stating that he was their son. David stayed with the Kapicas until the area was taken over by the Soviet army in January 1945.

The Kapicas, who adopted David Danieli, were a mixed family of [coal] miners—Anton [Antoni] a Pole, Martha [Marta] a German—who followed a typical proletarian way of

<sup>1431</sup> Account of Bronisława Szwajca (née Eisner), “Among the Silesians,” in Gutenbaum and Latała, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 2, 293–95.

life. They attached no special importance to their national origins and were not religious. Nevertheless, they were compelled to baptize David at the priest's urging, so that he would be issued a birth certificate stating that he was their son. David attended school and joined a German youth movement. At first he was under the impression that no one in the neighborhood knew he was a Jew. Later, however, he discovered that many people had known he was Jewish but had not denounced his adoptive parents.<sup>1432</sup>

Janina Bauman recorded open displays of solidarity with Jews by priests in Warsaw and in the environs of Kraków. Bauman escaped from the Warsaw ghetto with her mother and hid on the Aryan side until they were forced to abandon Warsaw after the uprising of 1944. Along with other refugees, both Poles and the Jews concealed among them, they were scattered in villages throughout the German occupation zone.

One time Staś, who was making desperate efforts to help them, had to abandon them in a church [in Warsaw], while he rushed off to find a friend who, he hoped, might take them to her flat. The friend could not be found at that moment, so Mother and Sophie [the author's sister] had to stay in the church for many hours. They were wearing their usual disguises and pretended to be praying all that time. The priest noticed them and took a deep interest in the two miserable figures. He must have guessed who they were and why they kept praying so keenly. When towards evening most of the congregation had left, he then brought them food and drink which they badly needed. He also found a few words of Christian consolation for them. Soon after Staś arrived with good news and took Mother and Sophie to his old friend Vala. ...

... The Mass [in the village church of Zielonki, near Kraków] continued, the young priest [Rev. Jan Pietrzyk] knelt and stood by turns, followed by the crowd. He sang, he prayed, he performed various rites at the altar, then he climbed into the pulpit and began to preach. The sermon was simple and clear. It was about the equality of all humankind in the eyes of the Almighty God and the sacred duty of every Christian soul to help those who were in peril, no matter what race they belonged to or which faith they espoused.<sup>1433</sup>

A Jewish woman identified as S.F. worked in a labour gang composed of Poles and Jews in the fields of a manor requisitioned by the Germans on the outskirts of Warsaw. She was separated from the group just prior to the outbreak of the Warsaw ghetto uprising in April 1943, when the Jewish farm labourers were taken by the Gestapo. She ran to the manor of a Polish woman, Mrs. Fijałkowska, who had sheltered her earlier.

After a narrow escape during a raid on the manor, she turned to a priest, Rev. Edward Wojtczak, the chaplain at a nearby convent, who was known as a "friend to the Jews." He provided her with temporary shelter at the convent

<sup>1432</sup> Bogner, *At the Mercy of Strangers*, 62–63.

<sup>1433</sup> Janina Bauman, *Winter in the Morning: A Young Girl's Life in the Warsaw Ghetto and Beyond, 1939–1945* (London: Virago Press, 1986), 145, 180.

before placing the Jewish woman with his sister in Warsaw, who had also taken in a Jewish child, and then with a doctor. Rev. Wojtczak supplied the woman with false identity documents and found employment for her.

It is not clear which convent this story refers to. Rev. Wojtczak was a priest at the chapel of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Kaplica Niepokalanego Poczęcia Najświętszej Maryi Panny), which was attached to an institution for the infirm located in the Królikarnia home at 113 Puławska Street. That institution was under the care of the Franciscan Sisters of the Suffering. However, during the occupation, the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union had to relocate to that same building, and Rev. Wojtczak is mentioned in one of their accounts reproduced later. During the Warsaw Uprising, on September 16, 1944, the Germans dropped a bomb on the chapel and institution, killing many insurgents, many patients, and five nuns.

The Gestapo squad called to the lord of the manor to come out. Fijalkowski [Fijałkowski] appeared and they pounced on him like wolves, slapping him and screaming: “*Juden seinen bei dir!*” It was no use when he protested that the German authorities had given permission. They beat him up so bad all his teeth came flying out of his mouth. Next, they ordered all the Jews to come out with their hands up. They were all marched off to a waiting truck and beaten and humiliated without mercy. I ran straight into Lady Fijalkowska’s chamber, crying to her that I was finished. She led me down into the cellar and told me to wait there until they’d gone. But a Polish policeman broke into the house ... “I was told there’s a Jewess in here!” The lady couldn’t talk him out of it. He ran down to the cellar and found me right away. He dragged me up to the ground floor. I kept crying and kissing his hands: “Tell them no one’s here! Give me a second and I’ll be far away!” He did. He must have been an angel of some kind. He let go of me and in an instant, I flew through the back door and out of the house. When the truck was gone, I went back into the lady’s chamber. She wouldn’t let me stay. She herself was still trembling from what had just happened. I knew I had to go now. I left the estate and walked through an open ditch by the side of the road. I stayed down there till morning.

As the sun was coming up, I fell into a panic. I knew no way of escaping my horrid fate. I went back to Lady Fijalkowska again. I clung to her, crying and pleading for her to save me. Her answer was telling me there was no reason to panic—I didn’t look “too much” like a Jew. She talked me into going to the nearby monastery and asking for sanctuary from the father, Edward Wojtczak. He was supposed to be a kind man and a friend to the Jews. I went. What else could I do? A sister answered my ring and asked what it was I wanted. I told her I had to see the father. She didn’t say anything—just looked me up and down as if trying to figure out who I was. She told me to wait. A long time passed. The father himself came out to see me. A tall man, gray-haired—he looked about sixty—with a kind face. I started crying and said I was a Jewish daughter. I took out my purse with the little money I had left and some jewelry I always carried with me for whenever I had to buy my way out of getting killed. I told him I would give it all away to the sick people in his infirmary. The priest looked at me with understanding and said: “I don’t need it. You might have to use it someday. Where will you go now? It’s night already.” He took me inside the monastery, I felt lost in the darkness. There were only small candles flickering over the heads of the marble and bronze icons. It was all horrifying. I sank quickly into a sleep.

At five in the morning, the priest came to me. He took me to his cell, gave me some food. I was beginning to feel that my fate was changing. He told me that in two hours, his real sister was coming here to talk things over with me. It was true—she really came. A nearsighted woman, she stared straight into my eyes as we stood nose to nose. She was simply radiant with kindness. She kissed me and calmed me down. I offered her my little bag with all my possessions.

“I’ll only hide it for you. Hitler won’t be around forever,” she said.

She combed out my hair so I’d look like a Gentile girl. She changed my clothes. She took me with her. We got on a trolley and she took me to Puławska [Puławska] Street, to her unmarried sister. This sister was caring for a Jewish child—a girl of about two. Such a beautiful and wonderful child you’ve never seen. The child treated her like a mother and she simply cherished the little girl.

“And you say,” she says to me, “that I’m a cousin of yours.”

The priest’s sister had a buttons-and-notions shop downstairs. I stayed in her flat and sometimes I came down to help out. My Polish was perfect.

Soon, Germans came and took over the store, letting only Volksdeutsche run it. I happened to be there that day. You can imagine how scared to death I was. After that, I never left the room. That’s right. I made it too obvious when I ran back to the room like that—but I was so scared.

The priest came. He comforted me. “Don’t worry,” he said. He told me to go back inside the monastery and to stay there till he got me papers and a job. I was now back inside the cloister. I learned all their prayers and the group recitations the nuns sang.

The priest went to see Fijalkowski—the lord of the manor where I worked on the labor gang. It turned out they were very well acquainted and he brought me back the Kennkarte of a real Gentile girl—Zofia Ryclinska [Rychlińska] of Białystok who had just died in the Warsaw Hospital. The father accompanied me—I was supposed to be a simple farm girl now—to the Gestapo, to have me registered. The Gestapo were completely cynical. They stared at me maliciously—they knew perfectly well who I really was—but since a Catholic priest had come along, they didn’t feel like starting the investigation.

So now I had the identity card of an “Aryan” Christian girl and my name isn’t S–V–anymore, it’s Zofia Rychlinska. I keep attending the services in the convent and sing along with the nuns.

The priest did me more favors. He got me a job with Dr. Niewiadomski on Marszałkowska [Marszałkowska] 87—a completely Gentile street—and I worked for a Gentile family. The priest had mentioned me to the doctor a few times. The father didn’t want to take on another person in times like these! The doctor finally agreed.

I got along in Dr. Niewiadomski’s house. Sleep, food, and a couple of zloty [złoty] a week. I helped take care of his house, and also his office.

The Jewish woman turned to Rev. Wojtczak again, frightened by a Gestapo raid on a nearby building.

Three weeks later, I was in the priest’s cell and Fijalkowski walked in. He was pale as the wall. He didn’t say anything. I got scared—something must be wrong. He was the one who got me the identity card. I tried to keep up appearances and say something pleasant. But

he was lifeless. The next day, I had to go back to the priest to find out what was going on and again, I met Fijalkowski. I tried sounding cheerful ... Then, it suddenly dawned on me that he was hiding out here, and it was because of me. His caretaker had denounced him to the Gestapo for giving the identity card of his servant girl, Zofia Rychlinska, to a Jew. The Gestapo rushed over to Fijalkowski's estate, found the place abandoned because he'd escaped through a back door, so they beat up his father and mother and arrested his wife and children. It was like this for many sad days until the priest was able—for a huge sum of money and through personal contacts—to free Fijalkowski's family and have the whole matter disposed of.<sup>1434</sup>

This Jewish woman remained in Warsaw until she was deported to Germany in November 1944, after the Warsaw insurgents capitulated.

Most Jews, to survive the long years of German occupation, had to rely on any number of Poles—both long-term and casual benefactors, along with the many who simply kept their mouths shut, despite the mortal danger they were placed in by the presence among them of Jews in hiding.

Róża (Rosa) Reibschid-Feliks identified numerous, devoted benefactors, among them priests, who came to her family's assistance. Four of these, including Rev. Wojciech Bartosik, the pastor of Wawrzeńczyce, a village east of Kraków, were recognized by Yad Vashem in 2014. A fifth, Rev. Ferdynand Machay of Kraków, was recognized in 2017.

My conscience would not leave me alone if I kept silent about the deeds of these "Righteous." Some helped me for a whole year, others for two months, some for a few days only, but I shudder to think what would have happened if they had not held out their helping hand just for those few days! Even he who gave me shelter for one night only—may he be blessed! ... Here are my saviors:

1. The Reverend Canon Wojciech Bartosik, Wawrzeńczyce, district of Miechów
  2. Professor Sarna (W.S.H., Kraków), during the war owner of an estate near Kraków, now living in Kraków
  3. Władysław Bukowski, now living in Kraków (during the war owner of the Makocice estate near Proszowice)
  4. Helena Bukowska, wife of Jan, now in Łódź
  5. Jadwiga Goetel (wife of the writer Ferdynand), now living in Warsaw
  6. The Reverend Dr. Ferdynand Machay, Our Lady's Church in Kraków
  7. The Lach family, Kraków, owners of a house in ulica Dobrego Pasterza
  8. Wiktoria Krawczyk, janitor, Kraków, Kościuszki [Street] 52
  9. Jan Wiecheć, Kraków (employed during the war in the Krischer firm, Zwierzyniecka [Street] 6)
  10. Engineer Karol Kulczycki, Warsaw (and his wife Julia)
  11. The family of Michał and Maria Stepiński, Makocice 12 near Proszowice
- Every one of these people has done a great deal for me at the risk of his own life.<sup>1435</sup>

<sup>1434</sup> Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 135–38.

<sup>1435</sup> Iranek-Osmecki, *He Who Saves One Life*, 284–85.

The Reibscheid family—Marian Reibscheid, his wife, Rosa Reibscheid-Feliks, and their son, Edward (b. 1938)—were from Kraków. In 1940, having procured Aryan papers, they escaped from Kraków and moved to Wawrzeńczyce, a town in the area. The local priest, Wojciech Bartosik, was quite influential in the town; he was extremely welcoming toward them and helped them find their feet in their new location. The Reibscheids believed it was best for them to all be baptized. Bartosik obliged, while fully understanding that this was not a true baptism but merely a way to escape persecution. He also provided for their nonspiritual needs: food, respectable paid work for Marian, release from forced labor for Rosa, and even Polish parents' names registered in his books for the Reibscheid's parents.

July 1942 saw Jewish families transferred to the town by the Germans. This encroachment of the regime increased the danger for the Reibscheids. Wojciech found them a family to stay with. Włodzimierz Bukowski was a well-off Polish estate owner. He lived with his sister and his sister-in-law, Helena Bukowska. (Helena later moved to a different village nearby.) They received the Reibscheids warmly and provided for them. When need arose, the Jews hid, but most of the time they simply lived on the estate together with the Bukowskis. One day a local tailor by the name of Latał reported the Bukowskis for sheltering Jews. It was September 1942, and the police were raiding the town, looking for Jews who might be hiding there. Someone tipped the Reibscheids off that people were out to get them. Rosa picked up little Edward and ran with him to the village that Helena Bukowska had moved to. Helena sent word to Marian's workplace to warn him of the danger, and he was able to jump on a bicycle and escape to Kraków. Rosa and Edward spent the night hiding in the local church and returned to Helena's home in the morning. They spent three days with her and then joined Marian in Kraków. From there, in 1943, they decided to move to Warsaw.

In Warsaw, they were sent to Jadwiga Goetel, the wife of a famous Polish writer, who greeted them warmly and helped in every way she could. She found a position for Rosa as a seamstress and a job for Marian as an engineer. She kept them in her own home for three months, until they were able to find an apartment for themselves. Once the Warsaw Uprising broke out, Marian volunteered to fight and was killed in battle. Rosa and Edward were sent to a transit camp in Pruszków and were liberated from there by the Russians in January 1945. Rosa returned to Judaism, remarried, and moved to Israel with her new husband and son in 1948.<sup>1436</sup>

Róża Reibscheid's testimony from 1946 provides additional details of the assistance she, her husband, Marian, and young son received from various priests and nuns in the Kraków area, including Rev. Bartosik of Wawrzeńczyce, Rev. Waław Radosz of Proszowice, and an unidentified priest from Michałowice. Rev. Machay was the chaplain at the Norbertine Sisters' convent and church of St. Augustine in Kraków, where Róża was sheltered temporarily. Afterwards, the Reibscheids moved to Warsaw, where they were also helped by numerous Poles.

When they started to collect Jews from nearby towns in Wawrzeńczyce, Nowe Brzesko county, Poles warned us that something was about to happen, especially after stories of

<sup>1436</sup> Wojciech Bartosik, RD.

the events in Tarnów reached Wawrzeńczyce. The pastor, Rev. Wojciech Bartosik, who was very kind to us, referred us to Buchowski [Władysław Bukowski], the owner of a nearby country estate, who took my husband on as a mechanic for all his farm machinery and tractor operator, and his wife recommended me as a seamstress to neighbouring manors. ... Materially we were well off there, but peasants from Wawrzeńczyce came by who knew us. Some Pole betrayed us. The Germans looked for us in the entire area ... but found out nothing ... The sołtys (village administrator) warned me and sent his daughter to the warehouse to warn my husband. When the girl was in the warehouse, Gestapomen were already circulating in the courtyard. My husband got on a bicycle and was able to escape undetected by the Germans. I went with my son to the Bukowskis, who did not allow me to leave because all the field roads and highway were guarded by the Gestapo, and the train at the train station was held up for three hours and all the passengers searched. I took my son to the barber to have his head shaved so he would not be recognizable, and there I learned from clients' conversations of the arrival of a punitive expedition who searched all the brush along the Vistula River.

In the meantime my husband went by bicycle to a priest he knew in Michałowice who allowed him to stay in for the night. I went to Proszowice to seek advice from Rev. [Wacław] Radosz. He reproached me for not having told him earlier that I was a Jew, as he would have found my husband a position in Radom. He sent for horses to take me to Michałowice. The next day a carriage arrived with a pair of horses (later I learned that the priest rented the horses for 300 złoty), and I travelled to Michałowice like a lady. There I met my husband at the priest's house. I arranged with my husband to meet in Kraków.

In Kraków I endured a real hell. Our Polish acquaintances were afraid to take us in, so we spent every night somewhere else. Rev. [Ferdynand] Machay showed us great compassion, and found a shelter for me with the Nobertine Sisters in Salwator. He helped us financially and found a position for my husband as a mechanic on an estate in Olszanica, seven kilometres from Kraków. After leaving the convent I had nowhere to live so we decided to go to Warsaw.<sup>1437</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Rev. Machay provided birth and baptismal certificates and other forms of assistance to many Jews, among them, Felicja Seifert (later Ela Manor), who passed as Elżbieta Smoleń.<sup>1438</sup> Rev. Machay vouched for Ewa Rose-Boratyńska, her husband and her mother when they were arrested in Kraków in March 1943 on suspicion of being Jews, and thus helped secure their release.<sup>1439</sup>

<sup>1437</sup> Testimony of Róża Reibschaid, JHI, record group 301, no. 1713; Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 315–16.

<sup>1438</sup> Aleksandra Mianowska, RD.

<sup>1439</sup> Testimony of Ewa Rose-Boratyńska in Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 559.

Marian Seidner was born in Kraków in 1937 or in 1938 as Józef Seidner. He was caught with his mother during a raid and taken to the Montelupich prison. Afterwards, they were placed in the Kraków ghetto, from where they were sent to the concentration camp in Płaszów. Afraid her son would be deported to Auschwitz, Marian's mother asked Maria Nawrocka and a priest to help him escape. She threw the wicker basket in which she had placed her son from a train. Fortunately, nothing happened to the boy.

Maria took him in and fell in love with him, naming him Marian, after her son who had been killed in the war. After the war, Marian was taken by the Jewish Committee and placed in a Jewish children's home in Zabrze. Two years later, when the children were being sent to Israel, Marian fled to Maria. He was found again and sent to an orphanage in Bielsko-Biała. At the age of 18, he moved to Israel. Many years later, he learned that his mother had survived Auschwitz and settled in Holland.<sup>1440</sup>

When she was three years old, Janina Katz (b. 1939) was smuggled out of the Płaszów concentration camp, where she was imprisoned with her mother, and entrusted to the care of Stefan and Maria Kapłański of Dobczyce, south of Kraków. The local priest was taken into their confidence. He baptized Janina and she was taught Catholic prayers by her adoptive parents. The family was well known in the town, so it was impossible for the community not to have been aware that Janina was Jewish. The child lived there peacefully throughout the war. After the war, she was reclaimed by her mother.<sup>1441</sup>

After being smuggled out of the Płaszów work camp with the help of a Pole named Kajdas, Tadeusz Jakubowicz (b. 1939) and his parents stayed with Katarzyna Siwek in Kraków, before taking refuge in the village of Kornatka, near Dobczyce. A number of Jews were hiding in the forest nearby, and soon the entire village became aware of their presence. The priest from the parish in Dobczyce urged his parishioners to help the Jewish fugitives, and not to betray them. Villagers, among them the Krupa, Morajek and Kopera families, provided them with food. During the winter months, they allowed them to stay overnight in their homes, barns and stables.<sup>1442</sup>

<sup>1440</sup> "Maria Babrzyńska...", Memory and Identity, Internet: <http://pamiecitozsamosc.pl/en/maria-babrzyńska-and-marian-seidner-from-cracow>.

<sup>1441</sup> Wierzbieniec and Rączy, *Righteous Among Nations*, 50; Janina Katz, *Moje życie barbarzyńcy* (Warsaw: Jacek Santorski, 2006).

<sup>1442</sup> See also Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 263–66; *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 371; Monika Stępień, ed., *Witnesses to Polish-Jewish History: The Stories of Holocaust Survivors, Former Prisoners of Nazi German Concentration Camps and Righteous Among Nations* (Kraków: Galicia Jewish Museum, 2016), 40–41.

We hid in dugouts in the forest ... in the village of Kornatka. Close by there were more than ten other persons, but they all kept in small groups. For reasons of safety, they didn't form a camp. We spent the entire day lying so that we would not be seen. Only in the evening did we crawl out in order to straighten out bones somewhat. Practically the entire village knew that we were hiding. Imagine, even the priest said in his sermon, "You know that Jews are hiding here in the forests. You have to help them, and do not betray them." And these people helped us. Without them we would have had no chance of survival. There was terrible poverty in the village. My mother, who had Aryan features and documents, travelled to Kraków and bought food, which we shared with our benefactors. I remember many people who helped us. To me those people are real heroes.

Winter of 1943/1944 was exceptionally frigid. The temperature would fall to minus 30 degrees (Celsius). Good people who lived near our hideout helped us out. They took us in overnight. I slept in the stable with animals. ... While there was frost, we spent every night with farmers. A member of the household would stand guard observing the vicinity to see if Germans were approaching. When today I hear someone say that Poles behaved badly, I can't agree with that. Of course no society is without its faults, whether they are Poles, Jews or Russians. ... But my family encountered wonderful people and to them we owe our salvation from the Holocaust.<sup>1443</sup>

**A**fter the liquidation of the ghetto in Nowe Brzesko, northeast of Kraków, in September 1942, Rozalia Elbinger and her daughter Pola took shelter in the parish rectory, where Rev. Józef Zdun resided with his sister. But when their presence there became known, Mrs. Elbinger took her daughter and joined her husband, who was hiding in a nearby village with their son.<sup>1444</sup>

**F**ela Rotsztajn, who lived in the village of Jeziorna, near Warsaw, recalled her many Polish benefactors, among them Rev. Antoni Konieczny, the pastor of Słomczyn.

I am a resident of Jeziorna near Warsaw where my family has lived for generations. I survived the occupation years in this area thanks to kind people. This wasn't for a day or a month, but my wanderings lasted more than three years. Risking their own lives people lent me a helping hand. These were: Wojciech Dominik of the village of Łęg, Edmund Komorowski of Konstancin, Rev. Antoni Konieczny of Słomczyn, Kazimierz Wandel of the village of Łęg, Władysław Moskałowicz of Słomczyn, Stanisława Suchecka of Słomczyn, Władysław Zduńczyk of Słomczyn, Bolesław Zawadzki of Klarysew, Andrzej Rossman of the village of Bielawa, Kornelli of the village of Bielawa, Jerzy Mrówka of Mirków, and Zbigniew Kępka of Mirków.<sup>1445</sup>

<sup>1443</sup> Przemysław Miśkiewicz, interview with Tadeusz Jakubowicz, "Dzięki nim żyję, dla mnie to bohaterowie," *Narodowy Dzień Pamięci Polaków ratujących Żydów*, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, *Dziennik Zachodni*, March 26, 2018.

<sup>1444</sup> Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 1, 32, 40; Testimony of Emanuel Elbinger, 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/emanuel-elbinger>.

<sup>1445</sup> Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, 308.

**A**nna Forkasiewicz (née Niuta Studnia), who married Józef Forkasiewicz, a Catholic Pole, during the war, described the assistance she and her family received from numerous Poles—three Polish families (consisting of 11 people), three individual Poles, four priests, and a boarding school run by nuns—in the vicinity of Radom and Warsaw. The following priests who extended help were identified by name: Rev. Bolesław Skwarliński of Radom; Rev. Józef Kuropieska, the pastor of Garbatka-Letnisko; and Rev. Jan Podsiadły of Mszczonów.

So much is heard about the unsympathetic attitude of the Polish clergy towards the Jews that I want to place special emphasis on two names:

Father Boleslaw Skwarlinski [Bolesław Skwarliński], Prefect from Radom: Whilst I was hiding for six months at the parsonage in Garbatka near Radom, the Prefect was a frequent guest of Father Jozef Kuropieski [Józef Kuropieska], who provided me with all the care and attention a pregnant woman requires. I had to leave when my baby's birth was approaching and it was then that I went to live with the Stopinski [Stopiński] family.

Father Jan Podsiadly [Podsiadły], my husband's school friend: We were guests of his cousin during Easter of 1943 while he was still studying for the priesthood. In 1943 when the Germans evacuated areas on the right bank of the Vistula, we were taken to a camp in Pruszkow [Pruszków], where I was separated from my husband who was sent to the Dachau concentration camp. I was left with my baby in Sochaczew in tragic circumstances. (My striking Jewish features were only partially offset by my faultless Polish accent.) With the help of the local curate (who did not know my origin) I reached Mszczonow [Mszczonów] near Zyrardow [Żyrardów] where Father Podsiadly was a curate. He took care of my child and me, by lodging us with a childless couple and visiting us frequently; although the visits could have led to his arrest and even death, they served to allay suspicion about my Jewish appearance.<sup>1446</sup>

Rev. Kuropieska of Garbatka-Letnisko provided false birth and baptismal certificates—in the names of Łucjan and Edward Rakoczy—for the sons of a Jewish woman from Warsaw. All three members of this family were sheltered by the Karpała family from 1943 until the Red army displaced the Germans in January 1945.<sup>1447</sup> Anna Dembowa also credits an unidentified priest near Mszczonów with helping her and her husband, Franciszek Dembowy, by securing a hiding place for them.<sup>1448</sup>

<sup>1446</sup> Chciuk, *Saving Jews in War-Torn Poland, 1939–1945*, 26–27. See also the testimony of Anna Forkasiewicz, SFV, Interview code 31814, where she mentions the helpfulness of another priest and nuns in Mszczonów.

<sup>1447</sup> Ryszard Śmietanka-Kruszelnicki, "Nieznane historie z dziejów ratowania Żydów pod okupacją niemiecką: Matka zostawiła otwartą piwnicę z ziemniakami," *Rzeczpospolita*, PlusMinus, March 23–24, 2019.

<sup>1448</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 536.

After the outbreak of the war, Zofia Pilichowska (later Weiser, b. 1927) moved to Warsaw with her parents and sisters, Janina and Wanda, from their hometown of Łódź. After their escape from the Warsaw ghetto in November 1942, the entire family underwent baptism at the Church of the Holy Saviour (Najświętszego Zbawiciela). The ceremony was presided over by Monsignor Seweryn Popławski, the pastor of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, on Leszno Street. Each family member took on a false identity. Zofia recalled:

All our family members were baptized in the parish of the Saviour in Warsaw. Father [Seweryn] Popławski agreed to baptize us at once without any further questions. Our Polish friend directed us to this priest. Our baptismal certificates became the proof that we were Aryan. My mother got her birth certificate under the name of an already deceased parishioner, Maria Anna Kowalewska. My father [Henryk] became Aleksander Franciszek Będzikowski. I and my sisters kept our original surname.<sup>1449</sup>

After residing for a time in Henryków, a friend named Heininger directed Zofia to the Kosiński family in Buków, outside Warsaw. The Kosiński family were also helping other Jews. Mrs. Kosiński introduced Zofia to Rev. Zygmunt Siedlecki, the pastor of Nowe Miasto nad Pilicą. Zofia stayed at the parish rectory for about three months, helping with farm chores.

Because her presence attracted too much attention, Rev. Siedlecki directed her to the Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Blessed Virgin Mary in that same town, as someone who wanted to pursue a religious vocation. Zofia was sent to the order's mother house in Mariówka, near Przysucha, where she lived in the novitiate for the remainder of the war. After the war, she left the convent and was reunited with her family.<sup>1450</sup>

Gustaw Alef-Bolkowiak, a Jewish partisan who fought in the Communist People's Guard, recalled the assistance he received from a number of Poles, including members of the Catholic clergy, after he was wounded in partisan warfare near Opoczno, west of Radom.

After I was wounded in a skirmish near Osa [Ossa] in Opoczno county, many people cared for me: Mirosław Krajewski, Elżbieta Krajewska, Mrs. Pieszczyk—the owner of a laundry near Jasna Street in Warsaw, Waclaw and Ryszard Strzelecki, the teacher Gromelski, the engineer Bukowski, Rev. [Jan] Gałęza, Sister Stefania [Miaškiewicz], Irena Ciesielska and doctors whose names have faded in my memory because of the passage of time. Those are the people who, in the fall of 1942, during a period when the occupier heightened their terror, risked their lives and the lives of their families to come to my assistance.<sup>1451</sup>

<sup>1449</sup> Testimony of Zofia (Weiser) Pilichowska, YVA, file O.3/2826 (Item 3556712).

<sup>1450</sup> Testimony of Zofia (Weiser) Pilichowska, YVA, file O.3/2826 (Item 3556712).

<sup>1451</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 533.

When his safety was endangered, Alef-Bolkowiak was dressed in Rev. Jan Gałęza's soutane and escorted to a safer place by Sister Stefania Miąskiewicz, a Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary.<sup>1452</sup>

Several priests in the vicinity of Włodawa, in the voivodship of Lublin, are mentioned in Jewish memoirs. Rev. Józef Sobieszek, the local dean, placed Mirka Bram (b. 1935), later Miriam Erlich, with the Orzechowski family, who took her in and cared for her. Another priest in a nearby village taught Mirka religious practices to help her pass as a Catholic. Mirka recalled:

Mrs Szusterowa [from Adampol] told me I should go and see the priest in Włodawa, and that he would certainly help me. We went to Włodawa across the gardens and fields so that no one would see us. She left me by the church and forbade me to go back to her house, because she was very much afraid. I went to the church and went looking for the priest ... I saw the priest by the little house behind the church and I went up to him. I said: "Good morning, Mr. Priest. I'm an orphan, please can you help me?"

The priest [Rev. Józef Sobieszek] smiled and said: "Go and see Mrs Orzechowska, the doctor's wife, and tell her that I sent you." And he gave me Mrs Orzechowska's address, even though I knew where she lived, but I did not say anything because I was pretending not to be from Włodawa. But Mrs Orzechowska and her husband recognised me straight-away and told me not to be afraid. I burst into tears and told them everything. Then Mrs Orzechowska sent me into the country to a priest she knew who knew that I was Jewish. The priest taught me how to talk so that no one would know that I was Jewish, how you must not say "Mr Priest" but "father," and many other things. I stayed there for several days.<sup>1453</sup>

Masza But (b. 1934), who lived in Dubeczno, was entrusted to a local farmer by her father, who paid for this arrangement. She remained with the farmer for about a month. Afterwards, she was sheltered by an unidentified priest, assuming the identity of Marysia Bidziek. Dubeczno was located in the parish of Hańsk. After the war, Masza was taken by the Jewish Committee to a children's home in Łódź.<sup>1454</sup>

Harold Werner, a Jewish partisan active in the area between Włodawa and Parczew, recalls in his memoirs:

<sup>1452</sup> Teresa Antonietta Frącek, "Ratowały, choć za to groziła śmierć," Part 1, *Nasz Dziennik*, March 10, 2008; Teresa Antonietta Frącek, "Siostry Franciszkanek Rodziny Maryi: Dzielili się z Żydami chlebem, sercem, schronieniem," *Życie Konsekwowane*, nos. 3–4 (131–32) (2018): 172–92, at pp. 184–85.

<sup>1453</sup> Cited in Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, *The Children Accuse*, 139–40. See also Gutman and Krakowski, *Unequal Victims*, 230; Testimony of Miriam Erlich, YVA, file O.3/10995 (Item 3565513).

<sup>1454</sup> Masza But, Ghetto Fighters House Archives (Israel), catalog no. 1265, and catalog no. 3735, registry no. 16061R<sup>M</sup>.

In a small village not far from the Bug River, we went at night to the house of a friendly local priest and asked him to take us to the shallowest point of the river. He led us to a spot where the water was waist deep, and with our weapons over our heads we crossed, with the priest leading the way. When we got to the other side, we directed him to go back.<sup>1455</sup>

**D**iane Armstrong (b. 1939), who was known as known as Danusia, together with her parents, Henek and Bronia Baldinger, spent the war years in the small town of Piszczac, near Biała Podlaska, under the protective umbrella extended to them by Rev. Roman Soszyński, the local pastor. Her family lived for three years, posing as Catholics under the assumed name of Bogusławski. They were befriended by the priest, who played chess with her father. The Gestapo was close by, and they lived in fear of being denounced.

Ever since my father [Henek] had arrived in Piszczac, the problem of making friends had been on his mind. Being newcomers made him and Bronia too vulnerable, because all new arrivals were suspected of being Jews until proved otherwise. He'd noticed that all the other newcomers in the village, who were Catholics, soon found mutual friends or church connections which made them accepted, but neither he nor Bronia could claim such links. He'd already asked the church organist to enter his certificate of baptism into the parish records. Although it was a false certificate, once it was entered it would appear genuine and he'd be able to make copies if he ever needed proof of baptism.

It was vital to make friends and become part of village life as fast as possible. ... A few weeks after the new priest [Rev. Roman Soszyński, then 32 years old] had arrived, Henek was heading towards the post office. ... He was about to walk into the post office when he heard a cart rattle along from the direction of Chotyłow [Chotyłów]. The driver tugged the reins, the cart stopped, and out stepped the new parish priest, brushing the sleet off his black soutane. His heart beating at his own audacity, Henek hastened towards him and apologised for accosting him in the street. "On the contrary, my dear Dr Boguslawski," replied Father Soszynski with a disarming smile. "I'm the one who should apologise for not having called on you, but I've been following the bishop's orders [not to call on his parishioners, but let them seek him out]. What can we do, we live in such dangerous times!"

Heartened by the priest's friendly manner, Henek pressed on. "This evening my wife and I have invited some friends over to our place. If Reverend Father would come and have a glass of tea with us, we'd be honoured."

Roman Soszynski looked with interest at this greying man whose neatly trimmed moustache and slight limp added to his air of distinction. He'd already heard about the new dentist from the organist, who'd reported the conversation about the baptism certificate with a look which had implied some doubt. But he liked Dr Boguslawski's sincerity and his direct gaze. "I'll be delighted to come tonight and meet your good lady," he replied.

When Henek told Bronia the good news, her forehead crinkled like a washboard. "How do I know what to say to a priest?" she fretted.

<sup>1455</sup> Harold Werner, *Fighting Back: A Memoir of Jewish Resistance in World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 191.

“Don’t worry about anything, leave the talking to me,” Henek said. “Anyway, he seems very approachable.” As it turned out, the evening proceeded better than either of them could have hoped. Roman Soszynski was an entertaining raconteur with an easy flow of conversation, and although his observant gaze missed nothing, he knew how to put people at ease.

He loved to hear what was going on in the parish and laughed at jokes as loudly as anyone, but with his Jesuit training he also enjoyed arguing, debating and exchanging ideas. One of his regrets about coming to this sleepy hollow was that there would be little opportunity to sharpen his wits, so he was delighted that the dentist was a thinking man, well read and cultured. ... Before leaving that evening, Father Soszynski told Henek that he’d welcome a game of chess in the presbytery. While they washed the glasses after their guests had gone home, Henek couldn’t help smiling. “Just imagine, the son of Reb Danil Baldinger playing chess with a priest!” ...

Not a day passed without some traumatic incident which threatened to reveal their secret. ... before long, rumours about the Boguslawskis were spreading through the village. ... Father Soszynski had heard rumours about the Boguslawskis. ... “At school today one of the children said that Danusia was Jewish,” he said casually. Henek’s eyes were boring into his face. “I told them it wasn’t true,” Father Soszynski continued. ... he [Henek] understood that the priest was letting him know that he was on his side.<sup>1456</sup>

Decades later, Armstrong visited the town and met with the priest, then in his 80s. The encounter restored a lost part of her childhood and gave her a new perspective on those years she spent in hiding. She had always been angry at the villagers and their rumours. Now she understood that everyone had suspected her family was Jewish; but despite this, no one had ever denounced them. The village, under the guidance of the priest, had in fact protected them. Her anger was transformed into wonder and gratitude.

Benevolence shines from Father Soszynski’s face. In a voice that’s surprisingly strong for a man of eighty-three, he says, “I was thinking about you just two days ago. I thought about your parents and wondered whether little Danusia was still alive. While I was in town today someone said that people from overseas were looking for me. I thought of you straightaway. Danusia! I thought, and flew home like a bird!”

Why should this telepathy astonish me, when the fact that I am looking into the face of the priest who helped us survive the war in Piszczac is beyond anything I ever dreamed of? ...

While he speaks, I keep pushing back the question that is nagging at me. Not yet, I keep thinking. Not yet. Suddenly Father Soszynski stuns me by answering my unspoken question. “Of course I knew that you were Jewish. We all knew.” ...

Father Soszynski continues his reminiscences. “Not long after I arrived in the village, your father asked the organist to enter his certificate of baptism into the parish records. This seemed a strange request, and I wondered then whether he had bought this certificate

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<sup>1456</sup> Armstrong, *Mosaic*, 294–307.

somewhere. If so, it was a very smart move because once the information was recorded, he'd be able to obtain authentic copies. Still, in those days it was better not to know too much so I decided not to inquire too closely into it and we entered your names in the parish records." ...

One day in 1944, Mrs. Forycka, the doctor's wife, came to see me and dropped a bombshell. "Has Reverend Father heard the latest? The whole town is saying the Boguslawskis are Jews!" I thought to myself, Jesus Maria, can this be true? Then I recalled that business with the baptism certificate, that embittered fellow Mr Jozek [Józek] who came to work with your father but turned out to be a Jew, your mother's nervousness, your father's constant vigilance ...

Next day, your father came to see me. He was not the same person. He had lost all his strength, he was a crushed man. Despair in his eyes. So sad to see.' ... "Catastrophe, Reverend Father!" he told me. "They're saying that we are Jews ..." ...

"When your father came to see me that day, I felt like weeping," he says. "Such a cultured, witty man, so intelligent and companionable. How could I not extend a helping hand?" I said, "Doctor Boguslawski, let's look at it another way. There's no merit being born a Pole any more than there is disgrace being born a Jew. It's not up to us. It's up to God. I can't feel proud of being born a Pole any more than another should feel ashamed of being born a Jew. But the issue is that to accuse someone of being born a Jew today is to sentence them to death." He leans towards me. "You know, the Gestapo were stationed only three kilometres down the road in Chotyłow."

So I said to your father, "Doctor, let me figure out how to climb out of this pit. I won't run from house to house, but what I will do is come to your place this afternoon with my sister, and we will walk down the centre of the main street of the town so that everyone will see that we're coming to visit you as if nothing has happened. Let them all see. Will you give us a glass of tea when we come?" ...

"I can still see the relief on your father's face when I told him that I'd come over that afternoon and keep coming to visit him," says Father Soszynski. ... For the first time in my life I realise that our only hope of survival, however slight, rested entirely with Father Soszynski. ...

"After that visit with my sister, I kept coming more often than usual, to demonstrate my support. When the villagers saw their priest socialising with your parents, they figured out that I must know what I was doing, and decided that they had no business gossiping about them."

Leaning towards me, Father Soszynski says with great emphasis, "And no-one in that village denounced you, even though everybody knew that you were Jews. In your case, Piszczac passed with flying colours. We had drunkards, thieves, and cheats amongst us, but on that occasion, everyone behaved beyond reproach." ...

Throughout my life I had been angry that our existence in Piszczac had been so tenuous, that dangerous rumours had proliferated and that, had the war continued, one of our neighbours or acquaintances would have denounced us to the Germans. But Father Soszynski's account of our survival helps me to see it in a different light. During the Holocaust it took only one person to send hundreds to their death, but it sometimes took one

hundred people to save a single Jewish life. For the first time I realise that by their silence the people of Piszczac had helped us to survive.<sup>1457</sup>

An unidentified village priest in the vicinity of Drohiczyn, on the River Bug, assisted Bella Bronstein, an orphan, by finding her a position with a local farmer under her new Christian identity, Antonina Bujalska. Later, the priest visited her when she was hospitalized, provided her with money, and invited her to sing in the church choir. Bronstein was helped by many Poles as she moved from village to village, even though she was recognized as or suspected of being Jewish. The priest also kept a Jewish housekeeper who went by the name of Wanda; she was *not* pleased at the arrival of another Jew.

I came by a Catholic church, and sat down to rest a while chanting a holy Christian hymn. An old man came out of a little house and invited me in. I accepted the invitation willingly. The old man was the warden of the church. After he gave me some warm food in his cozy little room I asked him if I could find employment around the place. He suggested that we go in to see the priest who might take me in as help to his housekeeper. It turned out later that the priest's housekeeper was also a refugee Jewish woman who was not too anxious to have another Jewess around ... (not unusual in those terrible days).

The priest however, was glad to help a child in distress and sent me to one of his rich parishioners, with a recommendation. I was accepted and was again rechristened Antonina. My new patroness was the wife of a rich farmer. She offered me the job in the cow barn and sheep shed, in which they had over eighty heads. I was too timid and scared to refuse the job although I knew that it was really too hard for a girl. I was willing to try and so I remained in the service of this family.

The churchwarden left me there, and I again felt at home with good people. At night I heard them talk about the horrible situation and how the poor Jews were being exterminated. ...

The rainy season began. Every day I had to take the sheep to pasture, and I returned soaking wet. Yet I didn't mind the cold or the discomfort of my wet clothes. I was determined to go on; until one day I caught cold, and got sick; but I was afraid to tell anyone how miserably sick I was. However, my kind mistress noticed how I suffered, and when she measured my fever it was above 40 degrees C. The doctor came and I was ordered immediately to the hospital. Now it was a struggle for life and all my thoughts were how to get well again.

One night I dreamt that my mother came to me and said that soon I would get well; I should then try to get away from this hospital as far as possible. The priest also came to visit me. All the nurses took an interest in me, but I avoided all their questions about my past. I was afraid I might be discovered. During my recuperation period, I got acquainted with a nurse named Sophia. This nurse suggested that I should not go back to the farm. Instead she offered me a place with her sister who needed help with her little ones. I was

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<sup>1457</sup> Armstrong, *Mosaic*, 573–83.

considering the change but dared not tell my former patrons, who were very good to me. When I was well again I decided to leave the hospital under cover of darkness. ...

Sophia's sister received me gladly and offered me her home. I kissed her hand and immediately began to attend to the two little girls, who soon took a liking to me. They never asked me who I was and where I came from. Evidently, the letter I brought from Sophia explained everything.

Once I was so exhausted from work in the field that I fell asleep on the spot. I was brought home to rest, and was not even scolded. I felt happy in my new home, and even attended religious services with all the other children of the village. Once when I came to church I noticed that I was being pointed at. I thought that again I was recognized as being Jewish. So after the services I slowly slipped out into the street and was again on the road, feeling once more the gaze of hostile eyes on me. As I was walking along I found myself before a group of German policemen, two of which turned out to be Polish. I thought that the best thing would be to go on walking calmly and briskly. But then I heard one of them calling me to stop. They said "Gut Morgen" rather politely and walked away. One of them, however, remained behind. Now, I thought, is the crucial moment. It turned out that this was a young Polish policeman whose name was Solick. He was a native of Drohichin [Drohiczyn] and recognized me.

"You are Jewish, aren't you? Your uncle's name was Sholem. I know all about you. Let me see your identity card."

Trembling I handed him the card with the name of Antonina Bujalska. Again he looked at me and said: "You are not telling the truth, but I shan't do you any evil. You better clear out of here, for somebody else might recognize you. Then, you shall be among all the other dead of your people." He let me go but wrote down the place where I lived.

Again I was facing danger. I didn't sleep all night, planning how to find safety elsewhere. I did not run away the next morning for I was hoping that the war would end soon. So a few months passed and it was already the eve of Passover, the season when good Catholic Christians go to church to confess their sins. I, too, went to the "father confessor" with the other children of the village.

On the way to church the children were discussing how and what to confess and made fun of the whole thing. Wanting to be part of the conversation, I decided to say something positive and affirmative. So I said that we must perform the duties of our religion, and urged them to hurry lest we be late. I was glad to be last to remain in the church after everybody had already gone and made as if I was praying devotedly. I drew the attention of a fine middle-aged lady who came over to me and asked why I had remained in the empty church so late. I took the opportunity to tell the lady about my sad lot. I told her how difficult it was for me to stay with the family I was living, and expressed the wish to find work with some other family, attending to children or taking care of an old woman. She immediately offered to take me with her as she had two children and an old mother.

I couldn't believe my ears, but here I was already walking by the side of my new benefactress. As we were walking the distance of about 3 kilometers from church to her home, the woman told me how her Jewish neighbors were taken out to be killed. I listened to her story of horror but made no reply.

When we came into the house, I met the old lady her mother. I bowed, kissed her hand and greeted her in the manner that good Polish Christian children do. Her reply was also cordial and traditional, but I noticed tears in her eyes and a benevolent smile on her face. Later, when all left for the fields and I was left alone with the old lady and the two children I again felt at home hoping that now I would resume a normal life as a refugee Christian girl under the name of Antonina Bujalska. The old lady took a liking to me and told me her own story. It appeared that she too, was Jewish, but eloped with her Polish lover when she was only 16 and never returned to her family. Now she would recall her old father who never recovered from the shock of his daughter's conversion, while her old mother perished in the Warsaw ghetto.

Hearing her mention Warsaw, I burst out crying. The old lady then told me that she knew right away I was Jewish by my appearance and gentle manners. ...

I remained with this family for several months, and everything appeared normal for nobody but the old grandmother knew that I was Jewish.

One sunny Sunday morning I was in the fields with the children of my adopted family and I felt fine. The children wanted me to sing for them, so I began a church hymn I knew well. Just then I heard the voice of the local priest who remembered me from the time I was in the hospital. He was glad to see me again and said: "Good morning, Antonina ... what are you doing in my parish?" I answered that I was already a year with the Timinsky [Tymiński] family and was fine and happy. Complimented [sic] me on my singing he invited me to come and sing in his church choir. Without waiting for a reply he handed me some money to buy myself some decent clothes before I come to church.

I was in a real predicament. To appear in a church choir before many people where somebody might recognize me was dangerous. But it was equally dangerous not to accept the priest's invitation. I was also afraid to tell my patroness. So I decided to seek the advice of the old grandmother. I came to her room when everybody in the house was already asleep kissed her hand and sought her opinion in regard to the priest's invitation. The wise old woman listened carefully and advised me to accept the offer; buy new shoes, dress nicely and join the choir. She was sure my outward appearance could never betray my being Jewish.

Next morning I did exactly as the wise old lady told me to do. I washed and dressed neatly and went to the priest's house. From there I was taken by the priest's housekeeper (who was also Jewish) to buy the right sort of clothes for a good Christian choir girl. We bought a pair of sandals, a beret, and a nice blue knitted skirt. When I was all dressed, Wanda (that was the housekeeper's name) slyly remarked that now I really look like a "Jiduvka [Żydówka]" (a Jewish girl) ...

I was really frightened, but soon Wanda calmed me by saying that nowadays anyone who looked gentle and cultured is suspected as Jewish ... We both knew the truth about each other, but acted as if we didn't, and so parted, to our respective non-Jewish "homes."

I was nervous and impatient, during the last days of the week, thinking how it would be on Sunday morning—my hour of trial. At nine o'clock, when I heard the church bells ringing I was ready but jittery. I only plucked up courage when grandma, my old friend, wished me good luck saying: ... "Sing well. Think of me when you stand before the public, and have no fears."

So I did. Standing there among the other girls in the choir, I felt the priest's approving look, and saw the old man's lips whispering: "Dobje [Dobrze]" (Polish: well done!)

My first appearance was successful. The next time it was easier. They got used to me and no one seemed to question my origin. I was well liked in the village and at times I was even permitted to substitute my master on night watch duty with the other villagers. No one suspected my Jewishness. Yet, I was often tormented by the thought of being the only Jewess left in the world.

So the days and months passed. ...<sup>1458</sup>

Rev. Jan Auder, the pastor of the village of Ostrożany, about 30 kilometres northwest of Siemiatycze, was known for his protective attitude toward Jews. Hinda Sarashka (Seroszko), who was sheltered by Poles in that area, recalled, "Christians Treated Me Well."

In Ostrożany the pastor was Auder, a decent man, very good and smart. He summoned all the Christians to church and told them that one must obey the Ten Commandments, help everyone who is in need, first of all those who are homeless. If one does not want to help, then one should allow them to go their own way. Many Jews survived thanks to that priest.<sup>1459</sup>

After their escape from the ghetto in the town of Siemiatycze, Chana Lisogurski Broder, then four years old, her parents and her grandmother were given shelter by several Polish families, most notably the Kryńskis, in the hamlet of Morze, near Ostrożany. The Lisogurskis lived there for a year and a half in a bunker under a barn, coming out only late at night when it was safe to do so. The Kryński family gave them the sustenance to survive all that time, until the Soviets overran the area in 1944. When their Polish benefactors were at their wit's end because of the fear of German reprisals if their charges were discovered, in desperation, Mrs. Kryńska turned to her pastor, Rev. Jan Auder, for guidance. He told her, "What you are doing is very good. They are innocent people. If you can, continue to hide them."<sup>1460</sup>

The Sisters of Divine Providence (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Opatrzności Bożej, commonly known as *siostry Opatrzności Bożej*) sheltered Irena Likierman (later Bołdok), born in Warsaw in 1932, in Międzyrzec Podlaski, where Irene's

<sup>1458</sup> Shtokfish, *Sefer Drohiczyn*, 29–42 (English section).

<sup>1459</sup> "Christians Treated Me Well," in Shtokfish, *Sefer Drohiczyn*, 400–4.

<sup>1460</sup> Paweł Rytel-Andrianik, "Ratowali od zagłady," *Nasz Dziennik*, August 3, 2013; Paweł Rytel-Andrianik, "Trzeba uczcić ich pamięć," *Nasz Dziennik*, December 2, 2013. Chana Lisogurski Broder's account, "The Lisogurski Family," dated April 2005, was submitted to Pier 21, Canada's Immigration Museum, Internet: [https://www.pier21.ca/wp-content/uploads/files/stories/displacedrefugee/Polish\\_Displaced\\_People\\_and\\_Holocaust\\_Survivors\\_The\\_Lisogurski\\_Family.pdf](https://www.pier21.ca/wp-content/uploads/files/stories/displacedrefugee/Polish_Displaced_People_and_Holocaust_Survivors_The_Lisogurski_Family.pdf).

family had sought refuge. A Polish railroad worker the girl and hid her temporarily before she was given over to Mrs. Cydzik, a friend of her mother's. Afterwards, Irena stayed in two institutions run by nuns, an orphanage and a home for the elderly.

I came from the train station to Mrs. Cydzikowa's. I had jaundice. I remember that I looked completely different from the other kids. My mother's friend let me stay for a little while, but then she said, "You know that I have two sons. I can't take such a risk." She turned me over to the nuns. These were the Sisters of Providence—located at 69 Lubelska Street [in Międzyrzec Podlaski], a place donated by Count Potocki. There was a barracks for orphans there. I was the oldest, but there were thirty other little ones. The nuns knew very well that I was Jewish. I was emaciated, with little braids, yellow like a lemon because of the jaundice.

I don't know how long I stayed with those nuns. One time, Germans came and told the nuns that if they had any Jewish children, they would have to give them up. They ought to go back to wherever they came from. The nuns decided to send me back to the woman who had brought me there. You should have seen the expression on Mrs. Cydzikowa's face when she saw me. She said that she was very sorry, but that unfortunately, she could not take me in and that I should return to the nuns. I didn't really know what to do; I went back and forth maybe twice. ... I spent the night on the doorstep of a church mortuary. ... Gendarmes came in the morning. They asked, "What are you doing here, little girl?" I answered astutely that I was waiting for my mother, even though she wasn't there, of course. "Where's your mother?" "She went to the store."

They came back once—I was still sitting there. A second time—I was still sitting. They said, "Come with us, your mother probably won't come back." They took me to the town hall, to the mayor. ... I think his name was [Franciszek] Majewski. ... The mayor got the idea to send me to a home for the elderly, so that I could wait out the worst period there. He figured out that I was Jewish. When someone asked me what my name was, I answered "Irena Likierman." What more did he need?

At the home for the elderly, I sat under someone's bed. I would only come out to eat and wash myself. I was already there for some time (months or weeks), when I once went outdoors. ... In any case, some woman saw me and began screaming ... I ran back into the home, and the nuns that were running it, afraid that this woman would come after me, took me back to the sisters where I had stayed before. I spent the following year with them. ...

In 1944 the Russians entered. Some time before, when the front was approaching and there was nothing to eat, the nuns handed me over, as the oldest of the girls, as a servant to a woman teacher. I was twelve years old already. ...

When the front passed, I went back to the nuns (those at the orphanage, not with the elderly), and in 1945 I went to school. I had never gone to school before ...<sup>1461</sup>

Sister Romualda Józefa Kuliberda, who was head of the convent, offers an additional perspective on this rescue. In 1943, the nuns at St. Michael's Parish, who included Sisters Hermina Helena Jaskulska, Wincenta Wiktoria Klęk, and

<sup>1461</sup> Account of Irena [Agata] Bołdok, née Likierman, "Back to Being Myself!" in Gutenbaum and Latała, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 2, 30–32.

Innocenta Janina Skowrońska, opened an orphanage for homeless children in Międzyrzec Podlaski. As a result of a denunciation, the Gestapo from Lublin arrived at the mayor's office to investigate. The mayor, Franciszek Majewski, quickly sent a confidant to the convent warning of the Gestapo's impending inspection of the convent; ultimately, he succeeded in convincing the Gestapo that the denunciation was fabricated. For a time, Irena Likierman was hidden in the church belfry.

The mayor also warned Rev. Stanisław Nosek, the pastor and dean, that he was sought by the German authorities for issuing false baptismal certificates to Jews. During the deportation of Jews from Międzyrzec, two Jewish families, originally from Żyrardów and resettled in Międzyrzec, escaped from a train bound for the Treblinka death camp and made their way to the convent, which was located near a palace occupied by the German authorities. The nuns sheltered the Jews for a short period of time, providing them with food and treating a Jewish child who had injured his leg when he jumped from the train. Afterwards, dressed as peasants, they were taken by a neighbour in a cart to the forest.<sup>1462</sup>

The Sisters of Divine Providence also sheltered Jews, mostly children, in their convents in Przemyśl, Rodatycze (near Gródek Jagielloński), Rzeszów. Skole (near Stryj), and Sterdyń (near Sokołów Podlaski). Three of the girls rescued in their convent in Przemyśl went under the assumed names of Maryla Lewkowicz, Anna Mikołajczyk, and Czesława Wolska. The nuns most actively involved in the rescue effort were Mother Laurencja Szwandron of Przemyśl, Sister Aurelia Prokop of Rzeszów, Sister Małgorzata Filak of Skole, Sister Jolanta Puchałka of Sterdyń, and Sister Kamila Kadłubkiewicz of Rodatycze.<sup>1463</sup>

Rev. Antoni Poznański, the pastor of Rodatycze near Gródek Jagielloński, sheltered a young Jewish man in the belfry of the church and, later, in the cemetery chapel, with the assistance of the aforementioned Sister Kamila Kadłubkiewicz. The man was shot by German soldiers who came across him in the cemetery. Rev. Poznański successfully sheltered the Redler (Riedler) family, consisting of

<sup>1462</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 448–50; Kopówka and Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki*, 292–93, 308–11; History of St. Michael's Parish in Międzyrzec Podlaski, Internet: <http://mokolaj.miedzyrzec.pl/historia.php?i=207>.

<sup>1463</sup> Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, 128–29; Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 448–50; Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945*, 74–75; Kopówka and Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki*, 298–99, 321–22; Agata Mirek, "Udział sióstr zakonnych w ratowaniu ludności żydowskiej w Polsce w latach 1939–1945 na przykładzie wybranych zgromadzeń," in Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 135–60, at p. 143.

parents and their daughter, Roma. The Jewish family took turns staying with the priest and the Zdobylak family.<sup>1464</sup>

After her escape from the ghetto in Łosice, Stella Zylbersztajn took shelter in several villages in the vicinity of Łosice. In total, 25 Polish families helped her survive the war. The attitude of local priests proved to be beneficial in assuring her survival.<sup>1465</sup>

Having been taught by experience, we gave our most valuable belongings to Poles for safekeeping and they were all we had later. On the day that the ghetto was destroyed several women stood on the boundary in front of our window in order to help us out in some way. Out of the window we threw things that we had no hope of carrying off and we did not lose any of them. ...

I left my mother and fled to the garden of Mrs Piotrowska. This was only 200 metres (650 ft) from the market square where everyone had been assembled.

At noon Mrs Piotrowska's sister-in-law brought me milk and bread. But too many children knew of my hiding place so in the evening I went to Świniarków [Świniarów]. Along the way I had to ask where Mr Śmieciuch, our customer, lived. Village patrols showed me the way but guessed I was a refugee and asked Śmieciuch to send me on further. So, after spending the night and eating a good breakfast I moved on towards Wyczółki. There I knew the head of the hamlet and his family. People were already returning from Church after High Mass. I avoided large groups but joined a peasant who was walking alone. I asked him the way and he asked me about myself, where I was from, and so forth. He quickly guessed the truth and put his whole heart in simple words:

"You still have time to get to Wyczółki; the Kalickis will take you in later, too. In the meantime come to my place; in the bay of my barn I have a hiding place for pigs, and no one will find you there, you can hide there."

He was moved to pity at the thought of my pampered childhood and compared me with his daughter. [Her benefactor, a complete stranger, was Waclaw Radzikowski of the village of Szańków. At the mass he attended in the church in Łosice, the pastor, Rev. Stanisław Zarebski, had spoken of the terrible fate of the Jews and urged his parishioners to assist them: "All people are brothers and you should help everyone."] ...

Whenever I went my hosts always guessed [that I was Jewish] but we got on well together and they kept me as long as they could. Only when the entire village started frightening them [about the danger and possible repercussions for the entire village] did they pay me for my work and advise me where I should go further. I was looking after children in Kornica where once again my hostess was 'advised' to send me away for I would bring misfortune down on the village. Shortly after that I heard at the Sunday sermon: "Fear the Lord more than people. When they tell you to turn over your pigs, you know how to

<sup>1464</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 450; Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 383; Piątkowski, *Relacje o pomocy udzielanej Żydom przez Polaków w latach 1939–1945*, vol. 5, 322–25.

<sup>1465</sup> Stella Zylbersztajn provided additional details about her rescue in her memoir, *A gdyby to było Wasze dziecko?*, especially at pp. 36, 52, 55–56, 58–64, 145.

conceal them though you could give them up without a sin. But when they tell you to give away Jews, the Germans must not be obeyed for God said ‘Thou shalt not kill’ and we must help them, give them food and shelter” ..., etc. I do not know whether or not the priest already knew something about me or whether he saw me under the organ loft but I do know that talk about me in the village died down. (And I know that he gave a lead by way of example more than by word—a female catechumen of the family of Abraham came to the presbytery daily for lessons in the catechism. [She later learned that Rev. Czesław Chojecki, the vicar, had informed the pastor of Radzików, Rev. Zygmunt Wachulak, that a Jewish woman was hiding in the area, and the pastor appealed to the congregation to extend help to Jews.]

Though I looked like a baited hare, the photographer took my picture and the community [county office] issued me a Kennkarte without any document of previous registration. Someone who wished me well brought me the card so that I would not have to show myself without need. I felt I was saved.

At Christmas the priest went around but he deliberately did not ask me about the catechism. On Christmas Eve, C.G. gave me verses of his sister and Rena X [Renia, Regina Hądzynska]. She was 13 years old. Father [Henryk] Sulej [from the Marian monastery in Bielany, a suburb of Warsaw] saved her and got her a Kennkarte and guardians. Since my hostess was too poor to keep me through the winter I got myself other work. It is with emotion that I recall that the poorest paid me best and showed me the most affection. How delicately Halina warned me not to tell anyone that “Mother used to bake *chala* [plaited white bread]” or pretended that she did not notice my ignorance about the Catholic faith! They probably all knew who I was but they didn’t let me feel it.

It happened that a woman known to have a long tongue recognized me to be the daughter of ‘that sweater maker’ ... I told the priest [the vicar] about it. He became gloomy for a moment, but then he immediately comforted me: “I’ll take care of that.” And the woman did not let the cat out of the bag.

During the bombing in 1944 a family I knew from Siedlce took shelter in the home of my host. They had previously concealed a small Jewess but she took ill and died, so they asked me to come to their home. After the war I gladly took up their offer because thanks to them I was able to resume my interrupted schooling. My former hosts and the priest [the pastor] continued to help me materially and gave me whatever I needed when I asked for it.

After so much proof of people’s goodness I come back to what I started from. Was that relative correct when she said that “If they could, the Poles would murder us all?” I know that there were such persons, although they were exceptions for me. But there were more true human beings ...

I once heard of a charge made by Mr. T., an engineer, that “Catholics concealed us in order to convert us to Catholicism.” Though I passed through many homes which I could not even list here, I never ran across this. I was taught my prayers and how to behave in church so that I might not give myself away; the rest was left to God and His mercy.<sup>1466</sup>

<sup>1466</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 288–89, 295–96.

In Konstancynów, east of Łosice, Rev. Aleksander Kornilak, the pastor and dean, had a good relationship with the Jews and helped the Jews in the ghetto. The Polish police would often look the other way, thus helping the Jews to leave the ghetto and smuggle goods into the ghetto.<sup>1467</sup>

After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto, Lily Fenster (née Luba Skórka) took refuge in Łuków, north of Lublin, where she passed as a Pole. With the help of Dr. Kornacki, she secured a job as nurse at the local hospital, run by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul. It was there that she happened to witness the execution of a priest who assisted Jews. (The identity of this priest is not clear.)

I endangered her life. It's true. I did. If they caught her [Mrs. Zając, for whom Fenster had worked as a maid], they would kill her and burn her like, that's what they did to a lot of Gentiles. I've seen they killed a priest, *ksiądz* Rosak ... He saved a couple of Jews ... in the parish there. They took him out. I was going [to the cemetery] with [a woman to] put flowers on the grave [of her mother]. She said, "Jesus Christ, that's *ksiądz* Rosak. What are they doing to him?" ... So we hid under the [grave] stones ... The whole city was crying that they killed [the priest] ... Shot in the cemetery because he saved some Jews.<sup>1468</sup>

Frieda Cukierman (later Halina Bartosiak) was born in Warsaw in 1921. She left the Warsaw ghetto shortly before the uprising in April 1943. She made her way to Łuków but soon had to leave when the Germans liquidated the ghetto there too. She was sheltered by a priest (who "helped her a lot") in a nearby village. She stayed in the rectory for several weeks, rested, and was cared for by the priest's housekeeper, who gave her a peasant skirt. It appears that the priest equipped her with a false birth and baptismal certificate under the name of Halina Chruścicka, which undergirded her pretended status as a Polish Catholic. Cukierman survived the war with the help of a number of Poles.<sup>1469</sup>

After leaving the ghetto in Łuków, Ruzhka Huberman was sheltered and helped at various times by Michał Nurzyński and his wife in the village of Gołąbki, near Łuków. Mrs. Nurzyńska wanted Ruzhka to convert, and took her to see the parish priest in Łuków for that purpose. The priest declined to baptize Ruzhka, telling her that, if she still wished to do so, she could convert after the

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<sup>1467</sup> Testimony of Louis Hofman, SFV, Interview code 13655.

<sup>1468</sup> Testimony of Lily Fenster, November 8 and 10, 1994, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, University of Michigan at Dearborn, Internet: <http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/fenster/> (section 28).

<sup>1469</sup> Testimony of Halina Bartosiak, SFV, Interview code 31545.

war. When Mrs. Nurzyńska pressed the priest, he informed her that she could baptize Ruzhka herself.<sup>1470</sup>

Together with her mother, 10-year-old Estera Borensztain (later Mitrani, b. 1932) jumped from a train headed for Treblinka. They got separated, and Estera never saw her mother again. Helped by random Polish farmers, Estera managed to reach her mother's home village of Osiny, south of Stoczek Łukowski, where they had agreed to meet. There, "the peasants arranged among themselves that each would hide a Jewish girl for a certain period so that 'everyone would be guilty and no one could inform.'"<sup>1471</sup>

Estera obtained identity documents in the name of Teresa Wiśniewska. Since she was well known in the village, Estera eventually moved on. For a time, she was sheltered by Józef and Marcjanna Goławski, but had to leave when a priest warned them that someone (a non-local person) threatened to denounce her.

After staying with various other farmers, Estera arrived at the village of Kłoczew. There Genowefa and Bolesław Pieniak took her in, and she remained with this family for two years. Once again, her presence became widely known in the village. The local pastor, Rev. Stefan Kosmulski, extended his protection to the her out of sight when German raids were anticipated. After the war, Estera wound up in a Jewish orphanage and eventually settled in Israel.<sup>1472</sup>

Lea Starowiejska, a young girl with Semitic features, somehow made her way from Warsaw to Żeliszew Podkościelny, a village between Mińsk Mazowiecki and Siedlce. She was taken in there by Rev. Julian Borkowski, the local pastor, who taught her Catholic prayers so she could pass for a Polish orphan. The Górczyńskis answered his appeal for a Polish family to accept her. They lived in

<sup>1470</sup> Testimony of Ruzshke Huberman-Ayvan in B. Heller, ed., *Sefer Lukow: Gehelikt der khorev gevorener kehile* (Tel Aviv: Irgun yots'e Lukov be-Yisra'el, 1968), 365–96, translated as *Le livre de Lukow: 1200–1945, récits et témoignages: Pages de l'histoire sorties de l'ombre* (Paris: Association des Originaires de Lukow d'Israël et des États-Unis, 1987), 53–71; Testimony of Ryszka Huberman-Iwan in Polish, Internet: <https://sites.google.com/site/jewishlukow/relacje/huberman>.

<sup>1471</sup> Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945*, 271; Testimony of Estera Borensztain, JHI, record group 301, no. 2989; Olga Orzeł, ed., *Dzieci żydowskie w czasach Zagłady: Wczesne świadectwa 1944–1948: Relacje dziecięce ze zbiorów Centralnej Żydowskiej Komisji Historycznej* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma, 2014), 59–60.

<sup>1472</sup> Waldemar Piasecki, "Gdzie jesteś Teresko," *Dziennik Związkowy* [Chicago], March 9, 2009; Wojtek Maślanka, "Dlaczego, Teresko... dlaczego nie chcesz się spotkać...," *Nowy Dziennik* [Garfield, New Jersey], August 3, 2015; Wojtek Maślanka, "Szczęśliwy finał 44-letnich poszukiwań: Spotkanie po 44 latach," *Nowy Dziennik* [Garfield, New Jersey], November 26, 2016. Józef and Marcjanna Goławski were recognized by Yad Vashem in 2017; Genowefa and Bolesław Pieniak have not been recognized.

the hamlet of Łęki, and they treated her like a daughter. Everyone there knew that the child was Jewish. No one betrayed them.<sup>1473</sup>

On a summer day in 1944, in the village of Leki [Łęki] near Siedlce (Lublin District), Aleksander and Genowefa Gorzyński [Górzyński] were attending a memorial prayer service in the village church. At the end of the service, they learned that there was a Jewish orphan girl in the village in need of a home. Her situation touched their hearts. Aleksander was particularly moved since he himself had been orphaned at the age of four. The Górzyńskis, the parents of one child, decided to take in the Jewish orphan. The Górzyńskis renamed the little orphan girl “Halinka.” She had dark hair and Jewish features, but so did Aleksander and his son, which made it easier for her to blend in to the family. Despite the risk, they decided to leave her with them. Her real name was Lea Strowieska [Starowiejska] and she was from Warsaw. After her parents died, she had wandered through the villages, until she finally ended up in the village of Leki, where she came to the home of the priest. It was the priest who was the one to hand her over to the Górzyńskis. Aleksander and Genowefa treated her warmly and at once she began to call them “Mama” and “Papa.” She played with their little son and helped look after him, and they grew to love her. She remembers how lovingly they cared for her. After the war, her aunt came and took her; they also found her younger sister. She immigrated with the two of them to Israel.<sup>1474</sup>

Rev. Szczepan Zasadziński, a Home Army chaplain and priest of the Mariavite Church (a Catholic-based sect not in communion with the Roman Catholic Church), prepared a hideout under the church in the nearby village of Żeliszew Duży. It served as a refuge for members of the Polish underground and fugitive Jews. Rev. Zasadziński also arranged for a shelter for Karolina Mantel, the aged mother of a Jewish convert to Catholicism. She was housed in the village rectory in Wiśniew, near Mińsk Mazowiecki, where she adopted the name of Maria. A Jewish boy (b. 1930) had arrived at the Mariavites’ orphanage before the war. Despite his plainly Semitic appearance, he lived openly in Wiśniew throughout the entire German occupation without being delivered up by the villagers, as they were required to do. The parish in Wiśniew, which was under the care of Bishop Wawrzyniec Rostworowski (Fr. Maria Franciszek), extended help to many Jewish fugitives who came around begging for food.<sup>1475</sup>

<sup>1473</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 1021; Kopówka and Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki*, 304; *Polacy ratujący Żydów w czasie Zagłady: Przywracanie pamięci / Poles Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust: Recalling Forgotten History* (Warsaw: Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland and Museum of the History of Polish Jews, 2008), 53.

<sup>1474</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 557.

<sup>1475</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 566, 574–76; Kopówka and Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki*, 304; Sławomir Gołębiowski, “Pochylając się nad historią,” *Mariawita*, nos. 11–12 (2004); Urszula Grabowska, “Mariawici i Żydzi—rzecz o pomocy,” *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i Materiały*, vol. 4 (2008): 442–65; Urszula Grabowska, “Stosunki mariawicko-żydowskie czasu Zagłady: Kilka przykładów z Mazowsza i Podla-

Dr. Maria Mantel [née Kłosińska] was the wife of a Polish officer of Jewish ancestry who was murdered at Katyn in the [1940 Soviet] massacre of Polish prisoners of war. Mantel, who lived in Warsaw and ran a private medical clinic in her home, invited her mother-in-law, Karola Mantel, 70, who until then had been hiding in various places in and around the city, to come live with her. Despite the danger to her life, Dr. Mantel took care of her mother-in-law, nursed her, and provided for all her needs. Because of the many patients that visited her clinic in the house, Dr. Mantel feared that the elderly woman's identity would be revealed. After a few months, Dr. Mantel moved her mother-in-law to an institution run by priests in the city of Minsk-Mazowiecki [Mińsk Mazowiecki], where she remained until the Red Army liberated the area in August 1944. In 1943, Mantel also hid Erwin Aleksandrowicz, an old acquaintance, in her apartment. He, like Mantel's mother-in-law, had also been forced to wander from one hiding place to another. Mantel also found a hiding place for Irena Aleksandrowicz, Erwin's daughter, until he found a more permanent place for her in an institution run by nuns.<sup>1476</sup>

Members of the numerically small Mariavite clergy were instrumental in rescuing a number of Jews in other places as well. In his memoir, Simcha Guterman describes how he, his wife, Ewa, and their young son, Yaakov (b. 1935), were sheltered in Warsaw by Mariavite nuns as well as other members of that city's Mariavite community. At his father's request, Yaakov (Jakub) was taken from Warsaw by a nun who travelled to Wygoda, a village near Łowicz, to visit relatives. There she arranged for Yaakov to live in the nearest village, with a family he tended cows for.<sup>1477</sup>

Sister Makryna (Natalia Siuta), a deaconess in Jędrzejów Nowy, near Mińsk Mazowiecki, who collaborated with Żegota, sheltered several Jews, among them Frajda Gewis, Jan Himilbach, and relatives of Ludwik Landau.<sup>1478</sup>

Kitty Felix (later Hart-Moxon) was 12 years old when the war broke out. She fled from her hometown of Bielsko, near the German border, with her parents and younger brother. They took refuge in Lublin, but were confined in the ghetto there. While in Lublin, Kitty's mother made the acquaintance of a priest,

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sia," in Zofia Chyra-Rolicz, Renata Tarasiuk, and Edward Kopówka, eds., *Żydzi na Podlasiu* (Siedlce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Podlaskiej, 2010), 341–55, at pp. 346–51.

<sup>1476</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 489.

<sup>1477</sup> Simcha Guterman, *Leaves from Fire* (U.S.A.: CreateSpace, 2015); Sicha Guterman, *Kartki z pożogi* (Płock: Towarzystwo Naukowe Płockie, 2004). See also the testimony of the Mariavite nun, Weronika Białkowska, JHI, record group 301, no. 3577.

<sup>1478</sup> Urszula Grabowska, "Mariawici i Żydzi—rzecz o pomocy," *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i Materiały*, vol. 4 (2008): 442–65; Urszula Grabowska, "Stosunki mariawicko-żydowskie czasu Zagłady: Kilka przykładów z Mazowsza i Podlasia," in Chyra-Rolicz, Tarasiuk, and Kopówka, *Żydzi na Podlasiu*, 341–55, at pp. 342–46; Testimony of Natalia Siuta, JHI, record group 301, no. 6129.

identified as Rev. Krasowski, possibly Rev. Aleksander Krassowski, the pastor of St. Nicholas' Parish. "He saved our lives," Kitty recalled.<sup>1479</sup>

Rev. Krassowski sheltered them in the rectory and provided them with false identity documents identifying them as Catholic Poles. He also devised a rescue plan that required them to separate in order to increase their chances of survival. He found a hiding place for Kitty's father, Karl Felix, in Tarnów, but he did not survive. Kitty and her mother, Lola Rosa Felix, joined a group of Poles being sent to Germany for forced labour. Unfortunately, their guise was discovered at the factory where they worked. They were deported to Auschwitz, yet both survived.

Soon a small section of the town was allocated to the Jews and we all had to move into this section—which became the Lublin Ghetto. Leaving the ghetto area was punishable by death. ...

My mother, who was a qualified English teacher, made contact with a Catholic priest whose vicarage was opposite the Gestapo headquarters. She gave him English lessons in return for food. Crawling through the city sewers, she too risked her life, but without our endeavours we would have died of starvation. ...

Conditions were now intolerable there and we could not find anywhere to live even though there were constant deportations. Once again my father decided to take us out of the ghetto. Disguised as peasants with bundles on our backs, we walked out before the ghetto was completely sealed off from the outside world. ...

We hid in the forest some three weeks, living mostly on berries. Eventually [in September 1942] we made our way back into Lublin—not to the ghetto but to the vicarage of the Catholic priest, who had obtained non-Jewish documents for us that were to help save our lives. I now had a new identity. My name was Leokadia Dobrzynska [Dobrzyńska], born in Lublin.

The priest had worked out a survival plan, but we would have to part, as together we were unlikely to survive. My father was to go to Tarnow to be employed in a sawmill. My mother (now my aunt with a different name) and I would go into a Lublin collection centre where the SS were holding non-Jewish Poles they had grabbed off the streets to dispatch them to work in German factories. We got to the centre and soon found ourselves in a train, on our way with a group of Poles into the German Reich. Our destination was Bitterfeld, the ammunition plant of IG Farben.<sup>1480</sup>

**S**onya Bimko (later Sarah Salamon, b. 1922 in Lublin) was married to Stanley Litwiński, with whom she had two children, Henry and Barbara. Her father,

<sup>1479</sup> Testimony of Kitty Hart-Moxon, SFV, Interview code 45132; Kitty Hart-Moxon, Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, Internet: <https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/kitty-hart-moxon/>.

<sup>1480</sup> Account of Kitty Hart-Moxon in Wendy Whitworth, ed., *Survival: Holocaust Survivors Tell Their Story* (Lound Hall, Bothamsall, Retford, Nottinghamshire: Quill Press in association with The Aegis Institute, 2003), 204–5. Also posted in the Internet: <https://web.archive.org/web/20110721162030/http://www.hmd.org.uk/assets/downloads/1251978650-120.pdf>.

Zeleg Bimko, had befriended an unidentified Catholic priest in Lublin who visited his home regularly before the war. Before Sonya's arrest and deportation to a concentration camp, her father had arranged with a priest to leave Sonya's daughter on the steps of a church on Zamojska Street in Lublin.

When Sonya returned to Lublin after the war, she learned that the priest had entrusted the child to a nursery. However, she was unable to find her daughter because the priest was arrested by the Soviets and imprisoned in the USSR. Her son, Henry, had been left in the care of a Polish woman. Shortly before the Soviets arrived, he was recognized as a Jew while playing in the street, and the Germans shot him.<sup>1481</sup>

After being separated from her parents and siblings, Szyfra Fiszbaum (later Stefi Altman, b. 1926 Lublin) obtained false identity documents with the help of a teacher and a priest in or near Lublin. When the Germans discovered that she was Jewish, they beat her and put her in jail. Apparently, the priest, whose identity is unknown, was hanged. Eventually, Szyfra escaped from a camp in Dorohuczka, a branch of the Trawniki labour camp for Jews. After wandering about, she was taken in by a farmer in Płouszowice, near Lublin. She spent the remainder of the war with another Jewish family in a makeshift cave beneath the barn.<sup>1482</sup>

In Lubartów, a town north of Lublin, Jan Maluga, the sexton of the parish church, hid Mrs. Zylber and her son from Lublin in a cellar under the church with the approval of the vicar, Rev. Władysław Pardyka. After a stay of several weeks, they were moved to more comfortable premises, where they survived the war.<sup>1483</sup>

After escaping from the Lubartów ghetto during its liquidation in October 1942, Mojżesz Apelbaum made his way back to his hometown of Firlej, in the Lublin region. He turned to the local priest for help. Rev. Szymon Tomaszewski hid Mojżesz Apelbaum in the attic of the rectory until the arrival of the

<sup>1481</sup> Testimony of Sarah Salamon, SFV, Interview code 748.

<sup>1482</sup> Stefi Altman, Obituary, *Houston Chronicle*, December 4–5, 2017, Internet: <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/houstonchronicle/obituary.aspx?n=stefi-altman&pid=187421957&fhid=7433>. It is not clear who sheltered Stefi Altman. Several Jewish families survived the war hiding with farmers in the village of Płouszowice near Lublin. The Mazur family sheltered 13 Jews. See The Mazur Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-mazur-family-0>. The six-member Roset family was sheltered by an unidentified farmer. See Alter Roset, "Grupa partyzantów spod Płouszowic," in Adam Kopciowski, ed., *Księga pamięci żydowskiego Lublina* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej 2011), 548–50; Testimony of Rubin Rosset, SFV, Interview code 37105.

<sup>1483</sup> Zdzisław Ligęza, *Lubartowskie drogi Armii Krajowej* (Lublin: Norbertinum, 1998), 50–52.

Soviet army in July 1944. Mojżesz's daughter, Dwora, was hidden in a pigsty. As a Home Army chaplain, Rev. Tomaszewski stood trial in 1946 on trumped up charges of the Communist authorities. Mojżesz Apfelbaum came forward to testify on his behalf.<sup>1484</sup>

Rev. Wincenty Szczepanik, the pastor of Kurów, near Lublin, assisted Hersh and Helen Kotlar by holding on to their money and paying out sums as required for their upkeep. He found Christian families willing to take in their two young daughters. The Kotlar family, consisting of the parents and two daughters, survived their long ordeal through the assistance of numerous.<sup>1485</sup>

The Kotlarzes were a Jewish family living in Kurów, Poland. Hersz and Chana had two daughters, Golda and Basia, and ran a large textile shop that had many non-Jewish customers. They were a well-respected family in the local Jewish community and had good relations with the local Christian leaders as well, particularly the Catholic priest, Wincenty Szczepanik.

When the war began Hersz was able to give the priest a sum of money for safekeeping, a resource which later helped him immensely. When the town's Jews were deported in May 1942, the Kotlarzes managed to stay behind with a small group of Jews who were left to work in the German dairy and to produce fur clothing for the Wehrmacht. This group, too, was murdered in 1942, but the Kotlarzes escaped in the nick of time.

By the time they escaped, Hersz and Chana were without their children. When the danger had become great, Szczepanik had suggested that the infant Basia be hidden with the Zarzycki family (recognized as Righteous Among the Nations in 1978<sup>1486</sup>) in a nearby village, while Golda, who was then 7 years old, was taken in by Aleksander Kozak and his wife, Janina. Aleksander was a forest ranger who took a liking to little Goldele and promised to take good care of her. He was a good, intelligent man, and there were other Jews hiding in the forest that was under his care, of which he was obviously aware.

After surviving the liquidation of the ghetto, the Kotlarzes went to the Kozaks to hide there as well. For a few days Aleksander and Janina kept them safe, but then, fearing for their own family's safety, they asked them to find another place. They said, however, that Golda could stay. The older Kotlarzes set out to wander the surrounding area in search of a place. It was winter and cold, and they were unable to find anything. A couple of weeks later, they returned to the Kozaks. The welcome was warm, and Aleksander even built them a hideout for the winter months.

<sup>1484</sup> Testimony of Mojżesz Apfelbaum, JHI, record group 301, no. 2013; Testimony of Dwora Appelbaum, YVA, file O.33/11159 (Item 11059030); Aleksander Baca, "Ks. Szymon Tomaszewski (1886–1957)—kapłan, który ocalił Żydów," *Głos Ziemi Urzędowskiej* (2012): 36.

<sup>1485</sup> See also Antoni Sułek, "The Righteous from the Barłogi Hut: The Story of the Kozak Family," PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/righteous-barlogi-hut-story-kozak-family>.

<sup>1486</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 925.

In the spring, when more people were around, this became unsafe again. While her parents once again needed to find a better place, Golda remained at the ranger's house. The Kozaks told strangers that she worked for them, herding their cow, and she did help their cowherd, a boy named Janek. In the summer of 1943, however, someone reported the Kozaks to the Germans, and soldiers came on a raid. Golda was not discovered, but she could no longer stay there.

The Kotlarzes were therefore forced to pick up their daughter and go to the Zarzyckis, who let them stay together with both girls until the liberation. After the war they went to the United States. Chana, now Helen, Kotlarz wrote a book about their survival story, in which she sang the Kozaks' praises and said in general that there had been quite a few good people around willing to lend a hand to the persecuted Jews. She lived in California until the ripe old age of 102.<sup>1487</sup>

In her memoir, Helen Kotlar wrote:

The only money that was still ours was entrusted to the priest. ... The priest was a good-natured and just man. He was concerned about the great sufferings of the Jews. Hersh was friendly with the priest. ... When the Nazis began to confiscate Jewish belongings and the Polish zlotye [sic] was devaluated, Hersh endeavored to exchange both our textile and yardgoods for gold coins. Both of us realized that in the future there will be a need for this type of currency. Having succeeded in selling some of our merchandise for payments in gold, we looked for a place to hide our money as well as the unsold goods. The priest helped us immensely. He hid our gold coins for us in his house.

One day he said to us, "In case I will not be present when you will be in need of the money, it is important that you know the location of the hiding place." He also assured us that only one other person knows about the money. This person, he told us, is an honest man, reliable and trustworthy. ... Had it not been for the priest we would not have been able to make the payments to the peasants who gave us shelter. The priest was an honest man and was fond of Hersh because he knew of Hersh's good reputation in the community.<sup>1488</sup>

Two Jews who hid in the Skrzynice forest, near Lublin, received assistance from an unidentified priest they happened to encounter there.

The next morning, we watched a priest and a peasant roll a wagon into the forest to get firewood for the church. We went up to the priest and asked for some bread. The priest said he had no bread with him, but in the afternoon, when he came to the forest for more wood, he'd bring us some. Later, he did bring us bread and two bottles of milk. The bread and the bottles were hidden under the straw in the peasant's wagon, and he didn't know it. While the peasant was busy gathering wood, the priest told us to go to the wagon, where to look for the bread and milk, we found it and left.<sup>1489</sup>

<sup>1487</sup> Kozak Family, RD.

<sup>1488</sup> Helen Kotlar, *We Lived in a Grave* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1980), 53, 89–90.

<sup>1489</sup> Account of A.G. in Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 169.

Gitel Hopfeld and her two young children moved from village to village in the vicinity of Bełżyce and Wronów, near Lublin, until the Soviet army arrived. While few farmers were prepared to shelter them for any length of time, almost no one turned them away empty-handed, and no one betrayed them to the German authorities. Eventually, the regional leader of the Home Army took them under his wing. Along the way they encountered the kindness of two unidentified priests.<sup>1490</sup>

Ryfka Goldiner, a newborn at the time, was sheltered by Stanisław and Helena Wiśliński in Bełżyce, near Lublin. Although the villagers were aware of Ryfka's origin, no one took it to the authorities. The local priest would not formally baptize the child as long as there was any chance her parents might still be living. In fact, they did survive the war, and eventually they reclaimed their daughter.<sup>1491</sup> The pastor of Bełżyce at the time was Rev. Tomasz Wilczyński.

An unidentified priest came to the rescue of Simon Grunwald (b. 1933), who worked as a hired hand, moving from one farm to another near the village of Sadurki, in the vicinity of Nałęczów, west of Lublin. When a drunkard for whom the boy had worked identified him as a Jew, the priest insisted that the boy, going by the name of Staszek Rudzki, was not Jewish. From that moment, no one questioned his origin.<sup>1492</sup> The pastor of Nałęczów (Bochothnica) at the time was Rev. Antoni Kargol.

Edwarda Kleinfeld (later Rorat, b. 1935) fled from Warsaw with her parents (who were professionals) and an older sister, arriving eventually in the Lublin area. After the Germans shot her parents, villagers urged the girls to run away. The village head of Olszanka, a prewar acquaintance of Edwarda's father, took an interest in the girls' fate. He arranged for each of them to work on separate farms.

After Edwarda left the first farm because of ill-treatment, she was taken in by Jan and Stefania Rorat, a poor, elderly couple. Having lost their only son in the war, they treated Edwarda like their own daughter. Her Jewishness was an open secret in Olszanka and the nearby village of Krzczonów, where she attended school. Edwarda enjoyed the protection of teachers, who

<sup>1490</sup> Gitel Hopfeld, *At the Mercy of Strangers: Survival in Nazi Occupied Poland* (Oakville, Ontario and Niagara Falls, New York: Mosaic Press, 2005), 87, 99.

<sup>1491</sup> Anna Dąbrowska, ed., *Światła w ciemności: Sprawiedliwi Wśród Narodów Świata: Relacje* (Lublin: Ośrodek "Brama Grodzka-Teatr NN," 2008), 56–61. See also *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 630–31.

<sup>1492</sup> Simon Grunwald, *Trilogie de la Persécution* (Paris: Éditions des Écrivains, 2000), 71–72; Testimony of Simon Grunwald, SFV, Interview code 26862.

would hide her when Germans came to the village. The parish priest, who was very fond of her, lent her books from his personal library; he did not press her to convert. Edwarda abided with the Rorats after the war, resisting efforts by the Jewish committee to remove her. Her sister also survived.<sup>1493</sup>

Thirteen Jews were sheltered by the Jarosz family in Piaski (then Piaski Luterskie), near Lublin. Marianna Krasnodębska (née Jarosz), who was awarded by Yad Vashem along with her parents and two brothers, recalled their rescue efforts and the help that Jewish fugitives received from many local residents, including priests.

“We had to help them,” she reflects on the Jews. “It was simply the duty of any human being. They helped us too, as is normal when living together.”

Marianna lived in Piaski, near Lublin. Her father was a clerk, one of the town’s elite; they let a tenement house and owned a large farm. There were eight children in the family. All of them were part of the underground from the very moment the occupation started. The Germans murdered four of Marianna’s brothers and her grandfather for harboring the guerillas. Her Home Army codename was “Wiochna.”

“With absolute confidence and with a clear conscience,” she states, “I can say that none of the residents of Piaski ever betrayed the Jews in hiding. They might have been too afraid to help, but would not sell one out. There were two informers, but they were executed by the Home Army.”

She enumerates the Jews hiding in Piaski. Nina Drozdowska from Warszawa [Warsaw] at Janek Król’s, Mrs. Makosiowa and her son at the Baranowskis’. There was a Jewish boy with the Świtacz family, a German or Czech Jew at the Siedliska [Jan and Aleksandra Pasternak rescued Johewet Netzman of Piaski in Siedliszczki<sup>1494</sup>], and an entire family at the Zajączkowskis’. Zajączkowski was of great help to the Jews, and so were priests, and also doctor Bażański, who provided them with medication and bandages. The friends of her family who were saved, with their help, also included: Godel Huberman, Mendel Plinka and Józef Honig with his father and brother.

She accounts their stories in her book “Stories Told.”

“Every war,” she says, “brings out either the heroes or the beasts in people. And people are the same, no matter the nation.”<sup>1495</sup>

A young Jewish woman from Bohemia by the name of Rutka was taken by members of the National Armed Forces from Piaski Luterskie to the estate of

<sup>1493</sup> Rorat Family, RD; Oral history interviews with Edwarda Rorat, April 15, 1995 and February 25, 1996, USHMM, RG-50.030.0319 and RG-50.549.01.0010, respectively.

<sup>1494</sup> “Piaski,” Virtual Shtetl, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Internet: <https://www.sztetl.org.pl/en/article/piaski/5.history/>. Many other rescue stories are recorded in that article.

<sup>1495</sup> *Polacy ratujący Żydów w czasie Zagłady / Poles Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust* (2008), 79.

Jan Koźmian in nearby Bystrzejowice. Afterwards, she was cared for by Rev. Piotr Stodulski, the pastor of Piaski. (He died in September 1942.) Eventually, the priest's housekeeper escorted Rutka to a hiding place in the nearby locality of Chmiel, where she remained until the arrival of the Soviet army.<sup>1496</sup>

Samuel Gruber, a Jewish partisan leader, described the attitude of a village priest in Pyszczoła Góra, near Lublin, in his memoir.

The [Jewish] partisans, the priest told the assembled mourners, were not robbers but fighting men, regardless of whether they were Christians or Jews. They were human beings who wanted to live and not be caught by the Germans. Accordingly, the priest warned his congregants, if a band of partisans came to your farmstead you should give them food and shelter for the night and not tip off the Germans, at least not immediately. You could always make the report the next morning after the partisans had left. Just be sure you don't inform the Germans while the partisans are still in your house, because if you do, you will end up having trouble from both sides, from the Germans for having taken in partisans, and from other underground fighters for having reported their friends.

It seems that the villagers took the words of their priest to heart, for the next day they treated us with unusual deference and hospitality. They gave us food, clothing, and even shoes, "so you can march better," they said. However, this was not enough for some of our men. They went out on their own and, instead of asking peasants for what they wanted, acted the part of thieves and holdup men.<sup>1497</sup>

Tema Rotman-Weinstock, who was born to a poor family in Frampol, a small town north of Biłgoraj in Lublin province, had only four years of schooling, but her Polish was fluent, and she was familiar with village customs. Penniless, she moved from farmer to farmer in the surrounding countryside, and from village to village—Trzęsiny, Gorajec, Czarnystok, Smoryń, Kajetanówka—in the surrounding countryside offering her services as a labourer. She too encountered the protective support of a priest, probably the pastor of Trzęsiny parish, when she hid in the village of Kajetanówka with a woman named Niedźwiecka. Of her numerous benefactors, only Aniela Chmiel and her daughter, Janina, have been recognized by Yad Vashem.<sup>1498</sup>

From the beginning of the Nazi occupation, Tema, dressed as a peasant, smuggled food from the countryside to the town to help support her family. During the last stage of the war she roamed the familiar countryside. She worked hard and had to move from employer to

<sup>1496</sup> Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne: "Żqb" przeciw dwu wrogom*, 2nd rev. and expanded ed. (Warsaw: Fronda, 1999), 118, 353 n.202.

<sup>1497</sup> Gruber, *I Chose Life*, 83–84.

<sup>1498</sup> Testimony of Tema Wajnsztok, JHI, record group 301, no. 7214; *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 137.

employer, most of whom were hungry themselves and found it hard to feed her. Constantly exposed to raids, cold, and hunger, Tema fought against her feelings of hopelessness.

One winter, while searching in vain for shelter, she suffered frostbite in three of her toes. A peasant woman who could hardly support herself and her retarded daughter took pity on Tema and kept her for three months. But the days when peasants were willing to keep her were [because of their fear—Ed.] coming to an end. Tema's frostbitten toes continued to hurt her, and hunger made her grow thin. Finding solace in prayers, she persevered. For a while she hid out with a few meager provisions in the attic of a small roadside chapel. But hunger drove her out, and she went on until she found a hut. There she met a cousin who had come in from the forest to buy provisions. He told her that he and his wife lived in a bunker in the forest. Tema begged him to let her join them. He refused. She continued to roam the countryside, sick and often starving. When she was on the verge of collapse, kind peasants took her into their home. She describes her stay.

"I could not regain my health. I stopped feeling hunger, vomited a lot, and suffered from headaches. I was hardly able to work. And after a month, afraid to keep me, this peasant, Popko, directed me to a woman who lived on a farm with her daughter. This woman had a hard time running the farm, yet she was too poor to hire a farmhand. The village was called Kajtanówka [Kajetanówka], and the name of the peasant woman was Niedźwiedzka [Niedźwiecka]. Her hut was far from the main road, and the Germans were unlikely to come there ... She was not [visibly—Ed.] afraid to take me in; and I worked for her as much as I could. ..."

The year 1944 brought the Russian front closer. Tema's health continued to deteriorate. She could barely eat, yet she had to work hard. Her employer seemed pleased with her; then somehow the word spread that Tema was Jewish. Fortunately, no bad consequences followed because she found a powerful protector in the local priest. He baptized Tema and defended her against those who still saw her as a Jew. "The priest stood up for me, arguing that conversion was a wonderful Christian deed ... Slowly, I began to feel better, my health improved, and the wounds on my toes healed ... Then a miracle happened. I saw my mother, dressed the way she had been when we parted. She entered the hut, smiling, and said that we wouldn't be suffering much longer because on the 23rd of July the Soviets would come to liberate us." When Tema reported this vision to her employer and neighbors, they laughed at her. She herself began to doubt her dream or vision. But "the miracle happened—on July 23, 1944, the first Soviet soldiers came to our village and to the next one."

After the Soviets came, a group of women rushed into Tema's house, calling her Santa Teresa. Each wanted her to come and stay. Each brought delicious food, insisting that Tema eat it. Like the people around her, Tema believed in miracles and saw herself as a saint. Eventually, however, Tema decided to return to her Jewish faith. She settled in Haifa, Israel ... Tema stayed in touch with the peasants who were kind to her.<sup>1499</sup>

**K**rystyna Modrzewska (Mandelbaum), a 20-year-old Jewish woman who had converted to Catholicism before the war, and her mother, Franciszka Mandel-

<sup>1499</sup> Tec, *Resilience and Courage*, 227–29.

baum, survived with assistance of nuns and Rev. Paweł Dziubiński, the pastor of the Conversion of St. Paul Parish in Lublin. Rev. Dziubiński provided temporary shelter and other assistance to his former neighbours, the Mandelbaums. His housekeeper, Sister Pelagia, the superior of the Sisters of the Family of Bethany (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Rodziny Betańskiej), arranged for Krystyna to be housed in a convent of that order in Mełgiew, near Lublin.

Krystyna's mother was groomed as a Catholic at the rectory and then taken by Sister Jadwiga Szafran to a home belonging to the Sisters of the Family of Bethany in Międzylesie, near Warsaw. She lived there with a nun, passing as Maria Górska, a displaced Polish widow.<sup>1500</sup> Rev. Dziubiński also provided birth and baptismal certificates to Sara and Lea Bass, whose story is found later on.

(At the beginning of March 1941 the landlady of the flat found out that the Jews were to be deported the following day.)

She was afraid to share this news with anybody, but she simply had to tell us, her lodgers. ... Unfortunately, I have no illusions. We began nervously to pack our suitcases, but that of course was no answer. What were we to do with ourselves? My mother and I were invited for lunch on the same day by a priest (Father Dziubiński), our former neighbour, who throughout had been taking a genuine interest in our welfare and assisted us whenever he could and as much as he could. Mother was very upset and told him about our new trouble. He said not to worry at all for we could simply stay with him and wait until the deportation was over—if it really did happen—and we would see later what could be done. He said this in a matter-of-fact voice, as if it were quite obvious and needed no comment, though sheltering a Jew was punishable by death then. We stayed at his parsonage.

Our fellow lodger was promised a new place. Should her new flat prove too big for her, we could move in. But only my mother went to live with her, since I, following the priest's advice, got out my hidden "Aryan" documents and from 15 March 1941 began the life of a new person. The priest recommended me to Sisters [of the Family of Bethany] from a convent (in Mełgiew, near Lublin).

Winter passed. The spring of 1942 began grimly. One of the Sisters returned one day from Lublin with hair-raising news. Piles of bodies lay in the streets following several days' massacres of Jews in that town. Blood was flowing in the gutters. Ukrainian soldiers of the SS were breaking into homes, killing whole families, throwing children out of windows, ordering sons to hang their parents, husbands their wives. Terrible manhunts were taking place in the streets. "Your mother is probably no longer alive," the Sister concluded her story. It was quite probable. I prepared myself for the worst, and in the evening held council with Marysia (a clerk the author got to know in the Village Council, where she was working). She kept vital statistics records and promised to help me should anything happen. She already knew about the massacre in Lublin. They had talked about it in the Council. Marysia promised to search the archives for the necessary documents: somebody's birth and marriage certificates and to issue a provisional identity card in that name. I was to give it to my mother and perhaps with the help of friends she would be able to find

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<sup>1500</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 653.

a hiding place somewhere. But there was a great deal of work in the office the next day and Marysia could not spare the time. The next day was Sunday. Thus it was Monday by the time we set off for Lublin. Marysia did not want me to walk about the town in those terrible days all by myself. She dressed me in a big country-style scarf, and I took a basket and we went by train to Lublin.

In Lublin, I went first to the priest who was in touch with my mother but he said he knew nothing about her. In the Jewish quarter terrible things were happening; it was impossible to go there. The four of us: the priests, Sister Pelagia (his housekeeper and at the same time Mother Superior of a convent), Marysia and I held council as to what should be done. The bell suddenly rang and my mother entered. She had come to say good-bye to the priest and ask him to take care of me. She brought a letter for me and her wedding ring. She was to report to Majdanek the same day at noon. All Jews with names beginning with the letter M were to go there. The priest ripped off the band from her arm.

“You’ll stay here,” he said quietly. And mother stayed at the parsonage. She was rapidly coached on how to be an “Aryan.” Sister Pelagia taught her to pray and after a few days sent her in the company of another Sister to Międzylesie near Warsaw, where the nuns had a small place. It was really of no importance, just two attached houses in a garden, looked after by one Sister. There was peace and genuine, literal poverty. Mother went to live there as an elderly lonely woman, a resettled widow. For the time being I could stop worrying about her. But I was filled by apprehension, by a nagging fear. ...

I escaped again to my village but, afraid to appear with my suitcases, went first to Marysia. She was really glad to see me and told me at once that the head of the village was sorry that I had left, that they were about to offer me a permanent position, and that I should not be afraid, everything would be all right! She would defend me if I were suspected, but I should keep up a bold front and on no condition admit who I was. Naturally! I went to the Sisters after I had arranged for a job at the Village Council, and though they were not particularly enthusiastic, they took me back—as a Village Council employee—into their uninviting home. There followed long days of dull office work. Marysia stood guard over my life, she constantly watched everything and everybody. When she saw through the window that strangers were approaching the office, she prudently hid me in the archives. Later she would come to inform me: “It’s all right. You can go back to the office, it’s a local girl dressed in town clothes.” Or sometimes: “Stay here. It’s some woman from Lublin. I’ll come again when she’s gone.”

Several times I had to hide with a beating heart among dusty volumes of old documents waiting for some “suspicious” person to go.<sup>1501</sup>

Sabina Irena Czerkies (née Ossowska) was married to Jakub Czerkies, a Jew who was forced into the Warsaw ghetto. Her husband was eventually sent to Treblinka, and thus disappeared without a trace. Just before the Great Deportation started in July 1942, two of her husband’s cousins—Ruta Helman (b. 1936), later Ruth Haberman, and Zdzisław Dynlacht (b. 1936), later Sigmund Dynlacht—managed to escape from the ghetto. Mrs. Czerkies, who had two chil-

<sup>1501</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 277–80.

dren of her own, took charge of hiding the two Jewish children. After she began receiving threats from blackmailers, Mrs. Czerkies left Warsaw in May 1943.

While in Puławy, she was arrested and imprisoned in Lublin. The Jewish children were placed in an orphanage in Lublin run by the Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived (of Stara Wieś), where Ruta was known as Basia Ossowska. Through bribery, Mrs. Czerkies was released from prison after three months. In June 1944, as the front was approaching Lublin, she was asked to take the children from the orphanage. Ruta was placed in the home of friends in Puławy who knew she was Jewish, while Mrs. Czerkies took Zdzisław with her to Warsaw, where they survived the uprising together.

After the war, Mrs. Czerkies found Ruth at a Jewish orphanage in Pietrolesie. She handed the children over to the Jewish Committee. They were adopted by a Jewish family from the United States.<sup>1502</sup>

**D**avid Zabludovsky met other Jewish survivors in Lublin after the war. He recalls what they told him of the help they had received from priests and nuns.

I meet with remnants of the survivors of our nation. ... I speak with a few sisters that wandered in the forests and the priest of the village provided them in secret food and clothing; he consoled them and foresaw for them “God tells me that you’ll remain among the living.”

Everyone has the miracle of their staying alive and their experience: A Jew in mid-life, hidden in an attic in a house outside the city by a priest. On the day of liberation when the Russian forces entered the city, he wanted to greet the liberators, full of happiness and enthusiasm. To his misfortune, the priest removed the ladder from which he would descend on the same day. The Jew fell and broke his spine and limbs. ...

The kitchen manager of the Jewish town representatives in the branch where I got my meals, was a Jewish woman with Aryan features. Her husband, a well-known surgeon, was cremated with all the Jews. She wandered as a Christian; they said that only recently she left a cloister but still wears a crucifix on her neck. It’s impossible to convince her that there is no reason to fear that as a Jew nothing bad will happen to her. But no reason would help. She has a fear complex and cannot escape it.<sup>1503</sup>

<sup>1502</sup> “Polin Museum Hosts Righteous Medal Award Ceremony,” June 16, 2016, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/news/polin-museum-hosts-righteous-medal-award-ceremony>; “Małżeństwo Halina i Jerzy Wesołowski oraz Sabina Irena Czerkies uhonorowani tytułem Sprawiedliwych Wśród Narodów Świata,” Internet: <http://dzieje.pl/aktualnosci/malzenstwo-wesolowskich-oraz-sabina-czerkies-uhonorowani-tytułem-sprawiedliwych-wsrod-na>; Testimony of Ruta Helman, JHI, record group 301, no. 997.

<sup>1503</sup> David Zabludovsky, “Horrors, Death and Destruction (Experiences of a Holocaust Survivor),” *Chosen Pages From the Zabludow Yiskor Book*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/zabludow/Zabludow.html>, translation of Nechama Shmueli-Schmusch, ed., *Zabludow: Dapim mi-tokh yisker-bukh* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Zabludow in Israel, 1987).

Rev. Józef Rukasz, the pastor of Żyrzyn, near Puławy, Rev. Stefan Bielawski, the vicar, and their housekeeper Stanisława Woś, fed Jews who came to the rectory begging for food. After German gendarmes took over part of the rectory, the Jewish fugitives no longer came around.<sup>1504</sup>

Assistance was provided by the pastor of Wąwolnica, near Lublin. Rev. Józef Gorajek, a Home Army chaplain, extended protection to Danuta Winnik and her seven-year-old son, Eugeniusz, who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto in 1942. Rev. Gorajek was awarded by Yad Vashem.<sup>1505</sup> At a Holocaust remembrance ceremony in Los Angeles on April 14, 1988, Rev. Gorajek stated:

In Wąwolnica, where I am living, before the war the Jews constituted fifty percent of the entire population. ... From the very beginning of the occupation, the Polish residents, being motivated by feelings of compassion and love of their fellow man, helped the Jews, even though helping Jews was punished with death without judicial process. At the beginning of the occupation, an organization called Ruch Oporu or the Opposition Movement, consisting of partisans to oppose the enemy, was created. I belonged to this organization as a chaplain. I did not use arms. At the organizational meetings, we decided on the type of warfare and assistance for the persecuted and this included the Jews. In order to save Jews, I issued [baptismal] certificates at the parish attesting they were Catholics, and thus enabling them to secure identity documents. Many of the Jews were placed with religious communities, for others we found jobs with a certain amount of security. ... There was real solidarity, solidarity and mutual aid between the Jews and the Poles ...

I recall from those days a rescued Jewish girl who, as a child, was found on the property of the Polkowski family.<sup>1506</sup> I advised them to help save this child since her parents had been killed. At night I baptized the child, recording another name for her in order to safeguard these good people who together with me, were risking their lives in the performance of this good deed. The Jewish girl now lives in London, England, under the name of Barbara Tennis. I am in contact with the Polkowski family, for whom a tree was planted in Jerusalem.<sup>1507</sup>

Eugene Winnik, one of those assisted by Rev. Gorajek, gave the following testimony:

I was born in 1933 into an affluent Jewish family in Warsaw. My father was a dentist and my early years were spent in a large home with servants and a nanny. When we were relocated to the Warsaw Ghetto, it was apparent to my father, David Winnik, that the

<sup>1504</sup> Sebastian Piątkowski, ed., *Relacje o pomocy udzielanej Żydom przez Polaków w latach 1939–1945*, vol. 3: *Dystrykt lubelski Generalnego Gubernatorstwa* (Lublin and Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2020), account 146.

<sup>1505</sup> See also the entry in *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 246.

<sup>1506</sup> See also the entry in *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 630–31.

<sup>1507</sup> Rev. Gorajek's statement (in the author's possession).

only chance my mother and I had for survival was to escape. My mother was an elegant, beautiful woman who spoke perfect Polish without any identifiable accent and whose face revealed no specific nationality. ... A Christian family from Warsaw had friends in a town called Niezabitów. They did not inform these friends that my mother and I were Jews, and, one night we escaped from the Ghetto and went to live with this family. I never saw my father again.

I was expected to attend the small church in Wąwolnica. Father Józef Gorajek was the priest and he was aware that my mother and I were Jews. I attended church daily. When it came time to receive my First Communion, it was given to me by Father Gorajek. A group of villagers had begun to suspect that we were Jews and they went to the priest and said that he must not under any circumstances give me Communion because I was a Jew. The priest was very angry with the villagers. He told them that I was a Catholic, that I would continue to receive Communion and that they were never again to say such a thing. The villagers, having respect for the word of the Father, were silent throughout the years.

During the entire war, Józef Gorajek continued to protect me. My mother was deeply involved in the Polish underground and had formed a strong friendship with Stanisław Witek, the leader of the partisans in the village area. Together they spent much time away from the village and I was alone, under the protection of Father Gorajek. [Father Gorajek arranged for the young boy to care for the village's herd of cattle.] At no time did this courageous priest, who risked so much, ever encourage me to leave my faith or my people.<sup>1508</sup>

According to a further account by Winnik:

“The entire village could have been destroyed were it known he offered us protection.”

Gorajek said he quieted the local townspeople after hearing rumblings that protecting was dangerous.

He said he took in other Jews during the war, placing them in convents and religious orders, and issued Christian birth certificates to Jewish babies he had never seen.

“I knew I could be executed, along with the entire village, without any question,” Gorajek said. “I only meditated for a moment: Did I have a right to affect so many people?”<sup>1509</sup>

Towards the end of the war, Rev. Aleksander Zalski, the pastor of Sobieszyn, near Ryki, in Lublin voivodship, sheltered a Jewish girl whose documents identified her as Marianna Tymińska; her real name was Rachela Zonszajn (b. 1941). Cypora Zonszajn (née Jabłoń), Rachela's mother, had snuck her out of the Siedlce ghetto when she was one-year-old. Rachela was delivered to her mother's Polish friend, Irena Zawadzka, who lived with her own mother, Sabina Zawadzka.

For several months, Rachela came under the protection of the Albertine Sisters in Siedlce, her stay there having been arranged by a priest misidentified

<sup>1508</sup> In the author's possession.

<sup>1509</sup> Eugene Winnik, “Priest's ‘deed of love’ remembered,” *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, April 15, 1988.

as Rev. Szesewski (his identity has not been established.) As in other orphanages, conditions were far from ideal. The place was overcrowded, while food, medicine and clothes were in short supply. Rachela was removed from the orphanage when she fell ill.<sup>1510</sup>

Afterwards, Zofia (Olszakowska) Glazer, another Polish friend of Cypora's, took Rachela to Zakrzówek, near Kraśnik, where they stayed with Zofia's sister, Irena (Olszakowska) Egierszдорff, for about six months. In the early winter of 1944, Zofia moved with Rachela to Sobieszyn, a nearby village. The last part of their saga is related by Zofia Kubar, a Jewish woman who passed as a Catholic Pole and worked as a teacher in Sobieszyn.

To be safe and inconspicuous, we decided to teach not in the school building in Ryki but in a nearby hamlet, Sobieszyn. ...

The first Sunday after our course began, all the teachers were invited to the parish priest's house for afternoon tea. Although most of us were atheists, we accepted the invitation; it was customary for newcomers in small parishes to visit the local priest. For myself, the visit had a special meaning. For the first time in my life, I was going to meet a priest socially.

The Reverend Alexander [Aleksander] Zalski was a tall, somewhat bulky man in his forties. Although he was kind, good-humored, and hospitable, my fellow teachers—young intellectuals—immediately attacked his theological beliefs, taking full advantage of his lack of argumentative skills. ...

Suddenly we heard a child crying, "Father! Father!" A girl, about four or five years old, ran into the room. I had rarely seen a child of such beauty and natural grace. Her curly hair and eyes were raven-black. Her complexion was dark. There could be no doubt that she was Jewish. I was startled by her presence in the priest's home.

The next moment she was in his arms. Still sobbing and out of breath, she reminded him to tell the story he always told her at mealtimes. "Father" is the term by which people usually address a priest, but I felt that this child actually considered him her protector, as

<sup>1510</sup> See also *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 928, where the rescue efforts of several Polish women—Sabina Zawadzka, her daughter, Irena Zawadzka, Lucyna Rzewuska, Zofia Glazer-Olszakowska, and Irena Egierszдорff (the last of these women recognized in 2014)—are all acknowledged, but not those of Rev. Aleksander Zalski. See also the testimony of Irena Zawadzka, SFV, Interview code 32553; Testimony of Zofia Glazer, SFV, Interview code 33574. Zofia Glazer (née Olszakowska) requested the assistance Rev. Szesewski (?) to place Rachela in an orphanage run by the Albertine Sisters. See Amira Keidar, *Lalechka* (Israel: Amira Keidar, 2012; U.S.A.: CreateSpace, 2015), 147–49. Irena Zawadzka recalled that the decision to take in one-year-old Rachela Zonszajn in August 1942, when she was brought to their home by the child's mother, was spontaneous. "We didn't think about it. Someone we cared about had turned to us, so we had to help. We just had to figure out how." They did not take pains to conceal Rachela. "None of the guests we had were people we were afraid of. Family members and friends—they all knew about Rachela. You didn't think about fear, you thought about normal life." See The Zawadzki Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-zawadzki-family>.

she would have looked on her own father. Later I would see how he fed her, comforted her, and stayed by her bedside until she fell asleep.

During our first visit, Father Zalski seemed slightly embarrassed by the little intruder, but he did not reprove her. Solemnly he promised to tell the story later, and Marianna, happy and reassured, left the room. Afterward, he mumbled a few words of apology. Although as a priest he had no experience in raising children, he said, he had undertaken to care for this child because her parents, both dead, had been distantly related to him.

Did he realize that we knew the girl was Jewish? Was he alarmed because we had seen her? I do not think so. It seemed inconceivable that he would fear that we would denounce him. Besides, her presence at the parish must have been widely known; one could not keep such a secret in a small village. ...

I deeply admired Father Zalski's devotion to the Jewish child and his courage in harboring her. His risk was great, for the punishment meted out by the Nazis was merciless. I personally knew of seven Sisters of Charity at the orphanage of Saint Stanislaus in Warsaw who were executed for hiding Jewish children. ... The Polish priests were widely engaged in helping Jews. This was but a part of their activities in the Resistance for which they were subsequently persecuted by the Nazis. More than 4,400 Catholic priests and brothers were put into concentration camps, where half of them were killed. Of 1,100 nuns imprisoned in concentration camps, about 240 perished.

I regretted that I never had the opportunity to express my feelings to Father Zalski, but the Jewish child was not a topic to be discussed then. ...

Only recently I learned about the fate of Father Zalski and the child. Father Zalski stayed in his parish until his death in the 1960s. Little Marianna, whose real name was Rachela, survived. Her mother had taken poison in Siedlce during the deportation. An old school friend of her mother's had rescued the child. Later, after being passed from hand to hand, she was entrusted to Father Zalski's care. In 1946, with the help of Mrs. [Zofia] Glazer-Olszakowska, Marianna was sent to an uncle in Israel and was brought up in a kibbutz there. Eventually, she studied economics, married, and has two children. Mrs. Glazer-Olszakowska visited her in Israel and reported that she had become a highly respected civil servant. I never saw her after that early spring of 1944 in Father Zalski's parish house in Sobieszyn.<sup>1511</sup>

**A** reference to an unidentified priest in the nearby town of Ryki crops up in the rescue narrative of Leah Springer (later Fein, b. 1924).

During the German occupation, Irena Janicka (née Życka) ran her family estate in Ułęż Górny (Garwolin County, Lublin District). In 1941, Irena was contacted by a friend who had had considerable business dealings before the war with David Springer, from the city of Ryki. Through the initiative of David's son, Israel, who was later murdered, and with the assistance of the local priest, his sister, Leah (later, Fein), received a birth certificate under the name of Helen Wiśniewska. Irena Janicka was contacted by her friend, who told her that Leah was Jewish, and decided to employ her, providing her with the board, food, and clothes. Irena informed other members of her staff that Leah, who spoke impeccable Polish and regularly attended services at the church, was a young orphan girl. Irena Janicka also

<sup>1511</sup> Kubar, *Double Identity*, 154–58.

sheltered on her estate an elderly Jewish couple who used the name of Wójcicki during the war and, for shorter periods of time, other Jews from the nearby village of Żabianka. She took no financial payment for the assistance she gave to the Jews and, according to her daughter, was motivated by her desire to help people in need. After the liberation, Leah Springer left the estate and immigrated to Australia.<sup>1512</sup>

Rev. Jan Poddebniaak of Krężnica Jara, near Lublin, was the chancellor of the Lublin diocesan curia. He helped a number of Jewish youths, among them Lea Bass, her sister, Sara Bass (later Frenkel), Manfred Frenkel, and Sara Kraus (later Kolkowicz). With his assistance, the Bass sisters were able to register for labour in Germany as Catholic Poles. Rev. Poddebniaak corresponded with them to dispel suspicion about their Jewishness, but their lack of discretion could easily have cost him his life. He was awarded by Yad Vashem. Rev. Paweł Dziubiński, a prelate from Lublin, provided the Bass sisters with false birth and baptismal certificates.<sup>1513</sup>

In September 1942, during the liquidation of the Lublin ghetto, 20-year-old Sara Bas [Bass] and her 13-year-old sister, Lea, escaped from the ghetto after their entire family had perished. Since none of their Polish acquaintances were prepared to take them in, they roamed from village to village for about a month vainly trying to find shelter. At night they hid in abandoned ruins and in Lublin's old cemetery. In early November 1942, when they were on the verge of despair, Władysław [Władysław] Janczarek, an old acquaintance of their father's, noticed them and approached them cautiously, offering them help. Since Janczarek was unable to put the two girls up in his home, he arranged to meet with them the next day and bring them two Aryan birth certificates of relatives of the same age, so that they could register for work in Germany. The two sisters, however, continued wandering around Lublin for several months until they found work in the home of a Polish woman. Since they were well known in their hometown, the sisters feared discovery and therefore decided to ask the nuns who worked in the local hospital for help. The nuns [Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, one of whom was Sister Maria Gulbin<sup>1514</sup>] put them in touch with Jan Poddebniaak [Poddebniaak], a priest, who advised them to register for work in Germany. Enlisting the help of the Chief Recruitment Officer, Father Poddebniaak arranged for the two sisters to be sent to Germany, where they worked in a hospital for foreign workers until the area was liberated. Father Poddebniaak made a point of sending them letters to allay suspicion as to their identity.<sup>1515</sup>

<sup>1512</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 563.

<sup>1513</sup> Dąbrowska, *Światła w ciemności*, 194.

<sup>1514</sup> Testimony of Rev. Jan Poddebniaak in Dąbrowska, *Światła w ciemności*, 191–94. The Bass sisters wrote postcards from Germany in which they foolishly addressed Rev. Poddebniaak as “Mr. Priest,” a usage that genuine Polish Catholics would never employ, and they thanked him for what he had done for them. See also Janczarek Władysław, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-janczarek-wladyslaw>.

<sup>1515</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 296–97.

The aforementioned Sara Kraus (later Kolkowicz, b. 1929) encountered many helpful Poles after leaving her native Warsaw. She was sheltered for a brief period in the diocesan chancery in Lublin, where she worked as a housekeeper's helper. The chancery was the seat of the diocesan vicar general, Rev. Józef Kruszyński. Sara decided to return to Warsaw, and from there, she went to work in Germany posing as a Christian Pole.<sup>1516</sup>

**R**ev. Jan Gosek, the pastor of Kanie, near Chełm, provided false documents that enabled a Jewish woman to pass as a Pole and survive the war.

Until the war broke out, the five members of the Wagner family lived in the village of Wolka Kanska [Wólka Kańska] near the city of Chelm [Chełm], in the Lublin district, and had been friends of the Puch family. During the occupation, after the Germans began liquidating the Jews, the Wagner family tried unsuccessfully to find a place to hide in the area. By 1942, of the entire family, only the 15-year-old daughter, Gita Wagner (later Stanisława [Stanisława] Konopka), remained alive. In her despair, she arrived at the home of Antoni and Maria Puch, who, although unable to take her into their own home, did not wish to abandon her to her fate. With the help of the local priest [Rev. Jan Gosek, the pastor of Kanie<sup>1517</sup>], they arranged to have a Christian birth certificate issued to her with their own surname. Their daughter, Danuta, who was a young woman at the time, took responsibility for the care of Gita upon herself and tried to find a safer place for her to hide. Despite her young age, Danuta set out on her own at her parents' behest to distant Warsaw to the home of Janina Wroblewska [Wróblewska], an acquaintance of Jewish extraction who was living there under an assumed identity. After Wroblewska agreed to take Gita under her wing, Danuta traveled with her by train to the capital and got her a job with a dentist. Gita Wagner stayed with Wroblewska until the Warsaw Uprising in the summer of 1944 and survived. After the war, Gita Wagner remained in Poland.<sup>1518</sup>

**A**fter escaping from the Warsaw ghetto, Diana Topiel (later Czerska, b. 1935) and her parents made their way to All Saints Church, where they were provided with false identity documents. They were then directed to separate safe houses. Diana was sheltered by several Polish families. She was arrested in a street raid (*łapanka*) as a Pole, and was sent to the Majdanek concentration camp without exposing her Jewish identity. Her escape from Majdanek was orchestrated by the Polish underground. She was taken to the parish rectory in Urzędów, near Kraśnik, where she was passed off as the relative of a priest identified as Rev. Świetlik. She remained in his care for about two months before

<sup>1516</sup> Sara Kraus-Kolkowicz, *Dziewczynka z ulicy Miłej: Albo świadectwo czasu Holokaustu* (Lublin: Agencja Wydawniczo-Handlowa AD, 1995), 46. Surprisingly, even a moderate historian charged—falsely—that, because of its highly favourable portrayal of Poles and bad experiences with Jews, this memoir was an “antisemitic fabrication.” See Paulsson, *Secret City*, 22.

<sup>1517</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 440. See also Dąbrowska, *Światła w ciemności*, 348–50.

<sup>1518</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 649.

returning to Warsaw.<sup>1519</sup> The priest in question may have been Rev. Jan Łazicki, who was the local pastor at that time.

Irena Sznycer (later Rina Feinmesser) was just two years old when the war broke out. Before her arrest in Kraków, Irena's mother succeeded in arranging for the child's aunt in Warsaw to take custody. A Polish woman there was giving shelter. However, because of Irena's Semitic features, the Polish woman asked a nun to take the child off her hands, and Irena was placed in an orphanage. When the other children became aware of Irena's Jewish origin, her aunt decided to remove her from the orphanage. She asked an acquaintance, Ksawera Brogowska, who was working as a housekeeper in Warsaw, to help find a safe place.

With the assistance of Maria Leszczyńska, Brogowska took the child to her brother's home in the village of Bełżec, near Tomaszów Lubelski. Irena remained with Maciej and Cecylia Brogowski, who had three children of their own, for over three years. They treated her like a daughter. "I was well cared for by that lady [Cecylia Brogowska] and was not afraid of anything," Irena recalled. "Although the neighbours knew I was Jewish, this lady had no enemies so nothing [bad] could happen."<sup>1520</sup>

Irena lived there openly, and many of the villagers understood that she was Jewish. In order for the child to pass as a Pole in the event of a German inspection, the Brogowskis turned to Fr. Ireneusz (Kazimierz Kmiecik)—the administrator of the local parish and a member of the Reformed Franciscan order—to have Irena baptized. After the German occupation ended, Irena was placed in a Jewish orphanage and later settled in Israel.<sup>1521</sup>

Remarkably, Irena Sznycer was not the only Jew to survive the occupation within sight of the notorious Bełżec death camp. Julia Pępiak sheltered Salomea Helman, her former neighbour and friend, and Salomea's young daughter Bro-

<sup>1519</sup> Testimony of Diana (Topiel) Czarska, YVA, file 0.33/1310 (Item 3555462); Gutman and Krakowski, *Unequal Victims*, 244.

<sup>1520</sup> Teresa Prekerowa, "Stosunek ludności polskiej do żydowskich uciekinierów z obozów zagłady w Treblince, Sobiborze i Bełżcu w świetle relacji żydowskich i polskich," *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu—Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, vol. 35 (1993): 104, based on the testimony of Irena Schnitzer (Sznycer), JHI, record group 301, no. 4638.

<sup>1521</sup> The rescuers of Irena Sznycer, Maciej and Cecylia Brogowski, were recognized by Yad Vashem in 2008; Ksawera Brogowska and Maria Leszczyńska were not recognized. See Maciej and Cecylia Brogowski, RD; The Brogowski Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-brogowski-family-0>; "Zagłada Żydów Biecha—Sprawiedliwi wśród Narodów Świata," Internet: <http://krzyprzy.zso4.gliwice.pl/zaglada/sprawiedliwi/sprawiedliwi.htm>; Kalisz and Rączy, *Dzieje społeczności żydowskiej powiatu gorlickiego podczas okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1945*, 113 n.205.

nia (b. 1938), a circumstance that also became widely known in the village.<sup>1522</sup> Pępiak's son, Zygmunt (b. 1919), known as Fr. Sebastian, was a Reformed Franciscan priest. In regions inhabited by Germans and Austrians, no such rescues occurred in the environs of concentration camps or, indeed, in any German or Austrian village. This contrast deserves emphasis.

Rev. Leon Janczewski, the pastor of Narol, near Tomaszów Lubelski, provided false birth and baptismal certificates to some Jewish women from the nearby village of Łówcza. After this had come to the attention of the German authorities, the priest fled for his life. He found refuge in Lwów, first in a monastery of Catholic priests of the Armenian rite and later in that of the Reformed Franciscans. In 1943, after the danger had apparently subsided, Rev. Janczewski returned to Narol.<sup>1523</sup>

Lucia Grinszpan (later Rotman) was thirteen years old when she travelled from Lwów to Lubaczów to join her sister, Miriam. She asked her brother-in-law, Meir Szenker, to get Aryan papers for her, so he turned to Zofia Pomorska, the Polish woman with whom they were staying: "... she had pity upon us, and she sees it as necessary to save us. She succeeded in obtaining a document for me from the local priest, in the name of a Polish girl who was exiled to Russia, since her father was a Polish sergeant."

Lucia then travelled to Przemyśl, where the woman's sister "greeted me nicely. She had already expected my arrival, and was ready to help me." Under her new identity of Janina Kogut, Lucia volunteered for labour in Germany, where she survived the war, passing as a Christian Pole. It is noteworthy that the town's "greatest anti-Semite," Zofia Pomorska, played a critical role in the Szenkers' survival.<sup>1524</sup>

<sup>1522</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 597; Zuzanna Schnepf-Kolacz, "Pomoc Polaków dla Żydów na wsi w czasie okupacji niemieckiej: Próba opisu na przykładzie Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata," in Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski, eds., *Zarys krajobrazu: Wieś polska wobec zagłady Żydów 1942–1945* (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2011), 236; Karolina Dzieciołowska, "I forgot about the terror, the fear and the consequences." The Story of Julia Pępiak," PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/i-forgot-about-terror-fear-and-consequences-story-julia-pepiak>.

<sup>1523</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 286; Henryk Wolańczyk, "Narolski proboszcz," *Kresowiak Galicyjski*, no. 4 (161) (April 2010): 6.

<sup>1524</sup> Lucia Rotman-Greenspan, "A Nine Year Old Girl Bears the Burden of the Generation," Chaim Rabin, ed., *Lizhensk: Sefer zikaron le-kedoshei Lizhensk she-nispu be-shoat ha-natsim* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Lezajsk in Israel, 1970), 54 ff., translated as *Memorial Book of the Martyrs of Lezajsk Who Perished in the Holocaust*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Lezajsk/Lezajsk.html>; Zofia Pomorska, RD.

According to Polish sources, the priests from the Lubaczów parish gave assistance, especially food, to Jews who had escaped from the ghetto.<sup>1525</sup>

Ludwik Ehrlich, a renowned jurist from the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów and a convert to Catholicism, was sheltered by a number of Poles including Rev. Wojciech Wanielista, the pastor of Bieliny, near Nisko, where he was active in the Home Army's Bureau of Information and Propaganda. After his capture by the Germans, Ehrlich was freed from the jail in Biłgoraj on September 24, 1943, along with 72 other prisoners, by a Home Army unit under the command of Major Tadeusz Sztumberk-Rychter. Subsequently, Ehrlich joined the Podkowa Home Army unit stationed in Puszcza Solska (Sól forest), where he monitored radio broadcasts.<sup>1526</sup> For a short time, Ehrlich found refuge at the Franciscan (Bernardine) monastery in Radecznicza, near Zamość.<sup>1527</sup>

Regina (Rivka) Sznajderman (later Tauber, b. 1917) survived the war by moving from place to place, assuming the identity of a Christian woman and taking on various jobs. For a period of several weeks, she was hidden in the parish rectory in Chodel, near Opole Lubelskie, by Rev. Antoni Biernacki's housekeeper, Kasia, with the priest's knowledge. Since Chodel was her hometown, Regina could not venture out of the rectory, which made remaining there very difficult for her. Polish friends helped her to find employment in distant locations.<sup>1528</sup>

The immediate reaction of Jews who witnessed the liquidation of the ghettos is a troubling matter. In October 1942, during the liquidation of the ghetto in Opole Lubelskie, two young Jews escaped and arrived unexpectedly at the home of the vicar, Rev. Władysław Krawczyk.

<sup>1525</sup> Wincenty Urban, *Droga Krzyżowa Archidiecezji Lwowskiej w latach II wojny światowej 1939–1945* (Wrocław: Fundacja "Semper Fidelis," 1983), 120.

<sup>1526</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 1st ed., 459; Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 1029, 1034. Ludwik Ehrlich's daughter, Konstancja (Constance) Krystyna, became an Ursuline nun (of the Roman Union) known as Sister Emilia, and worked under Pope John Paul II at the Vatican. Konstancja Ehrlich (b. 1924 to an American Episcopalian mother) was raised as a Catholic and attended an Ursuline convent school. She too had a tumultuous wartime experience. While living in Warsaw under the care of Maria Jezierska, she was caught in a street round-up and imprisoned in Majdanek. Her release was secured through a bribe. She returned to Warsaw, enrolled in an Ursuline school, took part in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising as a Home Army nurse, and was deported to the Bietigheim slave labour camp near Stuttgart. See Aleksandra Klich, "Papież i zakonnica," *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Magazyn Świąteczny, April 26, 2011.

<sup>1527</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 478.

<sup>1528</sup> Testimony of Regina Tauber, SFV, Interview code 26587.

When the ghetto in Opole Lubelskie, in the county of Puławy, was being finished off in 1942, I had the misfortune of seeing from the church tower the market square of the ghetto which was covered with corpses and blood. They [the Jews] had all turned toward the church when they were being shot at. A few days earlier some had visited the church and said that this was their nemesis for having once called out: “His blood be on us, and on our children.” [Matthew 27:25—Ed.]. The Schupo, dressed in green, shot them. Our police, dressed in navy, refused to do so. The dean, who had also ascended the tower, almost fainted. I held on to the frame of the window. We descended quickly but awkwardly since I had to hold up the dean.

It is difficult not to have a great deal of sympathy for that nation and it is entirely understandable that one would have wanted to protect them from that historical nemesis and hatred. That day, the 23rd of October 1942, when they were being liquidated, two young Jews managed to arrive at my home. I had only one room. The office of the Gestapo was next door and a [German] commander occupied the dwelling above mine. The building was well guarded. The punishment for hiding a Jew was death. Despite this, I fed them, gave them provisions, and around midnight led them across some fields to a forest about three kilometres away. [Polish] partisans were already there, among them the son of the local rabbi.<sup>1529</sup>

Here is another eyewitness testimony—that of Maria Bill-Bajorkowa of Wieliczka:

Beaten, kicked, shot, fainting, the Jews fall to the ground. They cry, they scream, we hear their voices: “Jesus Christ, since our Jehovah has forsaken us, take pity on me and I will convert to Your faith.” Others cry out: “If there was a Jehovah he would not have allowed what they are doing to us happen. There is no Jehovah, there is no God. We perish and no one helps us. Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.”<sup>1530</sup>

The reaction of rabbis was more steadfast. When the Jews of Brańsk were being rounded up for annihilation at Treblinka on November 7, 1942, that town’s chief rabbi, Itzhak Zev Cukerman, addressed the crowds with the following words: “The judgment was passed in Heaven. We have to die. But I believe that those who survive will inform the world of our suffering.”<sup>1531</sup> Similarly, in the face of imminent death, Rabbi Shimon Rozovsky was reported to have said to the Jewish community leaders of Ejszyski: “Jews, you see our end is

<sup>1529</sup> Władysław Krawczyk, “Żydzi zwracali się ku kościołowi,” *Opoka* [London], no. 11 (July 1975): 83.

<sup>1530</sup> Shmuel Meiri, ed., *The Jewish Community of Wieliczka: A Memorial Book* (Tel Aviv: The Wieliczka Association in Israel, 1980), 75.

<sup>1531</sup> *The Story of Two Shtetls, Brańsk and Ejszyski: An Overview of Polish-Jewish Relations in Northeastern Poland during World War II*, Part 2 (Toronto: The Polish Educational Foundation in North America, 1998), 78.

approaching rapidly ... God did not want us to be saved. Our destiny has been decided, and we must accept this.”<sup>1532</sup>

Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira, a prominent Hasidic leader, wrote in the Warsaw ghetto: “We must persist in our belief that whatever God does is exactly what must be done.”<sup>1533</sup> A Jewish survivor, now an American sociologist, writes:

During the tragic moments in the Bobowa ghetto [near Gorlice], the rabbis had one standard answer. All the rabbis I ever met or saw said the same thing: “Children, go and pray because the day will come when the Messiah will appear and he will protect us. The Lord knows what he is doing. He will help us.” There wasn’t one rabbi or other leader I know of who said to his people: “Children, let’s take up arms. Let’s train ourselves. Let’s fight. Let’s barricade ourselves and save our lives. Let’s not obey the German laws any longer.”<sup>1534</sup>

As one scholar has observed, “There are many such stories in the literature, describing rabbis who encouraged their followers on the way to execution by singing, reciting psalms, even dancing, so as to prepare themselves spiritually for the great honour and privilege that God had given them—to die for *kidush hashem*.”<sup>1535</sup>

The theological ramifications of accepting the tragedy that befell the Jews as the will of God—something that strikes one as particularly harsh and glaring in retrospect—are explained from the traditional Judeo-Christian vantage point by Leon Wells, a Jewish survivor from Lwów.

I read the Lubavitch in '43, '44—it’s not proper to mention—Soloveitchik and all the others, they said the Holocaust was sent from heaven and did good because it is the time of the coming of the Messiah. Even the Lubavitch in '43, I have here the document where he said enjoy, enjoy, because the Messiah is coming. And he said that Haman does not come by himself. He’s sent by God. I said to a major Jewish theologian recently, “Why are you only condemning the Pope? Or about what Cardinal O’Connor in New York said about the Holocaust?” I said, “Didn’t the Lubavitch and others say the same, that it’s God’s will and we should believe it? It is only cleansing, because of our sins. God threw us out from our land because of our sins.” And he said, “Yes, if you are a religious man and if I would be the Pope, I couldn’t behave differently because I cannot say it’s not God’s will because he can stop everything.” I said, “Fine. So why don’t you as a leading Jewish theologian come out

<sup>1532</sup> Perets Alufi and Shaul Kaleko (Barkeli), eds., *Eishishok, koroteha ve-hurbanah: pirke zikhronot ve-eduyot (be-tseruf temunot)/liket* (Jerusalem: Committee of the Survivors of Eishishok in Israel, 1950), translated into English by Shoshanna Gavish, “*Aishishuk*”; *Its History and Its Destruction: Documentaries, Memories and Illustrations* (Jerusalem: n.p., 1980), 62.

<sup>1533</sup> Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira, *Sacred Fire: Torah from the Years of Fury 1939–1942* (Northvale, New Jersey and Jerusalem: Jason Aronson, 2000), 306.

<sup>1534</sup> Samuel P. Oliner, *Restless Memories: Recollections of the Holocaust Years* (Berkeley, California: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1986), 98.

<sup>1535</sup> Jonathan Webber, “Jewish Identities in the Holocaust: Martyrdom as a Representative Category,” *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 13 (2000), 140.

and ask why are we jumping so much about the Pope and all?" He said, "What should I do? It is the people, it is their will. They know what they want to hear and I know what I want." And I said to myself, it is theological, they have no other choice. There is no other choice. If you believe in a God, then it's the will of God. We'd have to change the whole religious outlook in order to see it differently. But as of the moment, we believe in God's will.<sup>1536</sup>

Rabbis throughout Poland were inclined to attribute the calamities that befell the Jews to Divine punishment: "it was the process of the abandonment of religion that had caused all the current disasters of the Jews. Some rabbis explicitly claimed that the wartime reality was punishment for the community's sins, while many others believed that the Jewish community's return to and strengthening of religion would lead directly to an improvement in the situation."<sup>1537</sup> The views of Rabbi Hirsh Melekh Talmud of Lublin, in endeavouring to comprehend how God could allow His "Chosen People" to be punished to the point of destruction, are less optimistic.<sup>1538</sup>

While confined in the Wilno ghetto, Zelig Kalmanovich, the wartime voice of the Orthodox community, kept a diary that is replete with scriptural and rabbinical quotations. Why, Kalmanovich asks, did God allow the Jews of Wilno to be destroyed? Because the destruction would serve as a sign (1) that what was once a proud Jewish community was already rotting, crumbling from within, and (2) that future generations—unaware of this decay and left only with the detritus of the external destruction—would have something useful, even inspiring, to remember. According to cultural historian David Roskies:

God's purpose in destroying the community of Vilna [Wilno] was perhaps to hasten the redemption, to alert whomsoever might still be alerted that there is neither refuge nor hope for life in the Exile. ...

But if we take a hard look we can see that it was necessary for the destruction to come from without. The fortress had already been destroyed and laid waste from within. Vilna had put up no resistance to the assimilation and the obliteration of the Jewish character, had not stood up to the spiritual destruction decreed by the Red conquerors. ...

And these undesecrated stones will serve as a memorial to our Exile, for their merit was not to have been desecrated through the hands of their own children, by those who

<sup>1536</sup> Harry James Cargas, *Voices from the Holocaust* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1993), 91–92.

<sup>1537</sup> Havi Dreifuss, "'The Work of My Hands is Drowning in the Sea, and You Would Offer Me Song?!': Orthodox Behavior and Leadership in Warsaw during the Holocaust," in Dynner and Guesnet, *Warsaw*, 486.

<sup>1538</sup> Gershon Greenberg, "The Theological Letters of Rabbi Talmud of Lublin (Summer–Fall 1942)," in Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, *Ghettos 1939–1945: New Research and Perspectives on Definition, Daily Life, and Survival. Symposium Presentations* (Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2005), 113–27.

had once built the walls, but rather, through the hands of a savage nation, acting as the emissary of God.<sup>1539</sup>

Writing in 1962, Rabbi Avigdor Miller asserted that Polish Jews were punished, through the Holocaust, for their apostasy and self-atheization.

... on the upsurge of the greatest defection from the Torah in history, which was expressed in Poland by materialism, virulent anti-Torah nationalism, and Bundism (radical anti-religious socialism), G-d's plan finally relieved them of all Free Will and sent Hitler's demons to end the existence of these communities before they deteriorated entirely.<sup>1540</sup>

Many commentators misunderstand the collective nature of Divine punishment, asking, for instance, why God would punish a religious Jew alongside an atheist Jew for the apostasy of the latter. Miller clarifies this, "When the destroyer is let loose, he does not discriminate between the righteous and the sinners (Mechilta, Shmos 12:22)."<sup>1541</sup>

The late Satmarer Rebbe, Rabbi Yoel Moshe Teitelbaum ...

is clear and unambiguous. ... he decides that the Zionists were responsible for the tragedy of the six million. The arrogance of nationalistic self-determination in trying to build a Jewish state caused the great destruction. The fact that so many Zionists were secularists, nonbelievers, only made matters worse. They violated the injunction to remain passive, refrain from interfering in the divinely preordained plans of redemption, and to await the miraculous coming of the Messiah. Hence, the Zionists were guilty, and all the Jewish people suffered because of their sins.<sup>1542</sup>

Rabbi Elazar Menachem Schach, in 1991, concurred: The Holocaust was God's punishment of the Jews for their sins in the last few centuries.<sup>1543</sup> Such views are still held by some Jewish religious leaders today.

Many Haredi rabbis, for example, assert that the Holocaust, including most particularly the deaths of one-and-a-half million Jewish children, was a well-deserved divine punishment, not only for all the sins of modernity and faith renunciation by many Jews, but also for the decline of Talmudic study in Europe. The Haredim and their traditional Jewish followers attribute the death of every Jew, including each innocent child, not to natural causes but

<sup>1539</sup> David G. Roskies, "Jewish Cultural Life in the Vilna Ghetto," in Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, *Lithuania and the Jews: The Holocaust Chapter. Symposium Presentations* (Washington, D.C.: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2004), 36–38.

<sup>1540</sup> Avigdor Miller, *Rejoice o Youth! An Integrated Jewish Ideology* (New York: n.p., 1962), 279.

<sup>1541</sup> Miller, *Rejoice o Youth!*, 263.

<sup>1542</sup> Bernhard H. Rosenberg and Fred Heuman, eds., *Theological and Halakhic Reflections on the Holocaust* (Hoboken, New Jersey: KTAV, 1992), 121.

<sup>1543</sup> Dina Porat, *Israeli Society, the Holocaust and Its Survivors* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008), 372–73.

to direct action of God. The Haredim believe that God punishes each Jew for his or her sins and sometimes punishes the entire Jewish community, including many who are innocent, because of the sins committed by other Jews.<sup>1544</sup>

Some religious Jews also continue to share those views. A woman who was rescued by Poles in Volhynia described the following experience:

I have two boys. One lives in New York, he's a religious Jew, very religious. ... their idea about the Holocaust is enough to ... upset you. ... My grandson in New York called and asked me if it would be too hard for him to tell him some things. He had to write it for one of his yeshiva classes. And I was really surprised that ... they believe the Holocaust ... happened because we didn't follow God.<sup>1545</sup>

Religious Poles who witnessed this cataclysm also endeavoured to find an explanation for the horrific and unimaginable events occurring around them. As historian Andrzej Bryk explains, their “rationalization” had little, if anything, to do with actual malice toward the Jewish victims, nor was it an acceptance of the violence directed at the Jews. According to Bryk,

For the average Polish peasant, Jews were an integral part of the landscape, like the things of nature, the sky above, and himself. He might not have liked them, might have maintained only the most superficial trading relations with them, but their disappearance was unimaginable. They were part of God's universe, even if an inferior part, viewed with suspicion.<sup>1546</sup>

<sup>1544</sup> Israel Shahak and Norton Mezvinsky, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel*, New edition (London and Ann Arbor, Michigan: Pluto Press, 2004), 31.

<sup>1545</sup> Testimony of Peppy Rosenthal, July 1, 2009, Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive, University of Michigan at Dearborn, Internet: <http://holocaust.umd.umich.edu/rosenthal/>.

<sup>1546</sup> This was, essentially, the mirror image of traditional Jewish attitudes toward Christian Poles, a matter that is strenuously avoided in most discussions of Polish-Jewish relations. Albert Marrin, former head of the history department at Yeshiva University in New York City, writes candidly about how Jews traditionally viewed Poles. “Many traditional Jews held stereotypical views of the Poles—that is, opinions that were overly simplified and prejudiced. Thus, on the basis of limited experience, traditional Jews might make unfair, negative generalizations about Poles as a group. The Yiddish word *goy* (plural, *goyim*), for example, meant more than ‘a gentile person.’ It implied ignorance, coarseness, and sinfulness. ‘What do they know, these goyim?’ a Hasid asked. ‘A goy knows nothing, a goy does not think, the only thing he knows how to do is beat up Jews.’ A young male goy, called a *sheygetz*, was allegedly a brute who thought with his fists. This mythical Pole guzzled vodka until he became so shiker (drunk) that he lost his senses. A Yiddish folk song put it this way: *Shiker iz a goy—Shiker iz er—trinken miz er—vayl er iz a goy* (‘A goy is a dunkard—but drink he must—because he is a goy’). Similarly, the term *shikse* meant more than ‘a young gentile woman’; it also implied immodesty and sexual ‘looseness.’ Apart from the belief in one God, traditional Jews saw nothing in common between their religion and Christianity. To them, Christianity mimicked paganism, worshipping ‘idols’—statues

and paintings of God, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and the saints. In their view, the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, and the Resurrection were mere ‘superstitions.’ Traditional Jews showed their disdain in various ways. For example, at many rural crossroads in Poland, travelers would see a crucifix—a cross with the figure of the crucified Christ on it—signifying divine protection. Jews refused to look at this ‘graven image.’ Author Elie Wiesel, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, was born in Romania, but his attitudes mirrored those of Polish Jews. ‘[Christian] rituals,’ Wiesel recalled, ‘had no interest for me; quite the contrary, I turned away from them. Whenever I met a priest ... I would avert my gaze and think of something else. Rather than walk in front of a church with its pointed and threatening belfry, I would cross the street. ... Christians were more present in my imagination than in my life. What did a Christian do when he was alone? What were his dreams made of? How did he use his time when he was not plotting against me?’ For many traditional Jews, marrying a Christian amounted to a betrayal of everything Jewish. The scandal stained the entire family in its own eyes and in the eyes of the community. Traditional Jews disowned the offending daughter or son. Parents tore their clothes in shame and despair, as if mourning the death of a family member. When, for instance, the daughter of a rabbi converted to Catholicism and married a Polish policeman, her parents could not contain their grief. ‘[They] followed the carriage, crying and screaming and beating their heads to a bloody pulp on the sides of the wagon pleading with their daughter. ... After this shameful tragedy, the [bride’s] ... three sisters never married, neither did their cousins in the nearby town. Nobody would marry them.’ Such behavior troubled Isaac Bashevis Singer. A character in his novel *The Manor* asks: ‘How can anyone move into someone else’s home, live there in total isolation, and expect not to suffer by it? When you despise your host’s god as a tin image, shun his wine as forbidden, condemn his daughter as unclean, aren’t you asking to be treated as an unwelcome outsider? [It’s] as simple as that.’” See Albert Marrin, *A Light in the Darkness: Janusz Korczak, His Orphans, and the Holocaust* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2019), 41–44.

Jewish scholar Moshe Rosman writes in a similar vein: “Alongside the belief in the non-Jews’ demonic nature and the fear and mistrust of Gentile society, some of these [Hasidic] tales hint at a very different evaluation of the theological-moral standing of the non-Jews. According to Jacob Katz, given the religious rivalry between Judaism and Christianity, the members of each group adopted a double standard of morality towards each other. There was no religious rationale for treating outsiders according to ethical norms. Jews frowned on mistreating or cheating non-Jews not on moral grounds but from enlightened self-interest: such behaviour would bring Jews into disrepute and result in sanctions or even violence being brought to bear against them.” See Moshe Rosman, “A Minority Views the Majority: Jewish Attitudes Towards the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth and Interaction with Poles,” *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies*, vol. 4 (1989): 37.

“An American Pickle,” a 2020 American comedy-drama film, inadvertently underscores the persistence of these attitudes and beliefs. Herschel Greenbaum tells Ben that he, Ben, may be “stupider than a Polish person and they are THE stupidest.” Herschel later refers to Mary, Jesus’ mother, as a prostitute who made up the story of the Immaculate Conception to cover for her whoring: “I don’t think I’m saying anything controversial when I say everybody know Jesus Christ mother was prostitute. And she invent story of Christianity to cover up the fact that she prostitute. So if you believe in Jesus, you stupid idiot.”

To the (minimal) extent that such depictions raise eyebrows (this one did not), the pat response is one proffered by Anne Roiphe: it was merely reciprocal, i.e., provoked entirely

The complete extermination of his neighbours in a small town or village was for that peasant not only a crime in human terms but a fundamental violation of the universal order, of God's order. It was such a monstrous and absurd deed, that it could have been possible only through the will of God himself. Had he not, after all, been taught that Jews were guilty for the death of Jesus, the death of God? So, perhaps, this was the sentence for that deed? Hence the fatalism in perceiving the Holocaust, a certain self-defence through rationalisation against the madness of a deed equal only to the anger of God. Of a deed which must have been inspired by some hidden logic. The extermination was so terrible, surpassing human imagination to such an extent, that there had to be some hidden meaning in it.<sup>1547</sup>

Some Poles embraced the same sort of theological explanations to rationalize their own fate. A Jewish woman recalled the response she received from an elderly peasant woman when asked, "Are the Germans giving you much trouble?" The Polish woman replied, "It's the Anti-Christ! He's come to punish us for our sins."<sup>1548</sup> In the final days or hours before their execution, priests often spoke of their acceptance of the will of God. The conservative Catholic author Zofia Kossak-Szczucka, a co-founder of Żegota, the wartime Council for Aid to Jews, wrote in her postwar diary that the suffering and humiliation of Polish women that she witnessed as a prisoner in Auschwitz was God's punishment for having enjoyed themselves before the war, for wearing lipstick and silk stockings.<sup>1549</sup>

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by "anti-Semitic" Poles, and benign. "It is true that Jews in the privacy of their houses have for centuries *taken revenge* on the anti-Semitism of their neighbors by portraying them as dumb. Jews have long thought of Poles as less intelligent." See Anne Roiphe, *A Season for Healing: Reflections on the Holocaust* (New York: Summit Books, 1988), 117. For a similar take by a Jewish-American academic, see Robert Michael, *A History of Catholic Antisemitism: The Dark Side of the Church* (New York and Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 248: "Some powerless Jews responded to anti-Semitism by stereotyping Gentile Poles as 'dangerous, demonic, and devilish'; most Jews felt ambivalent toward Poles."

Surprisingly, the stereotype of the "stupid" Pole even surfaced when Poles put their lives at risk to shelter Jews during the war. As could be expected, living in close quarters could lead to occasional flare-ups between the charges and rescuers. Teresa Prekerowa, who was active in the Żegota organization, recalls: "It was often that Jews told Poles, 'We are more intelligent than you,' and it made the Poles crazy. It was a very difficult situation." See Lawrence N. Powell, *Troubled Memory: Anne Levy, The Holocaust, and David Duke's Louisiana* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 261.

<sup>1547</sup> Andrzej Bryk, "The Struggles for Poland," *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies*, vol. 4 (1989): 378.

<sup>1548</sup> Küchler-Silberman, *My Hundred Children*, 17.

<sup>1549</sup> Władysław T. Bartoszewski, *The Convent in Auschwitz* (London: The Bowerdean Press, 1990), 19.

Occasionally one encounters charges that priests urged the faithful not to provide assistance to Jews or even incited the populace against them. These charges are almost always based on second or third-hand accounts. Priests in rural areas were ordered by German officials to read—at Sunday masses—official notices regarding matters such as the delivery of mandatory agricultural quotas imposed on farmers and warnings not to assist partisans and Jews under penalty of death. Not to do so would not only have put the delinquent priest personally at risk, but also would have subjected him to the moral dilemma of withholding from his parishioners information about the serious risks that such activities could entail for them and their families.

An example of such a notice is the circular issued to local pastors by the reeve of the village of Zakrzówek near Kraśnik, pursuant to instructions from the *Kreishauptmann* (German county head), dated December 4, 1942, which reads: “In accordance with the orders of the Kreishauptmann of October 10, 1942, ... all residents and their neighbours will be punished by death for sheltering Jews, providing them with food or assisting them in escaping, in particular anyone who allows Jews to use their carts.”<sup>1550</sup> In some regions of Poland, there was considerable resistance on the part of priests to reading German notices in church.<sup>1551</sup>

Hearsay accounts have led uninformed Jews and Holocaust historians to accuse priests of preaching against the Jews when all they were doing in fact was reading such notices. It is telling that no credible, first-hand accounts of priests’ “sermons” that allegedly urged Poles not to help—or even worse to turn in or murder Jews—have come to light, even though many Jews who passed as Christians attended church services throughout occupied Poland.<sup>1552</sup>

<sup>1550</sup> The circular is reproduced in Chodakiewicz, *Polacy i Żydzi 1918–1955*, 185.

<sup>1551</sup> See, e.g., Marian Matysik, Małgorzata Rudnicka, and Zdzisław Świstak, *Kościół katolicki w Jasielskiem 1939–1945* (Przemyśl, Brzozów and Stalowa Wola: Biblioteczka Przemyska, Muzeum Regionalne PTTK [Polskiego Towarzystwa Turystyczno-Krajoznawczego] im. Adama Fastnachta, and Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski—Filia, 1991), 19, 88, 103, 211–12; Jerzy Adamski, Mieczysław Ligonowski, Franciszek Oberc, and Tadeusz Śliwa, *Kościół katolicki w Brzozowskiem i Sanockiem 1939–1945* (Brzozów and Przemyśl, 1992), 202; Witold Jemielity, “Diecezja łomżyńska,” in Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 74.

<sup>1552</sup> The closest we can find to a credible example of a priest inciting churchgoers against Jews is Symba Hampel’s account of his experience passing as a Pole in Niechcice, near Kamięńsk, where he resided from September 1943. Hampel claims that every [sic] Sunday, Rev. Feliks Grela, the local priest, would rail against the Jews and express his gratitude because they could no longer steer Polish youth in the wrong direction. Based on this, Hampel glibly extrapolates: Priests “often discussed the Jews from the pulpit and thanked God heartily that these parasites were gone once and for all,” and that priests “were grateful to Hitler for having done that dirty work” for them (“Ksiądz z ambony niejednokrotnie mówił o Żydach i gorąco dziękował Panu Bogu za to, że pozbawił nas raz na zawsze od tych pasożytów. Wdzięczni byli Hitlerowi za tę brudną robotę.”) However, Hampel had

lived previously in Pieńki and attended Sunday mass in Rozprza on a regular basis, yet he makes no mention of this problem in those other venues. Thus, despite an ample field of observation, he provides but the flimsiest evidence for this sweeping and about Polish priests. Crude generalizations of this nature pepper his memoir: “Already from the cradle the (Polish) youth was poisoned by the venom of anti-Semitism. The entire Polish society is to be blamed, and the Polish clergy most of all. Poland is probably the only country in the world where practically the whole society betrayed and handed over to the Germans every hidden Jew. ... People at large are happy that Hitler got rid of Poland’s Jews. ... [the Poles] collaborated with the Germans and turned over Jews at every step. ... in other European countries the clergy and society sheltered [Jewish] children, but in Poland it was just the opposite.”

A tell-tale and concrete measure of Hampel’s bias is the contrast he draws between the Warsaw ghetto uprising of 1943, which he views as valiant (“the Jews gave the first example and died courageously on the battlefield”), with the not-so-valiant Warsaw uprising of 1944, in which he alleges, “the Poles did not defend themselves for long” (“Polacy nie bronili się długo”). The former, which lasted a few weeks, took the lives of a score of German soldiers; the latter, which lasted 63 days and left 200,000 dead, resulted in thousands of German casualties. See Symcha Hampel, “Życie pod knutem okupanta: 1 września 1939 r.–16 stycznia 1945 r.,” YVA, file O.33/950. Hampel’s jaundiced views have entered Holocaust historiography as valid and credible observations about wartime conditions. See, e.g., Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień...*, 133; Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews*, 4–5.

An egregious example of falsely attributing to a Catholic priest from Kowel, Volhynia, an alleged vituperative sermon attacking Jews is found in Anthony J. Sciolino, *The Holocaust, the Church, and the Law of Unintended Consequences: How Christian Anti-Judaism Spawned Nazi Anti-Semitism: A Judge’s Verdict* (Bloomington, Indiana: iUniverse, 2012), 163. Sciolino does not provide a source for his reference to that priest, but it appears to be based on Ben-Zion Sher’s article “Thus the City Was Destroyed,” in Eliezer Leoni-Zopperfin, ed., *Kowel: Sefer edut ve-zikaron le-kehilatenu she-ala aleha ha-koret* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Kowel in Israel, 1957), translated as *Kowel: Testimony and Memorial Book of Our Destroyed Community*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/kowel1/kowel1.html>. Note, however, that the priest in question is not identified in that memorial book (at p. 416) as a Catholic priest. Allegedly, this was a Ukrainian Orthodox priest preaching to Ukrainian villagers.

Another vivid, “first-hand” account of a priest—actually, a fictitious bishop—delivering anti-Jewish sermons is found in the pseudo-memoir of Henry Gribou (Haim Grzybower). Gribou describes at length the exploits of a lecherous, anti-Semitic bishop named Taranski, who resided in the village of Dobre (which conveniently, and ironically, happens to translate as “good”) outside Warsaw, and was “at the very heart of the Church.” Yet no bishop or priest by that name ever existed. The bishop’s fictitious entourage consisted of other immoral priests who raped teenage girls and had them undergo abortions. Gribou uses this lurid tale as a prop for the “moral” of his story, namely, the condemnation of the Catholic Church: “So that was the story of Halina’s mother and the bishop. That, apparently, was the way people lived at the highest levels of the Catholic Church in Poland.” Of course, as could be expected, the bishop, who allegedly had a Ph.D. in theology from Rome, was anti-Semitic to the core, both publicly and privately: “The bishop was getting worked up, his face flushed, his fist pounding the air, his heavily robed vehemence out of

proportion to the little country church. I could tell this was not an act—he really believed this. And his passion was infectious, with the congregation murmuring in assent. Even I came under the spell. Yes, I thought, I hate those Jews he’s talking about. My head was spinning. ... The bishop thundered on. ‘And God will punish the Jews, he will send them all to hell for what they did to Jesus. He will send them all to hell!’ I discovered soon enough that I had only gotten a hint of the bishop’s hatred of Jews. One afternoon, after lunch, I was walking with him in the garden, and the talk turned to the Warsaw ghetto. I made some remark—with a detachment in my voice that amazed me when I heard myself—about how none of the Jews in there would probably survive. ‘Good riddance,’ he said in a frighteningly flat voice—as if he were talking about exterminating rats. Then, warming to the topic, he turned to me and said intently, ‘Do you know what those Jews do? Do you know how they make that, that bread of theirs—what do they call it, matzoh?’ ‘I don’t know,’ I said. ‘They make it,’ he said, pausing to make sure the message was clear, with Christian blood!’ ... ‘Yes,’ he went on, ‘the Jews mix the bread dough in large vats. And in the sides of the vats, nails stick through toward the dough. Then they hire Christians to mix the dough, and as they stir it, the Christians’ fingers are cut and their blood spills into the mixture.’ Near the end, I was in Dobre, standing at night with the bishop outside his house, looking toward the city [of Warsaw]. The sky was lit up so bright with the flames from the burning ghetto that you could have read a newspaper: ‘This is for killing our Jesus,’ the bishop said in solemn tones.” See Henry G. Gribou, *Hunted in Warsaw: A Memoir of Resistance and Survival in the Holocaust* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland, 2012), 144, 146–55, 159–61, 179. If such events were genuine, why is it that the only known story that was recorded “first hand” (by Gribou) is pure fiction? After all, hundreds, if not thousands, of Jewish survivors had interacted with Catholic priests during the war. Gribou also claims that “Cardinal Wysinski” [sic] was a frequent visitor at Dobre, and that he [Gribou] held himself out as the cardinal’s nephew in order to enhance his assumed Christian identity: “Cardinal Wysinski, after all, was the archbishop of Poland.” *Ibid.*, 194–95. It is trite knowledge that, at the time, Stefan Wyszyński was a little-known priest. He was appointed bishop of Lublin in 1946. He became the archbishop of Gniezno and Warsaw, and thus Primate of Poland, in November 1948, after the death of Cardinal August Hlond. He was created a cardinal in 1953. His wartime efforts on behalf of Jews are described in this publication. (Gribou is described as a retired chemist who held various executive positions in multinational chemical companies in the United States and Europe.)

Another such account is attributed to a Jewish prisoner of Auschwitz. Adam “Krawecki,” described as a former student steeped in Jewish philosophy, joined the State Security Office after the war and became the chief interrogator in the notorious Gliwice prison. He claimed to have had the following conversation—steeped in folkloric myth—with an elderly Catholic bishop in Auschwitz, even though no such bishop was ever imprisoned in that camp. “‘Why do the gentiles hate the Jews?’ Adam asked. ‘It’s this way,’ the bishop said. ‘A lion is lying in the woods, gluttoned and gorged, and a deer comes along. The lion isn’t hungry, and the deer isn’t going to harm him. But still the lion pounces on it.’ ‘But why?’ ‘The lion has a bestial instinct, you see, an instinct that tells it to kill that deer. The same with the gentile against the Jew. The Jew isn’t going to harm him, but the gentile still calls him a *Schweinhund Jude*. He has this instinct against the Jew.’ ‘But where does the instinct come from?’ ‘Maybe,’ the bishop continued, ‘the gentile receives it when he receives his mother’s milk. He hears from the day he’s born that if you don’t eat, the Jew

In some Jewish accounts, readings in Polish from the New Testament during Holy Week, and even prayers or intercessions said in Latin (especially on Palm Sunday and Good Friday), which were part of the universal Catholic liturgy mandated by Rome, are also represented as “sermons” delivered by priests to incite Poles against the Jews. (Given the length of the Good Friday liturgy, the afternoon service that day generally did not have a sermon.) However, putting all of that reasoning aside, in this context it is noteworthy that Jewish teachings about Christians were, and had long been, genuinely problematic.<sup>1553</sup>

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will get you, that if you don't sleep, the Jew will get you. Maybe that.” See John Sack, *An Eye for an Eye* (New York: Basic Books/HarperCollins, 1993), 28.

For another fictitious account involving a priest, see Yitzchok Perlow's book, *The Partizaner* (New York: Award Books, 1968), reprinted in Isaac Kowalski, *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance, 1939–1945*, vol. 3 (Brooklyn, New York: Jewish Combatants Publishers House, 1986), 298–310. Oddly enough, the priest of the ominously named village of Świńska Wola (Pigs Settlement), unlike the primitive villagers, is cast in a favourable light. Be that as it may, fictitious “literary” accounts of Christian-inspired mistreatment of Jews—part of a long tradition, for which there is apparently a market—are by no means rare. See, e.g., Iyov Ha-Giben (pseud.), *Willow Weep For Me* (New York: Bloch Publishing, 1991), 162–71, where a Jewish boy, a hunchback, is lured to a gathering of Poles by his neighbour, a Polish officer—“a confirmed anti-Semite, and one of the leaders of the Endeks”—and subjected to a series of relentless humiliations and physical abuse, culminating in a mock crucifixion of this hapless victim. A 2002 “Passion play” titled “Rebbe” by Artists For Israel International, which casts Polish priests as the instigators of the death of a rabbi—a Jesus figure—in the Warsaw ghetto. See Internet: <https://afi.org/rebbe.txt> (reproduced at the end of this compilation).

<sup>1553</sup> Here is a representative source to that effect. A Jew from Chełm recalled what it was like growing up among Christians and what he was taught about them in his yeshiva, a religious school for teenagers: “Our relations with the non-Jewish population were never very good ... There were the Polish-speaking Gentiles who were Roman Catholics, some more pious than others. We were most afraid of them. We considered them idol worshipers. My parents were proud to point out to me that they taught their children to consider the images on their walls as gods. There was not a home without at least three images: one of Jesus, with His heart showing; one of the *matka boska*, the ‘mother of God’; and one of Joseph, the husband of Mary. The priest would come to the village at times and bring the ‘transubstantiated’ wafer, which they believed became the flesh and blood of the Messiah. But at that time the priest’s coming only hardened our hearts. We knew we worshiped the only true God, and not priests and images. ... In these early years I had few contacts of any sort with Christianity. At about this time I learned the stories of Jesus from the Jewish point of view. They are given in the infamous book of legends composed in the Middle Ages and entitled *Toledot Yeshu* (*The History of Jesus*). Some of the material is already embodied in the Talmud: that Jesus was born an illegitimate child and He forced Mary His mother to admit it; how He learned sorcery in Egypt; how He made Himself fly up into the sky by sewing the ineffable name of Jehovah into the skin of his leg, but a famous rabbi did the same and brought Jesus down! ... Thus in the yeshiva, the Talmud reigned supreme. The Old Testament Bible could be used only for reference and there were no secular studies whatsoever. I had no contacts with Christianity at all. On the

Fifteen members of the extended family of Isaac and Leah Gamss were hidden from 1942 to 1944 in the attic of a farmhouse belonging to Stanisław and Maria Grocholski in the vicinity of Urzejowice, near Przeworsk. The villagers knew the Grocholskis were hiding Jews because some of these Jews called on a number of villagers to ask for food and, tellingly, it was the only house that in the winter did not have snow on the roof. A priest urged a villager who had accepted some property from Jews for safekeeping to return it to them. Leslie Gilbert-Lurie, the daughter of one of the hidden Jews, states: “I would say it took a whole village of people for my mother’s family to survive.”

At the earliest opportunity, on the next moonless night, Aunt Tsvia and Uncle Libish snuck back to their neighbor’s home, several miles away, to retrieve the leather coat. They tapped on her rear window, and when she appeared, they explained their plight. But she did not take pity on them. To their shock, she said no. The war was not over, so they could not have their coat. Thinking on her feet, Aunt Tsvia said that without the coat, our family would be killed and the blood would be on this neighbour’s hands. As my aunt had hoped, this

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way to school we passed a Roman Catholic church and a Russian Orthodox church, and we spat, pronouncing the words found in Deuteronomy 7:26, ‘... thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.’ I said it halfheartedly because of my previous favorable contact with Christianity and because some questions were beginning to creep into my mind. Why should we say such horrible words? The people looked pious. They came from surrounding villages to worship, and they never bothered us. As I continued studying the Talmud, I came to a passage that told of a cruel punishment for that Sinner of Israel, meaning Jesus. For one sin of deriding the rabbis, He was punished forever and ever with cruelty as to be ‘judged in boiling excrement.’ I did not like this story at all. Did it really mean what it said? Could I possibly be in full agreement with this? Did not I also have doubts about the rabbis’ claims that their teachings were given to Moses on Mount Sinai? What then would *my* punishment be? It was many years before I dared to proclaim these doubts openly.” See Rachmiel Frydland, *When Being Jewish Was a Crime* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1978), 17, 51, 54–55.

These teachings were also common in heders or cheders (primary religious schools), which many, if not most, Jewish children in Poland attended for some period of time. The authenticity of the *Toledot Yeshu* (*The Life Story of Jesus*) is beyond question among serious scholars. It was written by Jews, most likely in the 8th century, as an internal Jewish response to the Gospels and Jesus, and is unambiguously anti-Christian. The anti-Christian motifs within it go back at least to the time of the Babylonian Talmud—to a time and place (Sassanid and later Islamic Iraq), where Christians were in no position to persecute Jews, thus refuting the exculpatory argument that Jewish polemics against Christianity only developed when Christians were persecuting Jews. Some of the Talmudic themes in *Toledot Yeshu* include: Bavli Shabbat 104b—Jesus, the sorcerer, the son of Miriam (a hairdresser and adulterous woman), and Jesus the illegitimate Son of Pandera (Ben Pandera); Bavli Sanhedrin 43a—the death of Jesus Christ, vicariously by stoning, at the hands of the Jews; Bavli Gittin 56b-57a—Jesus is forced to spend eternity in hell in boiling excrement. See Peter Schäfer, Michael Meerson, and Yaacov Deutsch, eds., *Toledot Yeshu* (“*The Life Story of Jesus*”) Revisited: A Princeton Conference (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011).

troubled the neighbour, a devout Catholic, and she went to talk to her priest the following day. He encouraged her to give up the coat and whatever else she could. When Tsviva and Libish returned a few nights later, the coat was left for them, along with milk and bread. ...

My father [Isaac Gamss] and uncles began taking turns sneaking out at night in search of food. In the summer, they stole plums, apples, and pears from neighbors' gardens. And they went into fields to gather carrots, radishes, tomatoes, and onions—vegetables that could be eaten raw.

Besides what they picked outside, they also gathered food that sympathetic neighbors left out for them on doorsteps. Because they knew that as Jews we kept kosher, neighbors mostly set out potatoes, beans, or bread. From time to time, my father and uncles chanced knocking on the doors of casual acquaintances. Often they were turned away with angry replies, which was not surprising. Even if they were not anti-Semitic, Poles were terrified of being caught helping a Jew. ...

"I had many friends in our village," Uncle Max said proudly, "including Stashik [Staszek] Grajolski [Grocholski]. While we had grown up near each other, we became good friends in the army. That's why, when he agreed to hide my brother's and sister's families, he asked me to come as well, to act as a liaison." ...

"I spent my days and nights in the attic worrying about how to feed my beautiful family ... You and I are the only ones who know the gentiles in the community," Uncle Max told his eldest brother, Isaac. "Since I am single, I should be the one to sneak out."

To avoid being seen, Uncle Max picked the darkest nights, with the worst weather. From time to time, neighbors prepared small bundles of food that they either left out for him on their doorstep, or handed him when he tapped on the door.

"Here's some beans and bread," a kind neighbor would whisper, opening the door just wide enough to pass the package through.

"This is for the children," another villager told Uncle Max, handing him a bag with bread and fruit. "We pray for you each night," he added.

"Once, a friend gave me a ham sandwich, but I couldn't eat it because it was not kosher," Uncle Max said.<sup>1554</sup>

**R**ev. Henryk Uchman, the pastor of Sieniawa near Przeworsk, assisted in the rescue of six Jews: Emil Tamme, Izrael Bant, Helman Mechel, Jakub Posascher, Samuel Zins, and Helman Landau. These persons were presented as witnesses on Rev. Uchman's behalf when he was put on trial after the war by the Communist authorities for his continued support of the anti-Communist underground.<sup>1555</sup>

**R**ev. Józef Ulanowski, the pastor of Nowosielce near Przeworsk, assisted in the rescue of Felicja and Tadeusz Wilder of Lwów, who were sheltered by

<sup>1554</sup> Leslie Gilbert-Lurie and Rita Lurie, *Bending Toward the Sun: A Mother and Daughter Memoir* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009), 46–47, 58, 293.

<sup>1555</sup> Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945*, 77, 146; Rączy and Witowicz, *Poles Rescuing Jews in the Rzeszów Region in the Years 1939–1945 / Polacy ratujący Żydów na Rzeszowszczyźnie w latach 1939–1945*, 172–73.

his niece, Henryka Ulanowska in Nowosielce. Henryka acquired the birth and marriage certificates of her brother and sister-in-law, Tadeusz and Felicja Mazurek, which her charges used to pass as Polish Catholics. They were joined by Felicja Wilder's sister, Cecylia Motyl, who passed as Ziuta Górna. While in hiding, Felicja gave birth to a son, Andrzej, who was baptized by Rev. Ulanowski and provided with a birth and baptismal certificate. The Jewish charges remained in the house until the arrival of the Soviet army in July 1944.<sup>1556</sup>

Frank Morgens (then Mieczysław Morgenstern) took refuge in Olsztyn, a small town near Częstochowa, with his wife and children. Although the family was suspected of being Jewish, they survived under the protection of local Poles, as did several other Jewish families passing as Poles.<sup>1557</sup> The solicitous attitude of Rev. Józef Michałowski was described by Morgens in his memoirs.

Mrs. Michalska, a young woman with a boy of about seven. ... He had a light complexion, his features were Semitic and our suspicion that they were Jews in hiding proved later to be correct. ... When the war ended, we learned through the grapevine that Mrs. Michalska's husband had also survived in Olsztyn and that the entire family had emigrated to America. ...

The name of Judge Horski was uttered with respect, but always with a sort of knowing look which we did not comprehend at first. ... It was obvious he, too, was Jewish. His wife and daughter were Semitic-looking as well. The Horskis had moved to Olsztyn from Cracow [Kraków] at the beginning of 1941, a fact that was vastly reassuring to us. That a man with such a face could pass for a Pole and not be denounced to the Germans by those who suspected him of being Jewish, made us feel much safer.

The village of Olsztyn, only 8 miles from Częstochowa [Częstochowa], and having a population of under 2,000, could not possibly sustain a dentist, and yet there was one. The minute we opened the door of Dr. Nawrot's office on Villa Row, we knew that we were with one of our own. Dr. Nawrot was of medium height, his hair was dark, his face though not typically Jewish, was not Slavic either. His short, plump, dark-complexioned wife would never have survived a confrontation with the Gestapo, and neither would their young son. Yet Dr. Nawrot had been practicing in town for about two years without incident. This, too, reinforced our belief that we had settled in the right place. So far, I could count four Jewish families casting their lot with the Poles of Olsztyn.

But the greatest influence on the people and the tranquility of the village was exerted by the parish priest, Father Jozef Michalowski [Józef Michałowski]. About 60 years old, of medium height, slim and bespectacled, he evoked reverence when walking in the street and gently greeting his parishioners. His sermons preached love and humaneness, and during the crucial period of 1942–1944 his urging to save lives and not to betray fellow citizens gave us fortitude and courage to go on with our fight for survival. A denunciation

<sup>1556</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 389–90 (Henryka Kowalska-Ulanowska); Ulanowska Family, RD.

<sup>1557</sup> See also Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 211; Frank M. [Morgens] *Holocaust Testimony* (HVT-1294), FVA.

to the Gestapo about this kind of sermon would have meant deportation, at least, for Father Michalowski, but he was fearless and steadfast in his activities, as dictated by his conscience and his faith.<sup>1558</sup>

The misconduct of one person could frustrate a rescue effort supported by others. Beyond that, however, it could also trigger a sequence of disastrous events. Yehudis Pshenitse (Judith Pszenica), a young girl from Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, near Warsaw, turned to the local priest for assistance. He provided her with false identity documents and shelter. Although tortured by the Germans, the priest did not divulge her whereabouts. Here is how she testified.

I went to see the priest, who had known me as a small child, when I used to go into the church with our Christian maid. I wept and begged the priest to save me. I told him what had happened to my parents. He calmed me and promised me that he would give me as much help as he could. He hid me in his cellar. Every day I went to church with him, and I became one of the best singers in the church choir. After a time he gave me false papers, with my name listed as Kristina Pavlovna [Krystyna Pawłowska]. I began to feel like a genuine, born Christian.

That didn't last long, however. One day, when I was walking to church, a Christian stopped me on the street and said, "What are you doing here?" I ran away in terror. When I told the priest, he calmed me, telling me to go back into the cellar and be as quiet as possible.

The same day two Germans went to the priest, demanding that he surrender the Jewish girl whom he had hidden. He denied that there was anyone in his house. They threatened to shoot him, but he continued to insist that he was hiding no one.

The Germans tortured him in various ways, but he continued to refuse to give me up until he fell to the ground covered with blood. His body was pierced in several places, and his face was unrecognizable. Then the Germans left him as he was and went away. Before he died, the priest asked his housekeeper to take me out of my hiding place and bring me to him because he wanted to bless me.

When she led me to him, all I saw was a pool of blood and the priest's body, torn into pieces. I fainted. When I came to, he raised his crushed and broken hand and caressed me. Finally he told his housekeeper to give me over to trustworthy people, to behave toward me like a mother so that no one would suspect I was Jewish. Thus, leaning against him, I felt his body grow cold.

Once again he asked that I be hidden in a safe place, and then he died. I can't remember the priest's name. He was a parish priest in Nowy-Dwór [Nowy Dwór].

The housekeeper led me away from the priest and cleansed me of his blood. She changed my clothes, and at five in the morning she led me to Modlin. She left me there and disappeared.<sup>1559</sup>

<sup>1558</sup> Frank Morgens, *Years at the Edge of Existence: War Memoirs, 1939–1945* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1996), 97, 99.

<sup>1559</sup> This testimony from the Nowy Dwór Memorial book is reproduced in Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin, eds., *From A Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry* (New

William (Wolf) Ungar had taken refuge in the town of Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, north of Warsaw, in territory incorporated into the Reich, where he lived with the family of his Jewish friend. He decided to leave that town and return to Lwów, when it appeared that the ghetto in Nowy Dwór was about to be evacuated. In March 1943, Ungar approached a Polish smuggler who agreed to take him and another Jew, who had a very bad appearance, across the border to the General Government. The smuggler directed Ungar to an unidentified priest in Warsaw for assistance.

We waited as the chief smuggler talked to the fisherman. When he finished he came over to me and said, “You shouldn’t stay here. It’s not safe. ... This man here,”—gesturing toward the fisherman—“can take you to the other side. There’s a railroad station not too far off. You can get a train there for Warsaw.”

“Okay,” I said, “that’s what we’ll do. We want to thank you for your help.”

“One more thing,” he said. “Take this.” He gave me a piece of paper. “It’s the address of a priest in Warsaw who can help you get train tickets. You might not be able to do so yourselves.”

The fisherman had a rowboat tied to a little pier that jutted into the river. We climbed in and two minutes later we were on the other side. There the fisherman led us to a path. “Follow this a mile or so,” he said, “and it’ll take you right to the railroad station.”

... At the station the ticket window was already opened and I bought two tickets for Warsaw while my friend hung in the background keeping out of the ticketmaster’s view. ...

I Warsaw we found our way to the priest’s address the smuggler had given us. My impression was that this priest was probably working for the Polish underground. He didn’t ask a single question, he just did what he could to help. He gave us food, then went out and bought us train tickets to Lvov [Lwów]. With hindsight, I guessed he was part of the organization that was working with the Jewish underground, helping Jews acquire arms, or escape, or putting children into monasteries and other safe places. There were networks that did such things, as I learned later on, and more than a few Catholic priests were involved.<sup>1560</sup>

With the assistance of Polish friends, Jola Hoffman (b. 1931) and her parents, refugees from Germany, were able to escape from the Warsaw ghetto shortly before the start of the uprising in April 1943. Their friends, who worked with the Polish underground, led them to hiding places. An unidentified priest who worked with the underground provided the names of deceased persons which were used to obtain false identity documents.<sup>1561</sup>

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York: Schocken Books, 1983), 177–78; 2nd expanded ed. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 204–6. The identity of this priest has not been established.

<sup>1560</sup> Ungar and Chanoff, *Destined to Live*, 235–36.

<sup>1561</sup> Testimony of Jola Hoffman, November 3, 1987, Oral History Interview of the Kean College of New Jersey Holocaust Resource Centre, USHMM, Accession no. 1993.A.0088.74, RG-50.002.0074.

Several Jewish testimonies portray the attitude of Polish priests in Grodno. Genia Kotler-Nakdimon, Hillel Brojde and Łukasz Sienkiewicz all attest to having received help from priests.<sup>1562</sup>

Historian Philip Friedman mentions (though not by name) Rev. Albin Jaroszewicz, the dean of the Grodno, and Fr. Dionizy (Michał Klimczak), the prior of the Conventual Franciscan monastery.<sup>1563</sup> Doubtless, these priests provided some form of assistance to Jews. However, Friedman is incorrect in claiming that they were executed in Łomża in the autumn of 1943 for rescuing Jews.

Fr. Dionizy was arrested at least twice. He was executed on the day of his last arrest—July 15, 1943—outside of Grodno, along with two other priests, Rev. Justyn Skokowski and Rev. Kazimierz Szypiło, as well as other Polish residents of Grodno, in the Sonderaktion that targeted the Polish intelligentsia.

Although arrested by the Germans twice, Rev. Jaroszewicz survived the war. He was arrested by the Soviets in 1945, tried, and sentenced to eight years imprisonment. He perished in a concentration camp in July 1946.<sup>1564</sup>

Anna Kovitzka (later Kaletska, b. 1912) escaped from Grodno during a German Aktion. Complete strangers gave her assistance as she fled the city. She remained in the countryside for several weeks until things quieted down and she was able to return. An unidentified priest sheltered Anna, made enquiries about her husband, and drove her part of the way home in his cart.<sup>1565</sup>

The Germans were grabbing the people and dragging them to work in Germany. I wanted to return to the ghetto. Then a thousand Jews were deported that day. The ghetto was surrounded. One couldn't get in, nor could one get out. Part were going to Treblinka, and to get in one also didn't know how. I ran into a Christian—he was a working man. I told him I am a Jewess—"I can't get into the ghetto." And he said, "Get out of the city. You do not look Jewish. Go where ever you can, but don't remain here. You see here it burns." And so I departed alone, without papers, into the woods. I did not know the roads. Through the woods, into a Russian village. [N.B. There were no Russian villages in that area. The population was mostly Polish, with some Belorussians.—Ed.] I entered. "Give me some water." If one is alive, one has to drink water. And sometimes one has to eat. Everybody gave me something. I did not look Jewish, but they knew—what else could be driving me in the snow through the woods? Everyone kept me for one night.

The Christians—I can't complain. Everybody gave me warm water to wash myself. They gave me food, so that I should have strength to wander farther. And there was a preacher—A Christian, a Catholic. He hid me "for strength" for eight days. But he drove me back to Grodno to find out what was going on. The priest encountered some Jews that

<sup>1562</sup> Their respective testimonies are found in the YVA, files O.33/302, O.33/303, and O.33/305.

<sup>1563</sup> Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers*, 126.

<sup>1564</sup> Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 150, 154, 156, 230; Krahel, *Martyrologia duchowieństwa archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945*, 202–3, 574.

<sup>1565</sup> Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds*, 208.

were going to work. She he asked them: “Do you know whether Jack Kovitzki is there?” So they said: “He is there, he has remained alive.” Three thousand Jews were still in Grodno. So he said, “Tell him that his wife is alive—that she does not want to remain among us. She wants to go back, and in a few days she will be back.” The next week he took me out part of the way in a cart—to go further, he was afraid. And I went alone towards Grodno—I can’t remember how many kilometers. I arrived in Grodno. It’s the same story again—how does one get in—into the ghetto? And then it occurred to me that my father had a chauffeur, a Christian, a decent man.

He was a good business man; so he had an automobile and a driver—a very decent person. He lives now in the yard of the house that once belonged to my father-in-law. So I went to him. He didn’t know me, but I gave the name of Meyer Kovitzki, and he said: “Don’t be afraid. You can be with me as long as you want.” But he had a wife and a child, and I did not want to cause him anxiety. So I went down to the cellar, and he went to the ghetto to find out about things, and Friday morning his own wife went with me through the streets, and she led me to the ghetto. Then another Pole helped me to get in. But before I went in, he told me: “You know where you are going?” And I said, “Where is my man, and where is my place?” That was on Friday noon.<sup>1566</sup>

**D**r. Antoni Docha, a deeply religious man, figures in several rescue stories. Together with his wife, Janina, also a doctor, he ran a medical practice in the village of Indura, about 25 kilometres south of Grodno, where they lived with their three daughters. Dr. Docha arranged escape from the Grodno ghetto and found hiding places for professional acquaintances and their families.<sup>1567</sup>

Helena Szewach (later Bibliowicz) was a complete stranger who arrived unexpectedly at Dr. Docha’s doorstep with her friend, Fania Halpern (or Galpern, later Lubitch), after escaping from the ghetto in Grodno. Helena was directed there by a priest, Rev. Jan Kunicki, the pastor of Indura, a friend of her family in Grodno from before the war. Rev. Kunicki had promised to help Helena in her time of need. Dr. Docha placed the two young women with the Strzałkowski family in the village of Boryski and assisted with their upkeep.<sup>1568</sup>

<sup>1566</sup> Account of Anna Kovitzka, *Voices of the Holocaust*, Internet: [https://voices.library.iit.edu/interview/kaletskaA?search\\_api\\_fulltext=kaletska](https://voices.library.iit.edu/interview/kaletskaA?search_api_fulltext=kaletska).

<sup>1567</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 180–81; Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 55–57; The Docha Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-docha-family>.

<sup>1568</sup> Testimony of Helena Bibliowicz, SFV, Interview code 6485; Testimony of Helena Bibliowicz, YVA, file O.3/7017 (Item item 5339450); Margaria Fichtner, “‘I Shall Not Die’: From Holocaust Horror to an ‘Impossible’ Reunion,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 12, 1988. According to her Shoah Foundation testimony, Helena Bibliowicz’s parents’ house was adjacent to a Catholic church and convent on Brygidzka Street in Grodno. They formed a close friendship with Rev. Jan Kunicki, an elderly priest, and with the nuns who resided there. The church in question is the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the

Another heart-rending case is that of Dana Kuroczycka-Rusiecka, the Polish Catholic wife of Dr. Aron Rusiecki. The couple married in Wilno in the fall of 1939. After the Germans invaded this region in the summer of 1941, they moved to Raduń with their newborn son. Although a Jew, Dr. Rusiecki was employed at the military hospital. The German commander urged Dana to leave her husband, but she steadfastly refused. After learning that Dr. Rusiecki was treating an injured Jewish girl at the hospital, the German commander ordered the execution of Dana and her son as punishment, but he kept Dr. Rusiecki on because surgeons were in short supply.

Dana's son was killed, but somehow Dana managed to survive her gunshot wounds. The villagers who were ordered to bury the victims decided to hide Dana. She was taken in by Rev. Czesław Sztejn, the local pastor, who cared for her during the next several months. The local Polish police commander warned the priest that the German authorities were looking for Dana, and he brought her to his own home. Afterwards, he placed Dana with Rev. Sykstus Hanusowski, the pastor of Ossowo, with whom she stayed for about one month. She was then transferred from one villager to another until the arrival of the Soviet army. Dr. Rusiecki managed to escape from the hospital. He joined up with Soviet partisans but was killed shortly before the German retreat.<sup>1569</sup>

Several priests in this area are credited with coming to the assistance of Jews, including an unidentified priest from Raduń, who provided food to Jews.<sup>1570</sup>

After escaping from an execution site in the forest near Werenowo, Czesława Żołnierczyk (then Kagan) hid with various farmers. Assisted by a Polish farmer in 1944, she became the housekeeper of a priest whose name she could not recall. On November 18, 1944, the priest baptized her, issuing a certificate from the parish of Pielasa, near Raduń. At that time, the pastor of Pielasa was Rev. Jan Wienożyndzis. She remained with the priest until the end of the war.<sup>1571</sup>

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nuns were Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth. For several years, Helena attended a Catholic school where she says she was treated very well.

<sup>1569</sup> Tamara Omeljančuk, "Smutna historia miłosna," *Nasz Czas* [Vilnius], no. 9 (2005). There is also mention of a helpful priest from Ossowo who was allegedly executed, in Chciuk, *Saving Jews in War-Torn Poland, 1939–1945*, 33.

<sup>1570</sup> Yaffa Eliach, *There Once Was a World: A Nine-Hundred-Year Chronicle of the Shtetl of Eishyshok* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1998), 599.

<sup>1571</sup> Bejze and Galiński, *Martyrologia duchowieństwa polskiego 1939–1956*, 205, based on the testimony of Czesława Żołnierczyk; Larysa Mikhailik (Larysa Michajlik), *Kościół katolicki na Grodzieńszczyźnie 1939–1956* (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN; Rytm, 2008), 153.

Rev. Paweł Dabulewicz, the pastor of Nacza, is also credited with helping Jews.<sup>1572</sup>

Jewish accounts mention the selfless deeds of a priest from Dziewieniszki, located between Lida and Wilno; he intervened on behalf of abused Jews, safeguarded their possessions, placed at least one Jew with a parishioner, and provided Jews with false identity documents. The local pastor at the time was Rev. Antoni Weryk, who also served as a chaplain for the Home Army.

[Eliahu Blyakher:] One day, a German group appeared in town seeking entertainment. They gathered the town's youth in the marketplace square, facing the church, and forced them to perform exercise tasks. They then forced them to run around the marketplace, followed by more tasks. After a few hours of torture, one German made a wild anti-Semitic speech, and the Germans got excited. Thanks to the priest who came out and pleaded for us, sacrifices were then avoided.<sup>1573</sup>

[Kalmen Kartshmer:] After that, the wandering from village to village and from peasant to peasant began again, and to each one I gave some of the belongings I had left with Lodvik [Ludwik]. Once, a peasant demanded goose feathers. I sent a woman to the town priest and he informed the peasant that I had deposited with him 20 kilograms of feathers and that he would give the woman the feathers. Thanks to that I stayed with the peasant for a long while. Whenever I felt the situation was worsening and I was in danger, I would escape to Lodvik and he would shelter me for a few weeks until the storm passed. I want to emphasize that I remained alive only thanks to Lodvik.<sup>1574</sup>

[Pinkhas Lipkunski:] A young man named Shalom [Sorenzon] arrived to our house and asked to reside with us. We welcomed him as a family member. The town's priest, who visited us, saw the young man and asked who he was. We told him the matter, and on the spot he expressed his willingness to save his life under the condition that he would convert. After the war he would be able to return to the fold of Judaism. The young man agreed—and then he disappeared without a trace.

When we arrived to Israel and settled in Ramot Remez in Haifa, we became friendly with our neighbors who were former residents of Vilne [Wilno]. Once, on Rosh Hashanah, we found a Jew at their home whose leg was amputated after being wounded at the front. He recounted the whole story before me: The priest got him a job as a laborer in a farm near Divenishok [Dziewieniszki]. When the Russians arrived, he returned to Judaism

<sup>1572</sup> Viktorija Sakaitė, "Lietuvos dvasininkai—žydų gelbėtojai," *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 2 (12) (2002): 222–32 (Pavel Babulevič), based on the archival records of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum.

<sup>1573</sup> Eliahu Blyakher, "A Partisan's Story," 175 ff. in David Shtokfish, ed., *Sefer Divenishok: Yad vashem le-ayara yehudit* (Israel: Divenishok Societies in Israel and the United States, 1977), translated as *Devenishki Book: Memorial Book*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/dieveniskes/dieveniskes.html>. See also Zelig Rogol, "In Battle Against the Nazi Enemy," *ibid.*, 169 ff.

<sup>1574</sup> Kalmen Kartshmer, "In the Claws of the Nazi Beast," in Shtokfish, *Sefer Divenishok*, 162 ff.

and volunteered to the Red Army. He was wounded in action and his leg was amputated. He was among the ma'apilim [illegal immigrants] in Cyprus and now he lives in Ashdod.<sup>1575</sup>

After escaping from the mass murder pit in Ponary, Shalom Sorenzon made his way farther into the countryside. It is not clear from his own testimony that he underwent conversion. He was provided with false documents, which enabled him to conceal his identity. After some time, however, Sorenzon relocated to Subačius, near Panevėžys, where he and seven other Jews were sheltered by the Markevičius family (awarded by Yad Vashem).<sup>1576</sup>

Rev. Borys Kaminski, an Orthodox priest from Głowsiewiczze, near Słonim, writes: “During my visits to Lida I remember seeing groups of Jews, herded to work by members of the Gestapo, collectively removing their hats in respect, at the appearance of a Polish Catholic priest.”<sup>1577</sup>

Adolf Lewinson, a medical doctor from Lida, entrusted his daughter, Lea (b. 1939), via Zygmunt and Janina Skurczyński, into the care of Czesława Bętkowska, Janina’s sister, who formally adopted the child. The Skurczyńskis obtained from Rev. Alfons Rotkiewicz, the birth and baptismal certificate of a deceased child, which was used as the basis for the adoption. Lea became Lucyna Bętkowska. Czesława Bętkowska and Lucyna lived with the Skurczyńskis in Lida. Lucyna survived the war and became a medical doctor in Poland. Her parents did not survive.<sup>1578</sup>

Sometimes, Christian benefactors were put at risk because of internal rivalries and bickering within the Jewish community. Presumably, the cleric in Lida (below) was Orthodox.<sup>1579</sup>

<sup>1575</sup> Pinkhas Lipkunski, “The Story of an 11-Year Old Boy,” in Shtokfish, *Sefer Divenishok*, 242 ff. This account probably refers to Shalom Sorenzon.

<sup>1576</sup> Testimony of Shalom Shorezon, SFV, Interview code 9887; Testimony of Shalom Shurenson, YVA, file O.33/330. Sorenzon remained with the Markevičius family for about two months and then moved on. See also Markevičius Family, RD.

<sup>1577</sup> Chciuk, *Saving Jews in War-Torn Poland, 1939–1945*, 33–34.

<sup>1578</sup> Testimony of Lucyna Betkowska-Krata, SFV, Interview code 42582.

<sup>1579</sup> Another version of the story is that the Jews who broke into the Orthodox church and stabbed the priest when he confronted them were a family of thieves named Zimleich who stole horses from “the goyim.” The Germans ordered the Jewish council to turn the burglars over, but the three of them escaped from Lida. Instead, the council handed over some refugees who were acquainted with the criminals. In an effort to save themselves, they revealed to the Germans that the council issued false documents to Jewish refugees. See Chaim Basist, *The Story of the House of Plotnik-Monco-Basist*, December 2008, Internet: <http://museumoffamilyhistory.com/wims-basist-02.htm>. See also Herman Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania: Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps*,

In December 1941, all the Jews of Lida were concentrated in a ghetto ... At this time Aktionen were being carried out in Vilna [Wilno], and a few hundred Jewish survivors fled from there to Lida. By paying off Polish municipal clerks, the Judenrat was able to obtain residence permits for the refugees. However, not long afterward a group of Jews was caught while trying to steal the Jewish property that had been left for safekeeping with the local [Orthodox] priest. The thieves were taken to prison. Their wives demanded that the Judenrat intercede to obtain their release. When the Judenrat refused to act, the detainees told the authorities about the permits the Judenrat had arranged for the Vilna refugees and promised to disclose the identity of the latter as well. On March 1, 1942, all the town's Jews were assembled in the square next to the new post office. They were then made to walk through a narrow passage, where one of the thieves identified five people. They were immediately arrested and two days later were shot in the prison courtyard. Some 200 sick and elderly Jews who could not get to the site were murdered in their lodgings. A week later a number of the Judenrat's senior figures, including the chairman, Lichtman, were arrested, tortured, and murdered.<sup>1580</sup>

Eliahu Damesek describes these events in the Lida memorial book as follows:

One day, a party of Jewish thieves made an attempt on the life of a Russian [Belorussian] clergyman in the town and tried to rob him of the property which the Jews of Lida entrusted to him. The attempt did not succeed and some of the attackers were arrested. The wives of the thieves appealed to the Judenrat for assistance in obtaining the release of their husbands. The Judenrat could not take upon themselves their request and turned them down. Upon the thieves being informed of this fact, they decided to revenge themselves upon the Judenrat.

They then approached the Nazi authorities offering them cooperation in finding out the Jews of Vilno [Wilno] who had infiltrated into Lida.

The Nazis chose a day in March 1942 for the betrayal of the Jews from Vilno. ... all the Jews were driven from their homes and ... were led to a square opposite the new post office. There they were lined up in the snow and cold and forced to enter a narrow passage so that the thieves could point them out. Fifty Jews were arrested and shot shortly thereafter in the courtyard of the prison. ... All the children whose parents had left them at home due to the intense cold, and all the aged, the sick, and the dying who did not go out to the identification parade, were found lying in their own blood ... In this manner, on that day, over 200 souls were murdered.

A week after the betrayal by the Jewish thieves, the heads of the Judenrat were arrested ... These people were tortured and met a violent death.<sup>1581</sup>

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1939–1944 (New Haven and London: YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and Yale University Press, 2002), 235–36, 610.

<sup>1580</sup> Shmuel Spector, ed., *Lost Jewish Worlds: The Communities of Grodno, Lida, Olkieni, Vishay* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996), 212–13.

<sup>1581</sup> Alexander Manor, Itzhak Ganusovitch, and Aba Lando, eds., *Sefer Lida* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Lida in Israel and the Committee of Lida Jews in U.S.A., 1970), viii ff.

Two Pallottine Sisters (Missionary Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate) who worked in the hospital in Nowogródek—Celina Bławat and Jadwiga Kaczyńska—gave shelter to five Jewish doctors, their co-workers, during the first large Aktion of December 8, 1941. Those doctors later escaped from Nowogródek and joined Soviet partisan groups operating in the vicinity.

The head doctor, Dr. Zenon Limon, asked the nuns to shelter his wife, a Polish woman from Lida named Wanda (née Gierasimowicz), and their young son, Henryk. They were transferred for safety to the order's mother house in the nearby village of Rajca, where they remained until the spring of 1943, when they rejoined Dr. Limon. All three survived the war and settled in the Gdańsk area.<sup>1582</sup>

Herzl and Tina Bencjanowski (Benson) placed their one-year-old daughter in a convent, probably with the Pallottine Sisters, with the help of Mrs. Bencjanowski's sister, who was married to a Christian.<sup>1583</sup>

Sister Irena Przybysz sheltered several Jewish children in the children's home run by the Pallottine Sisters. The nuns also provided food to the ghetto from 1941 until its liquidation in 1943.<sup>1584</sup>

The Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Blessed Virgin Mary of Mariówka sheltered a number of Jewish children at their convent and orphanage in Łomża.<sup>1585</sup> One of the Jewish girls rescued there was Chana Kuperman (later Siloni, b. 1938), who was dropped off in front of the nuns' residence without any prior notice by her family's former servant. Although the child was thought to be Jewish, the nuns did not hesitate to take her under their roof. The local authorities were notified because all children living in orphanages had to be properly registered, and it was next to impossible to simply hide away a child of Chana's age. Chana became Halina Koperska and remained with the nuns until after the war. Eventually, she settled in Israel.<sup>1586</sup>

<sup>1582</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 1022; Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 406–7; Zofia Kaperczak, "Siostry Misjonarki Apostolstwa Katolickiego," in *Żeńskie zgromadzenia zakonne w Polsce 1939–1947*, vol. 8 (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1995), 77–110, at p. 96.

<sup>1583</sup> George Lubow, *Escape: Against All Odds: A Survivor's Story* (New York: iUniverse, 2004), 45.

<sup>1584</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 407; Agata Mirek, "Udział sióstr zakonnych w ratowaniu ludności żydowskiej w Polsce w latach 1939–1945 na przykładzie wybranych zgromadzeń," in Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 135–60, at p. 145.

<sup>1585</sup> Agata Mirek, "Udział sióstr zakonnych w ratowaniu ludności żydowskiej w Polsce w latach 1939–1945 na przykładzie wybranych zgromadzeń," in Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 135–60, at p. 155; Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, 130–31.

<sup>1586</sup> Gita and Mendel Kuperman, Photograph no. 09195, USHMM, Internet: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1178220>.

There was a young couple in Zambrow [Zambrów], Mendl Kopperman, a tailor, and his wife Gutsheh [Gita]. In the year 1941, the Germans murdered both of them. However, they had the presence of mind, before death, to hand over their only daughter Chana, almost five years old, to an elderly Christian woman Leszczyńska [Leszczyńska] who had worked for them, and this Christian woman secretly raised the child. The parents saw fit to give the Christian woman the address of the mother's brother in America ...

The Christian woman hid the child for about a half year, until she no longer could. The ghetto had been liquidated, and she didn't know what further to do. Contact with America had been cut. So she came up with a plan, that she would surreptitiously leave the little girl at an orphanage, and they would be forced to take her in. So she rehearsed the little girl, who spoke Polish, that she should only say that she is a Christian child. She put on a crucifix around her neck and traveled with her to Lomza [Łomża].

At night, in the middle of a snowstorm, when not a living soul could be seen in the street, the elderly woman put the little girl into a sack, told her that she must keep still, and under no circumstances reveal who it was that left her there, and where she is from, and she left the sack by the door of the orphanage on the Ostrolenka [Ostrołęcka] Gasse. The old lady hid herself in a yard somewhere close by, and watched from a distance through a slit in the fence to see what would happen... a few minutes after this, the dog in the yard of the orphanage began to bark, and tried to tear himself from his chain. It became irritating to the Headmistress of the orphanage—a good, pious woman, who secretly worked against the Germans—and she went out onto the doorstep to see what was happening: why is the dog barking like that? She then saw the sack with the little girl in it... she immediately brought the sack into the house, and the elderly gentile woman left immediately, and on the following day she went off to the Zambrow Road late in the night.

Even before they had begun to ask her anything, the girl, out of fright, immediately began to cry and say: I am not Jewish, I am Catholic, see the crucifix around my neck... the Headmistress understood only too well, what it was she had in front of her, but she feigned ignorance, calmed the child, gave her food and drink, washed her and put her to bed. In the morning, she went with her to the municipal office to present her. First, however, she learned what to say and what not to say. She gave her the name Halina Koperska and rehearsed this name many times. The Headmistress and Governess Julia, prepared her well for her “examination,” and came with her to the municipal office. A Polish-speaking German received them, and continued to shout that she was a Jewish girl, from the liquidated ghettos, and she needs to be taken away... to her parents. The little girl, however, held her ground: I am a Christian!... soon we will know the whole truth, the employee threatened: I will call in the big dog: If you are Jewish, he will tear you to pieces, he hates Jews. So the little girl burst into tears: he will not tear me to pieces, because I am a Christian girl... the interview lasted for three hours... and she remained in the orphanage as a Christian girl until the year 1949—seven years.<sup>1587</sup>

<sup>1587</sup> “Chana Kopperman,” in Y. T. [Yom-Tov] Lewinsky, ed., *Sefer Zambrow: Zambrove* (Tel Aviv: The Zambrover Societies in USA, Argentina, and Israel, 1963), 211–14, translated as *The Zambrów Yizkor Book*, Internet: <https://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/z/zyb-08.htm>.

Hundreds of Jews jumped from trains headed to the Treblinka death camp, and a small number of Jews—perhaps as many as 250 according to historian Chad Gibbs—managed to escape from the camp itself. Many of these fugitives—most often destitute—received assistance from Polish villagers (numerous examples of such help are set out in the penultimate appendix). Sometimes, these Jewish fugitives knocked on the doors of parish rectories, seeking assistance. As historian Philip Friedman noted, “A number of priests in the neighborhood of the death camp at Treblinka gave food and shelter to Jews escaping from transports on the way to the camp.”<sup>1588</sup>

Among the priests who came to the assistance of Jews who escaped from Treblinka, and of others who jumped from the trains that were headed there, was Rev. Sergiusz Góralczuk, the acting pastor of Ugoszcz, north of Węgrów. Rev. Góralczuk hid, in the parish rectory, two young Jewish men who had escaped from Treblinka during the August 1943 revolt. He provided temporary shelter and food to several other Jews, some of whom later moved on in order to get away from the vicinity of the camp.<sup>1589</sup>

After escaping from Treblinka, Henryk Kompanijec, a native of Voronezh, was sheltered by Rev. Kazimierz Czarkowski, the pastor of Węgrów. Kopianiec remained in Węgrów after the war.<sup>1590</sup>

The following account pertains to a Jew from Warsaw who managed to escape from Treblinka on a transport train. Injured, he entered a random church where a sympathetic priest provided him with the necessities he needed to return to Warsaw.

... they took him and his wife to Treblinka. They were ordered to throw all their valuables, jewellery, dollars onto a sheet—death if you didn’t. Everyone did, but Grandpa thought to himself, they’ll kill my anyway, but what if I survive? So he bent down as though he were throwing, and picked things up again and again. Then, they selected several stronger men, put them back in the train, and Grandpa was one of the chosen. As they rode at night, they managed to push out the bars of the window. The German shot, but missed him. Cut and bruised, he dragged himself to a settlement where he saw a church. The priest gave him clothes and money for the train, because he couldn’t pay in dollars. When he got back to Warsaw, his friends said: “We’ll introduce you to Jędrzek Korczak of the HA [Home Army] who is hiding in the Ujazdów [military] hospital.” In this way, Grandpa became one of General Horodyński’s charges. [Witold Horodyński was head of the surgical department—Ed.] ... the colonel on the officer’s ward is a Jew, a pharmacist who’d studied along with Horodyński. And the major is also a Jew, a music teacher. And the quiet, devout soldier with

<sup>1588</sup> Friedman, *Their Brothers’ Keepers*, 126.

<sup>1589</sup> Kopówka and Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki*, 301, 328–29.

<sup>1590</sup> Małgorzata Piórkowska, *Sprawiedliwi i ocaleni: Mieszkańcy Węgrowa i okolic, pomagający Żydom w latach okupacji hitlerowskiej* (Węgrów: Towarzystwo Miłośników Ziemi Węgrowskiej; Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna im. A. Cieszkowskiego w Węgrowie, 2012), 119.

the bamboo walking-stick who wears a crucifix on top of his pajamas. And that rheumatic lady who claims that we're suited to each other, Grandpa knew her well in Kraków. Even poor Lieutenant Doliński had a Jewish mother.<sup>1591</sup>

Catholic priests in the vicinity of Treblinka are known to have stood up to malfeasants who harassed and robbed Jewish fugitives.

Jentel Kita [Kitaj] recounts the following incident which occurred in the village of Lachow [Łochów], Wysokie Mazowieckie county. Several villagers assaulted a rather well-dressed woman, trying to strip her of her clothes. A priest suddenly appeared, approaching the attackers and asking them why they were harassing a lone woman. They told him that she was a Jewess who had jumped out of a Treblinka-destined train. Upon hearing that, the priest demanded that they leave her alone: he told them that she had suffered enough. The victim of the assault took advantage of his intercession and of the ensuing argument to withdraw speedily. Then the priest also walked swiftly away.<sup>1592</sup>

A priest in Sokołów Podlaski, in his Sunday sermon, admonished the shameful behaviour of some Catholics who had pillaged the bodies of Jews who had jumped from transport trains headed to Treblinka.<sup>1593</sup>

Joseph S. Kutrzeba, then known as Arie Fajwiszys, recalled the assistance he received from several priests in the vicinity of Brańsk. In particular, Rev. Stanisław Falkowski, who was awarded by Yad Vashem, played a key role in the rescue of this 14-year-old boy from the Warsaw ghetto who had jumped from a train headed for Treblinka.

After wandering in the countryside for several months, hiding in forests, fields and barns, the boy asked farmers to give him work and shelter. He turned to a priest in Hodyszewo, Rev. Józef Perkowski, to whom he disclosed his identity. That priest referred him to Rev. Falkowski, a young vicar who was posted in the nearby village of Piekuty Nowe (or Nowe Piekuty). The boy knocked on his door in the dead of night. Rev. Falkowski gave him a warm reception and tended to his wounds. Since the Germans had taken over the parish rectory, the small premises Rev. Falkowski had to rent for himself were not conducive to rescue. He arranged a hiding place for the boy in the courtyard near the church. Joseph stayed for four months. Rev. Falkowski then arranged for the boy to work for Polish farmers in the area, among them Trzeszczkowski and Stanisław Ołędzki.

Rev. Roch Modzelewski, the pastor, was aware of Joseph's true identity and assisted in the rescue effort. The boy also received help from another young vicar, Rev. Janiecki, who visited Rev. Falkowski, and from a priest in a nearby

<sup>1591</sup> Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories*, 151–52.

<sup>1592</sup> Gutman and Krakowski, *Unequal Victims*, 245, based on the Czyżew Memorial Book.

<sup>1593</sup> Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous*, 215.

village who was a homeopath. Bishop Stanisław Łukomski of Łomża,<sup>1594</sup> who had been taken into confidence, consented to the boy's wish to be baptized in the spring of 1943. Through Stanisław Olędzki, the village head of Szeptetowo, Rev. Falkowski arranged for Aryan papers for Joseph under his new identity, as Kutrzeba. This enabled him to register for work in Germany. Rev. Falkowski kept in touch with Joseph the whole time while he worked in a factory, writing him letters to keep up his spirits and sending him food parcels. Rev. Falkowski also helped other Jews, which Joseph was not aware of at the time.<sup>1595</sup>

Joseph Kutrzeba wrote the following statement in May 1994.

During the first days of September 1942, at the age of 14, I jumped out of a moving train destined for Treblinka, through an opening (window) of a cattle car loaded to capacity with Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto.

Wandering over fields, forests and villages, at first in the vicinity of Wołomin, and later of Zambrów, I found myself, in late November, in the area of Hodyszewo (at the time district Łomża).

Throughout my wandering, the peasants for the most part were amenable to put me up for the night and to feed me—some either suspecting my origins or pressing me to admit it.

I am the son of the well-known musician, composer, professor and conductor, Izrael Fajwizys, and of Malka Hakman, murdered by the German Nazis together with my sister Rela.

Generally, I was aiming to reach the forests of Lublin as I'd heard within the resistance movement in the Warsaw Ghetto, Hashomer Hatzair, to which I belonged (and whose leader was Mordechai Anielewicz) that a Jewish partisan unit of that movement was being formed there. The peasants were afraid to shelter me longer than overnight since an officially announced death penalty had been decreed by the German occupiers for any assistance rendered to Jewish escapees.

Several times I was advised to seek out "a priest" who, as the peasants believed, could baptize me and thus to "save" me. While still in the area of Wołomin, I looked up a pastor (whose name I don't remember). He had handed me a prayer book advising me to somehow take care of myself and to learn the basic prayers etc., and to look him up again after

<sup>1594</sup> For information about Bishop Stanisław Łukomski's (unsuccessful) interventions with the German authorities on behalf of both Poles and Jews and his pleas for support for Jews directed to the faithful, see Ryszard Bender, et al., ed., *Słownik biograficzny katolicyzmu społecznego w Polsce*, vol. 2 (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1994), 103; Białous, *Biskup Stanisław Kostka Łukomski (1874–1948)*, 232–33, 239; Damian Bednarski, "I vescovi polacchi e la salvaguardia degli ebrei," in Mikrut, *La Chiesa cattolica in Europa centro-orientale di fronte al Nazional-socialismo 1939–1945*, 753–54.

<sup>1595</sup> See also *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 211–12; Anna Pyżewska, "Pomoc dla ludności żydowskiej w Okręgu Białystok w latach okupacji niemieckiej," in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 955–56; Joseph S. Kutrzeba, *The Contract: A Life for a Life* (New York: iUniverse, 2009), 59–60, 80–164, 197–98, 203, 207, 217–18; Zbigniew Romaniuk, *Słownik historyczny miejscowości i postaci z terenu gminy Nowe Piekuty* (Nowe Piekuty: Urząd Gminy Nowe Piekuty, 2014), 169–70, 197, 208.

I have mastered the prayers. Then “we’ll see,” he said. Because, as he stated, he was afraid to shelter me. I never saw him again.

But at the end of November 1942, when heavy snow covered the ground, I followed the advice of a peasant who suggested that I look up, as it turned out, the parish priest (canon) Józef Perkowski in the church at Hodyszewo (housing the Miraculous Image of the Virgin Mary), the post-war rector of the Catholic Seminary in Łomża, with whom I corresponded after the war. Rev. Perkowski, having fed me, suggested that I repair at night, over heavy snow, to find a young vicar, Rev. Stanisław Falkowski, in the village of Piekuty Nowe, near Szepietowo.

Rev. Perkowski maintained that German gendarmes were constantly milling about in Hodyszewo and thus it would be difficult for him to hide or shelter me. However, as he put it, Piekuty Nowe was a small village, out of the way (as it turned out, there was also a gendarmerie post there), and that Rev. Falkowski was a “young idealist” who might agree to help me.

Father Falkowski opened the door for me on a dark evening, asking me to come into his one-room dwelling unit where, as a young vicar, he’d found a locum with a family, since the parish house in Piekuty Nowe had been requisitioned by the Germans, and the parish priest, Father Roch Modzelewski, had had to move into the house of the organist.

At first, Father Falkowski had put me up in his only room where I slept on the sofa. I had been covered with lice and with sores over my body. Father Falkowski fed me, arranged to clean me up, boiled my clothes, somehow coming up with an ointment for my sores. At the same time, we held many conversations evenings, rising at five in the morning to attend dawn Mass during Advent (December 1942).

From the start, Father Falkowski’s superior, pastor Modzelewski, had been fully taken into confidence (I often visited him—a short walk) and fully cooperated in assisting me. Both priests resolved that it was most important that I learn the catechism and the basic Catholic teachings—that is because that, if they would eventually attempt to place me with a peasant as a “working hand,” or to tend the cows—due to my “good” appearance and Polish speech—I would not give myself away with regard to my origins.

Over time, as I learned later, the bishop of Łomża, Stanisław Łukomski, had been taken into confidence; also, when the time came, in the spring of 1943, he had also granted permission to Father Falkowski to baptize me. When I took ill with jaundice, Father Modzelewski took me by sleighs to another village where a well-known homeopathist-priest cured me with herbs.

Another young vicar [Father Janiecki<sup>1596</sup>], a friend of Father Falkowski, had also visited us several times; he’d brought over a violin which he and I both played. He, too, was taken into confidence. However, active assistance was rendered to me mainly by Father Falkowski and Father Modzelewski including the subsequent placements with several peasants, as a Catholic, and later even with the head of a cluster of villages (wójt).

Father Falkowski suggested a new last name for me—Kutrzeba (the first name remained as at my birth)—and that for two reasons: 1) it had a very “Polish” ring to it, and 2) to honor Gen. Kutrzeba who resisted the German invasion to the last moment.

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<sup>1596</sup> See Kutrzeba, *The Contract*, 95–102.

When, during a particular stay with a peasant, things began to get “uncomfortable”—either owing to very hard work ... or due to gradually emerging suspicions which I’d promptly report to Father Falkowski, the priests would move me to yet another peasant—usually located at an isolated homestead, away from the main village where I would not be regarded with suspicion by passers-by or by visitors.

Over time, steeped in prayers, I began to cling to them, as they became my only inner refuge and a spiritual nourishment, especially while co-existing with simple people with whom I shared very little, nor could I share anything about myself or about my past in order to alleviate some of my inner torment. Owing to much hard work and security reasons, I was allowed to visit Father Falkowski and Father Modzelewski solely after church on Sundays or holidays where I wouldn’t attract much attention among throngs of people. (After the war I learned that the housekeeper of Father Modzelewski whom I got to know well, was also a Jewess, and that Father Falkowski also helped to shelter several other Jews.)

These visits meant spiritual rescue for me. As time went by, Father Falkowski became my only source of survival and hope, spiritually and otherwise. When, at one point, he proposed baptism to me, I agreed. Now, recalling my mental state of the time, I believe that: 1) I came to believe in Christ in whose name Father Falkowski had extended to me an unequivocal love of one’s neighbor, constantly risking his life in the name of his ideals; 2) to a certain extent, I felt neither could I disappoint my benefactor whom I came to love; and 3) it seemed to offer a better chance for survival. In addition, I recall as how Father Falkowski expressing it with some levity perhaps, added the conversion of souls was not only a priest’s mission, but that it would also put him “in good stead” with his bishop (I remember also that I had to write a formal letter to Bishop Łukomski stating my reason for my desire to be baptized, in order to receive his permission therefor.) I felt that I could not disappoint him, although he’d assured me that even if I should eschew baptism, he would still care for me.

When, toward the end of summer, things started to get “hot” (as I was almost found out by a certain mason—a “wiseguy” from Warsaw who worked there), Father Falkowski took me in again and, together with the parish priests, put together the following scenario:

The plan was for me to report to the general population registration, then in progress in the German-occupied Białystok voivodship, where new identity cards were being issued; with the partial cooperation of the village elder (who had to verify my identity, based on the priest’s assurance—not being aware of my true origin), I was granted a new identity card (Polish Catholic).

With it in hand, I “volunteered” for civilian labor in East Prussia, as the Germans, in addition to forcibly deporting young people for labor, were also conducting a broad propaganda campaign to recruit volunteers.

With tears in my eyes, I took leave of Father Falkowski who felt that my only chance to survive would be “in the lion’s den,” since the Germans embarked on a wild hunt for Jewish escapees, and a death penalty—often on the spot—was meted out to those assisting them.

I was received by the German Amtskommissar in Szepletowo who dispatched me by train for labor in a factory in Insterburg, in East Prussia.

From September 1943 to January 1945 I worked there, all along corresponding with Father Falkowski. Because nourishment was very scarce, Father Falkowski would continuously

provide me with packages containing bread loaves; inside the bread, in a hollowed-out cavity, I usually found a ring of kielbasa [sausage], which, by the way, was strictly against the law (the remittance of meat products during the war-time food rationing). In the event that I would be found out (as four other Poles were employed in that same factory), without doubt it would have caused a tragic end for my friend.

Moved to Germany proper, where I was liberated by the American Army (in the city of Erfurt), I reestablished contact with Father Falkowski. Since then, allowing for some interruptions, we've been in constant touch for over 50 years: twice I brought him to the United States for visits, and to Israel (where he received the highest honors); I visited him in Poland a number of times. Currently he is retired, following two heart surgeries, at age 78, residing in the village of Klukowo, district Łomża. ... Throughout his entire life he displayed great dedication in restoring churches, in furthering education, especially among children (he was imprisoned for two years in Białystok under Stalin), and always leaving parishes behind in an improved state. ... (As far as I know, he also assisted, and possibly sheltered, the well-known deceased writer, Paweł Jasienica.)

Leaving him, en route to East Prussia, I had been asking him how I would ever repay him (taught by my parents that one should not take from others without intending to give). He replied, I remember, "don't even try, only pass it on to others." ... Fifty years later, from a present perspective, I asked him, among others, whether he'd received any instructions from his Church superiors with regard to aiding or sheltering escapees or Jews. He answered: "I didn't need any, for I had my instructions from Christ—'Love thy neighbor' or 'I am my brother's keeper.'"

In the course of our long conversations when I was under the care of Father Falkowski (1942–43), I was asking him, among others—as a 15-year-old boy, why were we being persecuted and murdered. His answer then, apparently the product of his state of mind at the time, or else his scope of "knowledge" acquired in the seminary, or in the environment, expressed itself thusly: "The Lord Christ told the Jews: 'My blood will fall upon you and your offspring.' (I am not able to quote directly but such was the content.) And this has to be fulfilled." When I questioned that—"but why upon us, the innocent?" "Father, you have imbued me with the love of one's neighbor as the foundation of Christianity, and the Germans are a Christian nation ..." He would reply: "Certainly, every Christian has the duty to realize these principles of faith, but apparently, in order to fulfill the prophecy of Christ, the Lord, in ways incomprehensible to us, is using Hitler as His Attila's whip." In addition, he told me that one could attain salvation solely through Christ and through a belief in Him.

These days he does not recall having said the former, and as for the latter, he maintains that such an approach is undergoing changes in the philosophy of the modern-day Church—many roads can, apparently, lead to salvation.<sup>1597</sup>

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<sup>1597</sup> In the author's possession (written by Joseph Kutrzeba for Rev. Zygmunt Zieliński).

Rev. Stanisław Falkowski penned the following account about the rescue of Joseph Kutrzeba.

During Advent in 1942, when I was vicar in the parish of Piekuty, Wysokie Mazowieckie County, a young boy of 16 came to me one evening, asking me to help and save him. He introduced himself as the son of Professor Fajwiszes [Izrael Srul Fajwiszys] of Łódź, director of synagogue choirs in Poland before 1939. While being transferred from the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka the boy had jumped out of a window of the train and then had wandered from ghetto to ghetto in small provincial towns, frequently slipping out of the hands of the Germans until he came to Father [Józef] Perkowski, then curate in Hodyszewo and now rector of the Theological Seminary in Łomża. Father Perkowski concealed him for a short time in the home of a parishioner and when there was danger of discovery he sent the boy to me, in the neighbouring parish of Piekuty.

I hid him in my room for a couple of weeks, conversing with him for hours on end, teaching him the foundations of the Catholic religion, so that he could more easily adapt himself to the Catholic milieu where I was planning to place him. At the time, I admired the rare intelligence and ability of the boy. He knew Hebrew and he delighted other people with the beautiful translations of the psalms (I had given him the Bible in Hebrew by Kittel). From memory he reproduced a musical composition for three voices composed by his father during imprisonment in a concentration camp for Jews; could write down any melody he had just heard for the first time.

After a couple of weeks of our constant association, when he had learned the prayers and catechism well, and after he had read the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament I took him to the settlement, to a parishioner, and requested a place for him to live in as one of my cousins. He was at times cross-examined by the peasants but whenever they appeared to become suspicious he always managed, by his knowledge of the religious truths and quotation of the catechism, to dispel their suspicions. But he had to change his place of residence very often. He was frequently saved by his identity card, issued in the name of Józef Kutrzeba (he still bears this name today), that he had received while still living with me. On 25, March 1943, I baptized him in the church of Piekuty parish, giving him the Christian name he had since birth—Józef. The parish curate, Father Roch Modzelewski, knew of all this and he helped us, displaying great courage and wisdom in helping the oppressed.

When things became truly difficult for my Józef in this parish I advised him to volunteer for work in Germany. ... We corresponded quite often. ... Later, when the front drew near in 1944, I lost track of him. Not until 1946 did I receive the first letter from him from Munich ...<sup>1598</sup>

Rev. Roch Modzelewski, the pastor of Piekuty Nowe, provided various forms of assistance to Jews. As mentioned by Kutrzeba, he engaged a Jewish woman as his housekeeper. His beneficiaries included Dr. Szejna (Zofia) Kamieniecka from Brańsk and a Jewish woman called Kasia. He also came to the assistance of Marianna Jurczuk, a convert, and her children.<sup>1599</sup> Her son, Jerzy, stated: “He was

<sup>1598</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 344–46.

<sup>1599</sup> Romaniuk, *Słownik historyczny miejscowości i postaci z terenu gminy Nowe Piekuty*, 170.

a very decent man. He helped everyone who had to hide regardless of whether he was a Jew or a Russian.”<sup>1600</sup>

The village of Lendowo, in the parish of Piekuty Nowe, is mentioned in several Jewish survivors’ accounts as a bastion of refuge for local Jews.

Liba Goldberg-Warobel [Luba Wrobel]: “This village, Landowa [Lendowo], had a good name among the Jews who were hiding in the area around Sokoly [Sokoły], and they regarded it as a paradise. Many Jews began to stream there. After two weeks, there wasn’t a house in Landowa where there weren’t three or four Jews.”<sup>1601</sup>

Tzipora Tabak-Burstein: “Finally, we came to the village of Landowa [Lendowo]. ... we knocked on the door of a house, not far from the forest. An old farmwoman brought us into the house. She gave us permission to sleep next to the warm stove. ... I remained alone with the old farmwoman. ... Over time, it became known to all of [the villagers] that I was not related to her family and that I didn’t even know how to speak Polish. The farmwoman did not hesitate to admit that she had adopted me, a Jewish girl, as her daughter. ... The farmwoman began to teach me Christian prayers, and on Sundays I went with her to church. ... The *goyim*, residents of the village who knew I was Jewish, did not hand me over to the Germans.”<sup>1602</sup>

Supported by a network of helpers, Rev. Józef Perkowski, the aforementioned pastor of Hodyszewo, helped several Jews survive the war. Dr. Szejna (Zofia) Kamieniecka stayed initially at the parish rectory with her young son, Arie (Jan). The priest’s housekeeper, Franciszka Krakówka, was also involved in the rescue, as was Adela Bińczak, a nurse from Brańsk. Afterwards, Dr. Kamieniecka and her son were sheltered separately by Polish families, among them Władysława Tomczak and her husband. Mother and son survived the war, settling eventually in the United States.

Rev. Perkowski also sheltered the five-year-old daughter of Josl Tykocki, a merchant from Brańsk. This young girl, baptized as Teresa, died not long after the war. Rev. Perkowski was also involved in the rescue of a young boy named Henry. The boy was sheltered by the Wróblewski family, who nursed him back

<sup>1600</sup> Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 956 (the surname is given as Jurczak).

<sup>1601</sup> Liba Goldberg-Warobel, “In a Struggle for Life,” in Kalisher, *Sokoly*, 188–200, translated as *Sokoly: In the Fight for Life*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokoly/sokoly.html>. See also Luba Wrobel Goldberg, *A Sparkle of Hope: An Autobiography* (Melbourne: n.p., 1998), 63: “This village Lendowo became a refuge for a lot of wandering Jews, they called this village the Garden of Eden. ... here they opened wide the doors without having any fear. Soon there were Jews in every house.”

<sup>1602</sup> Tzipora Tabka-Bustein, “The Shepherdess Returns to Her People,” in Kalisher, *Sokoly*, 201–7, translated as *Sokoly: In the Fight for Life*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokoly/sokoly.html>.

to health. Walerian Szymborski also played a role in the rescue.<sup>1603</sup> With the assistance of the Franciscan Sisters, Rev. Perkowski provided shelter and material assistance to Mina Charin (later Omer), whom he baptized as Maria Jadwiga.<sup>1604</sup>

Mina Charin, later called Omer, was 16 in 1942, when she escaped from the Warsaw ghetto and arrived in the town of Lapy [Łapy], in the Białystok [Białystok] district, where her brother [Józef or Julian Charin] worked as a doctor in the local hospital. After meeting with her brother, Mina began working in one of the estates close to the town, until one day all the Jews of the vicinity were ordered to report to the nearby police station. The owner of the estate, considering it her lawful duty to obey the German order, decided to drive the [registered] Jewish worker to the Gestapo and hand her over. When they were on their way, Mina asked her employer to stop near the home of Maria Kuzin, a practical nurse who worked with her brother, so she could say goodbye to her. Kuzin, who knew very well what fate awaited Mina, asked the owner of the estate to continue on her way and promised she herself would accompany the Jewish woman to the Gestapo. Mina was hidden in a hiding place arranged for her in the yard of Kuzin's home, where she remained for a few months. When the German searches of the houses in the vicinity became more frequent, Kuzin transferred the Jewish refugee to a nearby village, where she found shelter in the home of the local priest [Rev. Józef Perkowski], who looked after her with devotion and generosity. She remained there until her liberation in July 1944. Even while Mina was in the priest's home, Kuzin continued to visit her, to provide her with her needs and to boost her morale.<sup>1605</sup>

Rev. Perkowski also took in Stella Szczerańska, a young Jewish girl from Białystok who had been thrown out of a train on the way to the Treblinka death camp. She survived the occupation and moved to Israel.

In a separate bunker near the village Hodyszewo [Hodyszewo] was hiding Chaim Wrobel, they called him kewlaker with a nine year old girl, Stella Szczecranska [sic]. This is her story how she came to the Bransker [Brańsk] group. Stella was born in Białystok [Białystok] at the polish [sic] end of town. Her father was a chemist and they talked only polish. She was on a train with her parents on the way to Treblinka gas chambers when her mother wrapped her in a towel and threw her out of a train window. Polish people were walking alongside the train where dead bodies of Jews were laying shot while jumping from their [sic] trains. ... In between the dead they found Stella alive. The people picked her up and took her to the priest in Hoduszewo [Hodyszewo]. Haim Kewlaker came to the priest for

<sup>1603</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 829; Waldemar Monkiewicz and Józef Kowalczyk, "Pomoc Żydom w regionie białostockim podczas II wojny światowej," *Studia Podlaskie*, vol. 2 (1989): 362–79, at p. 372; Romaniuk, *Słownik historyczny miejscowości i postaci z terenu gminy Nowe Piekuty*, 53–54, 223; Engelking and Grabowski, *Dalej jest noc*, vol. 1, 171.

<sup>1604</sup> Testimony of Fania Charin, August 6, 1948, JHI, record group 301, no. 3950; Testimony of Mina Omer, YVA, file O.3/2668 (Item 4026285).

<sup>1605</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 433.

food, so the priest gave him little [sic] Stela [sic] and told him to take care of her. The priest helped Chaim with food and Chaim took Stella to his bunker.<sup>1606</sup>

**D**r. Józef (Julian) Charin, the brother of the previously mentioned Mina Charin, was helped by Rev. Henryk Bagiński, the pastor of Łapy, and afterwards by Rev. Feliks Zalewski, the pastor of Topczewo,<sup>1607</sup> as well as by Maria Kuzin and some other Poles.

Julian Charin, a prominent local physician and a member of the Polish Home Army (AK), received assistance from many Poles, arranged mostly by Henryk Bagiński and Feliks Zalewski, the respective heads of Roman Catholic churches in Łapy and Topczewo village. However, after another Pole betrayed Charin's hiding place, he was shot on March 18, 1943, outside of Topczewo, by members of the Topczewo [German] Gendarmerie post. The AK likely revenged his murder by executing the informant. Charin's sister, Mina (later Omer), survived the war, sheltered first by Charin's fiancée, Maria Kuzin, then by [Rev.] Zalewski, and finally by another priest in Hodyszewo village, most likely Józef Perkowski. In Łapy, [Rev.] Bagiński was determined to protect Kretowicz [Jadwiga Chinson], whose conversion to Christianity he had sponsored. He used his Sunday homilies to urge parishioners not to reveal the hiding places of Jews to authorities. She survived the war, as did the sisters Lea and Rivka Srebolov [Srebolow], sheltered by the owner of a Łapy cycle shop.<sup>1608</sup>

According to other sources, Dr. Charin last resided in the village of Sieśki, where he was sheltered by the Tur family. He was discovered accidentally by German gendarmes, who shot him on March 19, 1943. Four members of the Tur family were arrested, but were miraculously released on the intervention of Rev. Zalewski, who had directed Dr. Charin to their home.<sup>1609</sup>

Rev. Bagiński, a member of the Home Army, issued birth and baptismal certificates for Jewish children whom the aforementioned Maria Kuzin placed with Polish families.<sup>1610</sup>

<sup>1606</sup> Goldberg, *A Sparkle of Hope*, 98.

<sup>1607</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 829; Waldemar Monkiewicz and Józef Kowalczyk, "Pomoc Żydom w regionie białostockim podczas II wojny światowej," *Studia Podlaskie*, vol. 2 (1989): 362–79, at p. 372.

<sup>1608</sup> Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part A, 917.

<sup>1609</sup> Grądzka-Rejak and Namysło, *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, vol. 1, 321–22. See also A. [Alter] Trus and J. [Julius] Cohen, eds. *Bransk: Sefer hazikaron* (New York: Brainsker Relief Committee of New York, 1948), 370, translated as *Bransk: Book of Memories*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Bransk/Bransk.html>.

<sup>1610</sup> "Łapy—ks. Henryk Bagiński," Społeczne Muzeum Żydów Białegostoku i regionu, Internet: <https://www.jewishbialystok.pl/%C5%81apy--ks.-Henryk-Bagi%C5%84ski-i-Maria--Berta-Kuzin,5472,2822>.

In her Yad Vashem testimony, the aforementioned Mina Charin (Omer) identified Rev. Jan Idźkowski, the pastor of Poświętne near Łapy, as having helped her and several other Jews including Zalman Sukman and his two daughters from the nearby village of Pietkowo, as well as a ten-year boy from Bydgoszcz.<sup>1611</sup> Zalman Sukman recorded that he turned to priests, whom he did not identify by name, while hiding in the countryside with his two daughters. “Sometimes I would go to Christian friends, even priests who were among my friends, and [from them] I received bread and other food. Without this, we would have died of hunger.”<sup>1612</sup>

Several testimonies from the Sokoły area, near Białystok, mention the help of Catholic clergy. Most, however, do not identify the priests and nuns who assisted Jews. A priest in Sokoły condemned those who preyed on Jewish fugitives.<sup>1613</sup> Rev. Leon Ostalczyk, the pastor of Waniewo, did likewise. He encouraged his parishioners to help Jews, and he provided food to Jews living in nearby forests.<sup>1614</sup>

Joshua Olshin recalled his survival as a partisan and the help he received from the Catholic clergy.

I survived partly because I worked with the partisans and partly thanks to the help of a priest and a Franciscan nun. When the Russians came back to Białystok [Białystok] in the summer of 1944, we Jewish survivors organized a Jewish Committee of sixty persons, of which I became the president. We searched the surrounding villages for Jewish children who had survived the war. By 1945, thanks to my contacts with the priest of our locality, we had gathered a total of forty-eight Jewish children.<sup>1615</sup>

The Sokoły memorial book also refers to a priest from the village of Jabłonka who “endangered his own life and property and hid a number of pregnant Jewish women in his home, who gave birth there.”<sup>1616</sup> It is not clear whether this refers to the parish priest of Jabłonka Kościelna (to the west of Wysokie

<sup>1611</sup> Testimony of Mina Omer, YVA, file O.3/2668 (Item 4026285).

<sup>1612</sup> Zalman Sukman, “In the Village of Pietkowo,” *Sokoloy: In the Fight for Life*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokoloy/sokoloy.html>, translation of Kalisher, *Sokoloy*, 221–23.

<sup>1613</sup> Borwicz, *Vies interdites*, 109.

<sup>1614</sup> Testimony of Jerzy Śliwowski, Społeczne Muzeum Żydów Białegostoku i regionu, Internet: <https://www.jewishbialystok.pl/Soko%C5%82y--Izaak-Wac%C5%82aw-Kornblum,5485,6782>; Testimony of Izaak Wacek Kornblum, Centropa, 2005, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/izaak-wacek-kornblum>.

<sup>1615</sup> David Kranzler, *Holocaust Hero: The Untold Story and Vignettes of Solomon Schonfeld, an Extraordinary British Orthodox Rabbi Who Rescued 4000 Jews During the Holocaust* (Jersey City, New Jersey: KTAV, 2004), 211.

<sup>1616</sup> “Preface,” *Sokoloy: In the Fight for Life*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokoloy/sokoloy.html>.

Mazowieckie) or perhaps the parish priest of Jabłoń Kościelna (to the east of Wysokie Mazowieckie). The evidence below suggests the latter.

After surviving an execution by German gendarmes in which her three children were killed, the wounded and destitute Zelda Kaczerewicz made her way to the village of Jabłoń Kościelna, near her hometown of Wysokie Mazowieckie. She was nursed back to health by Rev. Adolf Kruszewski, the local pastor, who had helped her in the past, and by Antonina Jabłońska, the priest's housekeeper, and her daughter, Helena Pluszkiewicz. Several months later, wounds now healed, Zelda found shelter with Maria Drągowska and her husband in the nearby village of Jabłoń-Zarzeckie.

Two Jewish children were left in the village of Jabłoń Kościelna by their mothers. A Jewish infant girl was found on the doorstep of the parish rectory in December 1942. Rev. Kruszewski entrusted the child to his housekeeper, Antonina, who looked after her for more than two years. A Jewish woman, the wife of a mill owner from Sokoły, abandoned her nine-month-old son, Józik Żółty, along with a note requesting that he be raised as a Christian. The child was found by the teenaged sisters Janina and Stefania Grabowska. After staying with the Grabowski family for a time, the boy was taken in by the Jankowski family, and then by Teresa Jabłońska. In order to protect this child, the village head registered him as a Polish foundling, and Rev. Kruszewski baptized him. He was given the name of Józef Jabłoński. Both these children survived the war and were sent to a Jewish children's home in Chorzów. After settling in Israel, the boy was known as Józef Gedali Wanger. For a time, Rev. Kruszewski and his housekeeper provided food to an elderly Jew from Sokoły named Arko and his two sons. However, the Germans later shot Arko and his elder son.<sup>1617</sup> Rev. Kruszewski was recognized by Yad Vashem in 2020.

The above reference to Józef Gedali Wanger, however, appears to be inaccurate (due to a confusion of various accounts). After jumping from a train headed to Treblinka, Gedalia Wander (b. 1933) wandered from village to village in the vicinity of Wysokie Mazowieckie. Jan Jabłoński, the village headman of Śliwowo, in the parish of Jabłoń Kościelna, took him on as a farm hand. Gedalia took up his rescuer's suggestion to undergo baptism, though that was not a prerequisite for continuing to help the boy. After the area was liberated, Gedalia met a Jewish

<sup>1617</sup> Testimony of Zelda Kaczerewicz, JHI, record group 301, no. 2246; Testimony of Zelda Kaczarewicz [sic], YVA, file M.11/376 (Item 3714522); Szymon Datner, *Las sprawiedliwych* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1968), 57; Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 738–39; Waldemar Monkiewicz and Józef Kowalczyk, "Pomoc Żydom w regionie białostockim podczas II wojny światowej," *Studia Podlaskie*, vol. 2 (1989): 362–79, at p. 372; Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień...*, 173–75; Romaniuk, *Słownik historyczny miejscowości i postaci z terenu gminy Nowe Piekuty*, 83–84; *Historia wsi Jabłoń Kościelna*, Internet: [http://www.jablon.nowepiekuty.pl/obrazki\\_tresc/Historia.doc](http://www.jablon.nowepiekuty.pl/obrazki_tresc/Historia.doc).

couple to whom he revealed that he had converted to Christianity. They took him away. Gedalia then moved to Germany before leaving for Palestine.<sup>1618</sup>

The following rescue account from Jabłoń-Zarzeckie, which lies in the parish of Jabłoń Kościelna, doubtless refers to Rev. Kruszewski. It exemplifies his attitude towards the rescue of Jews.

Paweł [Paweł] and Władysława [Władysława] Kalisiewicz lived with their five children in the village of Jablon Zarzecka [Jabłoń-Zarzeckie], in the county of Wysokie Mazowieckie, Białystok [Białystok] district. In November 1942, five Jewish women—Perl Weisenberg, her daughters Yaffa and Nechama, and her two sisters, who had fled from the Wysokie Mazowieckie ghetto, arrived in the village. The Kalisiewczes were the only ones who agreed to shelter the five refugees. For the 22 months until the liberation, the Kalisiewiczes, at great personal risk, hid the five refugees in a small storehouse. Despite their straitened circumstances, Władysława came each day to the hiding place to bring the refugees food. In their subsequent testimony, the survivors described their saviors' warm and humane attitude toward them throughout their stay, despite the terrible tragedies they were experiencing at the time: Their son Waclaw [Wacław] was murdered by the Germans during a raid in the village while another son died of an illness. In her anguish, Władysława turned to the local priest, asking him if the tragedies were a punishment for hiding Jews in her home. The priest reassured her that, on the contrary, God would reward her and her family for saving Jews. The Kalisiewiczes' adult sons, Józef [Józef] and Waclaw, also took an active part in the rescue operation. During one of the raids, the Germans ordered their nine-year-old son, Mieczysław [Mieczysław], at gunpoint to reveal the Jews' hiding place, but the little boy refused to be intimidated. Later, one of the survivors wrote: "Despite their great suffering, they did not abandon us, and we never heard a sharp word from them. They shared what little food they had with us, and watched out for our safety..." After the war, the survivors immigrated to Israel.<sup>1619</sup>

At least two other families—Harasimiuk and Kobosko—rescued Jews in Jabłoń-Zarzeckie, among them the Nosko and Kopytowski families.<sup>1620</sup> Thus, the presence of Jews in that village, as in Jabłoń Kościelna, was widely known among the villagers.

Jewish sources also mention the helpfulness of Rev. Henryk Betto, the rector of the seminary in Łomża, who took up residence in Jabłoń Kościelna after the seminary was closed by the Soviets in 1939. Rev. Betto was active in the Home Army.

In the village of Jablonna [Jabłoń], where the priest lived during the war, he had 11 Jews whom he saved in various ways under his protection in a dark chamber in a masked bed in a tree in the forest to whom he himself brought food. Among them was a child whom

<sup>1618</sup> Testimony of Gedalia Vender, YVA, file O.3/12746 (Item 5603065); Jan Jabłoński, RD.

<sup>1619</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 328–29.

<sup>1620</sup> Romaniuk, *Słownik historyczny miejscowości i postaci z terenu gminy Nowe Piekuty*, 84.

he gave to a trusted Christian woman. Later he gave it to a *kibbutz* [collective community] in Lodz [Łódź]. Today [the child] is certainly in Israel.

[Rev. Betto:] Chanale, a shame she is not now here ... in 1941 we found her on a frosty morning sitting on our threshold. “What is your name?” I asked her. She looked with such sorrowful eyes and answered: “Chanale!” I understood everything and did not ask her anything more. A Jewish child already was with me and I gave her to one of my friends. She wanted [me] to convert her, but her husband did not permit this. Perhaps her parents would survive the war and come for her. She remained Jewish and today she writes letters to them from Israel. She married ...<sup>1621</sup>

In his Yad Vashem testimony, Alter Trus mentions the sermons of Rev. Bolesław Czarkowski, the pastor of Brańsk, imploring his parishioners to help those in need (understood to mean the Jews). Trus mentions as well the assistance provided by Rev. Czarkowski’s vicar, Rev. Józef Chwalko.<sup>1622</sup>

After their escape from the ghetto, six Jews—the Szapiro brothers, Fajwel and Lejb, their parents, Lejb’s fiancée, Mina Wasser, and Sonia Weinstein-Rubin—were sheltered in town for about a week by the pharmacist Janina Woińska. Rev. Chwalko then found them hiding places with the Popławski family in the nearby village of Oleksin and continued to assist the Jewish fugitives.<sup>1623</sup>

Rev. Henryk Opiatowski, another vicar, was also involved in rescue efforts on behalf of Jews and escaped Soviet prisoners-of-war, which resulted in his arrest and execution by the Germans on July 15, 1943.<sup>1624</sup>

The disposition of priests from Brańsk, in the Podlasie region, has been registered in several accounts.

One night early that month [i.e., November 1942], someone jumped over the ghetto fence and ran into the pharmacy. It was Lejb Shapiro [Leon Szapiro], the pharmacy’s prewar owner. He told [Janina] Woińska that the ghetto was surrounded, and nobody knew what was going to happen. He wanted to hide with his wife, his two sons, and his brother’s fiancée in the basement of the pharmacy. Woińska, and the two other women living in the building, decided that this was a suicidal plan: the pharmacy was right in the ghetto, and frequented by Germans and Poles. Instead, it was agreed that the Shapiros should go

<sup>1621</sup> I. Dawidowicz, “Czyzewo Jews? Where Are They? A Visit with the Czyzewo Priest in the Year 1960,” in Shimon Kanc, ed., *Sefer Zikaron Czyzewo* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Czyzewo in Israel and the USA, 1961), cols. 1135–42, at 1139–40, translated as *Czyzewo Memorial Book*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/czyzew/Czyzew.html>. See also Betto Henryk, *600-lecie miasta Łomża*, Internet: <https://600.lomza.pl/2017/12/26/betto-henryk-ks/>.

<sup>1622</sup> Testimony of Alter Trus, YVA, file M.11/374 (Item 3714520); Testimony of Alter Trus, JHI, record group 301, no. 2113.

<sup>1623</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 633, 880.

<sup>1624</sup> Kopówka and Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki*, 174; Krahel, *Martyrologia duchowieństwa archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945*, 315.

to another building, close by but outside the ghetto area. There, Woińska made a hiding place behind the piles of lumber. Together with the two other women, she brought the fugitives food for the next few days. ...

Her sense of danger was sharpened, however, after a close call with the Gestapo, who came to the pharmacy a few days later and ordered a search. By that time, with the help of a young priest [Rev. Józef Chwalko], the Shapiros had gone on to another, safer place outside Brańsk. The Gestapo found their suitcases, left behind in the pharmacy's attic. ...

... As it happened, the whole "aristocracy" of Brańsk had gathered in the pharmacy, including a doctor, a priest, and a teacher. They all knew about the hiding place. No one said a word.

During the search, another Gestapo man started hitting a peasant quite viciously. ... He ordered the pharmacy cordoned off more securely from the ghetto.

"It's a miracle we survived," Woińska says. ...

The young priest who arranged for the Shapiros' second hiding place, and who escorted them on their short but hazardous journey, was Vicar Józef Chwalko. His superior, Rector Bolesław Czarkowski, reiterated in his sermons that "one must help people" who were in need. A priestly word, a priestly example, carried enormous moral authority in a congregation such as Brańsk's ...

... the Nazis announced a hunt for the hidden Jews. The Catholic priest, to his credit, preached a sermon in which he told people to "wash their hands" of such murderous activity, and enjoined them to help those in need. ...

... in July 1943 a priest named Henryk Opiatowski, who was a member of the Home Army, was executed for helping Jews and Soviet deserters from labor camps. ...

The forest partisans continued to function and even to grow, adding people who escaped from Białystok after the liquidation of the ghetto and even from the train transports to Treblinka. From 1943 on, there were more than eighty Jews trying to survive in this way. They organized themselves into a unit, consisting of a "family camp," which sheltered those who could not use weapons, and a defense camp. Their supply of arms was replenished by "intelligent Poles," who were sympathetic to their plight and who included schoolteachers and a priest.<sup>1625</sup>

During the war, Janina Wońska [Woińska] lived in Bransk [Brańsk] in the district of Białystok [Białystok]. She was a pharmacist and the owner of the only pharmacy in the town and Poles and Jews were her regular customers. The pharmacy was located on the border of the ghetto. When the liquidation of the ghetto began, Leibko (Leon) Szapiro turned to Janina and asked her for help and shelter. Janina set up a hideout in a service building and Leibko and his brother, Faivel (Filip), as well as Leibko's fiancée, Mina Waser, moved wood that was stored there and created space that resembled a room. Janina delivered food to the hideout and after a week a priest [Rev. Józef Chalko], who knew Janina, arranged a new hiding place for the Szapiros with the Popławski [Popławski] family. The Szapiros left Janina but stayed in touch with her and also received medicines from her.<sup>1626</sup>

<sup>1625</sup> Eva Hoffman, *Shtetl: The Life and Death of a Small Town and the World of Polish Jews* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 205–8, 224, 232, 235.

<sup>1626</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 880.

After her husband was executed by the Germans, Eugenia Wirszubska and her daughters Regina (later Szymańska, b. 1931) and Adela (later Boddy, b. 1935) escaped from the ghetto in Prużana. They survived with the help of a number of Poles. They moved to Wysokie Litewskie, where they obtained Aryan papers from a family friend, Lidia (Lidka) Lichnowska, the daughter of the prewar mayor. In the fall of 1942, Wirszubska and her daughters relocated to the village of Narew, southeast of Białystok, where they were extended protection by two priests. Rev. Stanisław Łukaszewicz, the local pastor, provided them with additional church documents. Rev. Henryk Kardasz arranged lodging for them with his mother.<sup>1627</sup>

Just before the establishment of a ghetto in Wysokie Litewskie (one was created there as well), thanks to the intensified effort by Lidka Lichnowska, we obtained Aryan papers. We could then leave for Narew. It was Lidka Lichnowska, I believe, who brought us the news that a ghetto would be created. Her father, who was the prewar mayor, continued to carry out his duties during the war. His attitude toward us remained very friendly. ...

I think that people did not treat us any differently as Jews in Wysokie Litewskie, because of our assimilation and the type of life my parents led.

During the war, on two occasions, we managed to escape virtually “from under the knife,” once, from the ghetto in Próżana [Prużana], the day before its liquidation, and afterward, from Wysokie just before a ghetto was established there. From Wysokie we found our way first to Bielsko [Bielsk Podlaski]. We stayed with friends of Lidka Lichnowska, physicians. We were there for two or three nights. From there, equipped with letters of recommendation, we went to Narew, where we spent the rest of the occupation. We were helped by a Catholic priest [Rev. Stanisław Łukaszewicz] to whom we were referred by Mrs. Lichnowska. It is difficult to say whether the townspeople knew we were Jews.

My mama was very likeable, pleasant, hardworking, and very obliging. We did not go to school. We played practically the whole time with the local children. My sister, in spite of having very dark brown hair, had a snub nose and never looked Jewish. Therefore, she could move around freely. With me, it was different; I have a long nose and chestnut-colored hair. During the entire occupation, Mama kept me hidden and bleached my hair with peroxide. My hair was so damaged by these treatments that I had to wear a white crocheted beret the whole time. Mama told everyone that I had bad sinuses, and that is why I had to be shielded from the sun. I think that people might have suspected the truth; however, they were tolerant.

We lived through the rest of the occupation relatively peacefully. ...

<sup>1627</sup> Kopówka and Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki*, 293; Testimony of Regina Szymańska, SFV, Interview code 28361. Regina Wirszubska Szymańska misidentifies the local pastor as Jakubowski, which was the name of his relatives with whom her family also interacted. See also Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part A, 928, 979, which repeats the misinformation and provides an incorrect Interview code (28351). The testimony of Adela Wirszubska Boddy (Interview code 45233), the younger sister, is far less reliable given her age at the time.

Later, Mama was offered a tiny room in exchange for her cleaning. We lived there until the end of the occupation. ... The landlady was the mother of a priest [Rev. Henryk Kardasz]. She was a very decent old woman, who embraced us warmly. She later arranged for a better job for Mama, cooking dinners for the clerks in the community office. Such a job made it possible to always get something to eat.<sup>1628</sup>

In Białystok, an unidentified priest called on his congregation to show compassion toward the Jews and to assist them.<sup>1629</sup> Rev. Canon Aleksander Chodyko, the dean of Białystok and pastor of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary parish, who was mentioned earlier, provided Jews with baptismal certificates.<sup>1630</sup> Although arrested by the Germans at one point, he was not deterred in his mission to help those in need.

Rev. Franciszek Pieściuk, pastor in the nearby town of Choroszcz, sent food to the family of Jakub Lichtensztejn in the Białystok ghetto.<sup>1631</sup>

After being issued a pass to leave the Białystok ghetto for a few hours, Józef Zeligman encountered a priest who had taught religion at the private high school where Zeligman was once the principal. The priest took Zeligman, who

<sup>1628</sup> Account of Regina Szymańska, “Fear and Dread,” in Gutenbaum and Latała, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 2, 301–2.

<sup>1629</sup> Żbikowski, *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, vol. 3, 129, 131; Huberband, *Kiddush Hashem*, 417–18. It is alleged that this same priest gave sermons against Bolsheviks and Jews under Soviet rule. However, that appears to be a bald claim, as such public pronouncements would have surely led to the priest’s incarceration.

<sup>1630</sup> Daniel Boćkowski, Ewa Rogalewska, and Joanna Sadowska, *Kres świata białostockich Żydów* (Białystok: Muzeum Wojska w Białymstoku; Galeria Śledzińskich w Białymstoku, 2013), 43; Szymon Datner, “Materiały z dziedziny ratownictwa Żydów w Polsce w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, no. 73 (January–March 1970): 133–38, at p. 133.

<sup>1631</sup> Anatol Leszczyński, “Zagłada ludności żydowskiej miasta Choroszczy,” *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, no. 79 (September 1971): 49–67, at p. 50. After a Soviet lieutenant was shot in Choroszcz on June 24, 1941, then under Soviet occupation, Rev. Franciszek Pieściuk was arrested by the Soviets, who claimed, falsely, that the shots were fired from the church tower. Although summarily sentenced to death, Rev. Pieściuk’s life was, for some reason, spared by the Soviet soldier assigned to execute him. When Rev. Pieściuk knelt and asked permission to pray, the soldier shot in the air and receded. However, three residents who went to intervene on Rev. Pieściuk’s behalf with the Soviet staff—Dr. Izaak Friedman (a Jew) and the orderlies, Jankiel Sidrański (a Jew) and Henryk Klimowicz (a Catholic)—were brutally massacred outside the town, having been stabbed with bayonets, their eyes plucked out and their tongues cut off. Suppressed by the Communist authorities, the memory of this event is now preserved in a monument at the execution site. See Krzysztof Bielawski, “They Gave Their Lives for a Priest,” Virtual Shtetl, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Internet: [https://www.sztetl.org.pl/en/cms/story/1175,they-gave-their-lives-for-a-priest/-/](https://www.sztetl.org.pl/en/cms/story/1175,they-gave-their-lives-for-a-priest/).

wore a Star of David, by the arm and escorted him along the road to his destination.<sup>1632</sup>

After escaping from the ghetto in January 1943, Henia, who had a pronounced Jewish appearance, went to a parish with her six-year-old son, Marek, and requested birth and baptismal certificates, which the priest provided. He also offered to shelter her son, but she declined. Henia and Marek lived on the outskirts of Białystok, passing as Christians. They survived the war.<sup>1633</sup>

Rev. Adam Abramowicz, the pastor of St. Roch's parish in Białystok, found shelters for Jews and provided them with false documents.<sup>1634</sup> A rabbi from a nearby town, who was acquainted with Rev. Abramowicz, directed Jakub Sławiński (then Hirsz) to the priest for assistance. Sławiński obtained a false birth and baptismal certificate and a school certificate which enabled him to get a job.<sup>1635</sup> Several children also survived with documents from St. Roch's parish.

During the occupation, Tadeusz Strzelczyk lived in the city of Białystok. He was married to a Jewish woman named Maria (née Józefowicz). In the same home lived his sister, Helena [née Strzelczyk] with her husband, Michal Kempinski [Michał Kępiński, who was a Jew]. In June 1941, upon the Nazi invasion of Białystok, the two families lived within the ghetto borders. However, in mid-1942, both families managed to escape to the Aryan side of the city. Soon afterwards, Maria Strzelczyk (née Józefowicz) received a request from Mrs. Kaplan to save her daughter, Pola (later Anna Brinstein), then three years old. Tadeusz and Maria agreed to help, but it was Michal Kempinski who fetched the child and brought her to Tadeusz Strzelczyk. Tadeusz took the girl into his home, arranged a secure shelter for his wife and the child and managed to acquire forged documents for them as well. [The forged birth and baptismal certificate under the name of Anna Strzelczyk was obtained by Stanisława Horodko from St. Roch's parish.<sup>1636</sup>] "Three weeks later, my sister-in-law, who had Aryan papers, as Helena Strzelczyk, née Woźniak, with her daughter, Anna Strzelczyk, were brought to the village of Kowale, about 40 kilometers away. The child had lung disease and the doctors recommended a change of climate," wrote Michal Kempinski in his testimony to Yad Vashem. "The foster-mother and the child survived safely there." After

<sup>1632</sup> Gustaw Kerszman, *Jak ginąć, to razem* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation, 2003), 151; translated as *If Perish We Must, Let It Be Together* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation, 2014). Zeligman perished in Majdanek in 1943.

<sup>1633</sup> Grubowska, *Haneczko, musisz przeżyć*, 37, 44, 75–76.

<sup>1634</sup> Boćkowski, Rogalewska, and Sadowska, *Kres świata białostockich Żydów*, 42–43; Szymon Datner, "Materiały z dziedziny ratownictwa Żydów w Polsce w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej," *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, no. 73 (January–March 1970): 133–38, at p. 133.

<sup>1635</sup> *Polacy ratujący Żydów w latach II wojny światowej: Materiały dla nauczyciela* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2008), card 42.

<sup>1636</sup> Tadeusz Strzelczyk, RD; Anna Cheszes Papers, USHMM, Internet: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn523472>; Rogalewska, *Getto białostockie*, 50.

the war, the Strzelczyks, along with Anna, moved to Lodz [Łódź] and brought up Anna as if she were their own daughter.<sup>1637</sup>

The Missionary Sisters of the Holy Family worked closely with Rev. Abramowicz, providing food and other forms of assistance to Jews.<sup>1638</sup> Rev. Abramowicz was arrested by the Germans at one point but was not deterred in his mission to help the downtrodden.

After escaping from Treblinka, Avrom-Leyzer Rubin, a 35-year-old blacksmith from Goniądz, made his way to Białystok, where he hid in the crypt of St. Roch's Church for more than a month. Afterwards he was sheltered in the home Ada Liskowska, a Polish woman. A Polish cobbler put him in touch with Jewish underground liaisons who brought him to partisans in the forest.<sup>1639</sup>

Maryla Różycka, a liaison officer and courier for the Jewish underground in Białystok, acknowledged the help Rev. Abramowicz extended to Jews.<sup>1640</sup> On missions between Białystok and Nowogródek, Różycka would stay at Catholic parishes.<sup>1641</sup> She recounted how a Jewish child was taken from the ghetto in Białystok to a parish rectory outside the city.<sup>1642</sup>

**M**ira Kwasowicer (then Glikfeld, later Becker) was 21 years old when she and her husband were taken out of the Białystok ghetto in the summer of 1943 and put on a transport headed to Treblinka. They jumped off the train. Her husband was shot dead, but Mira managed to escape and began walking back to Białystok.

With the help of several random Poles she happened on along the way, Mira eventually arrived at the house of Marianna Kazuczyk, a prewar acquaintance who agreed to shelter her in a hideout in her attic. (Mira was not the only Jew that Marianna sheltered or otherwise helped.) Marianna, a widow with a teenage son named Zygmunt, was involved in the black market with some German soldiers,

<sup>1637</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 761–62.

<sup>1638</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 1st ed., 165–66; Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 48–49, 51–52, 55; Maria Halina Horn, *A Tragic Victory* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1988), 82.

<sup>1639</sup> Chaika Grossman, *The Underground Army: Fighters of the Bialystok Ghetto* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1987), 331; Moshe Shlomo Ben-Meir (Treshansky) and A. L. Fayans, *Our Hometown Goniądz* (Tel Aviv: The Committee of Goniądz Association in U.S.A. and in Israel, 1960), 701 ff.

<sup>1640</sup> Tadeusz Krahel, "Ksiądz prałat Adam Abramowicz," *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 154 (February 2003).

<sup>1641</sup> Tadeusz Krahel, "Il salvataggio degli ebrei da parte del clero dell'arcidiocesi di Vilnius nel 1941–1944," in Mikrut, *Perseguitati per la fede*, 643–61, at p. 653.

<sup>1642</sup> Tadeusz Krahel, "Il salvataggio degli ebrei da parte del clero dell'arcidiocesi di Vilnius nel 1941–1944," in Mikrut, *Perseguitati per la fede*, 643–61, at p. 654.

so it was risky to keep Mira in her home. After several weeks, Marianna decided to transfer her charge to her sister-in-law, Maria Kazuczyk, a widow who lived alone in a small house on the edge of the village of Janowicze, near Białystok.

Maria was a tertiary, a lay person affiliated to a religious order who lived outside an organized religious community. Maria knew full well that hiding a Jew was punishable by death. In her Yad Vashem testimony, Mira described Maria, “as a devout and pious old lady who had a heart of gold. She could not read or write, and was extremely poor: her only assets were a few chickens and a pig. There was just one pot in the house: the pig ate first, then the two women.”

Villagers became aware of Mira’s presence, but no one betrayed them. The village headman, who was responsible for registering all residents under pain of death, feared for the lives of his villagers and wanted Mira to leave. Maria appealed to the local pastor, Rev. Walerian Sześciuk, in the nearby village of Juchnowiec Kościelny. He stood up for Maria, protected her charge, and the arrangement was allowed to persist.

One day, German soldiers arrived in the village with dogs. They searched every house looking for partisans. Mira hid inside an old stove, and Maria locked the door and went to church to pray for Mira’s safety. Fortunately, the Germans passed her house. After the area was liberated, Mira returned to Białystok. She left for Germany and later immigrated to the United States.<sup>1643</sup>

The parish rectory in Tykocin, near Białystok, was the local hub of Polish underground activity. Both the pastor, Rev. Julian Łosiewski, and his vicar, Rev. Czesław Bruliński, were members of the Home Army. With the knowledge of the pastor, the parish organist, Jan Smółko, also a Home Army member, accessed church documents and records to issue false birth and baptismal certificates, which were then used to obtain Kennkarten for Jews. These activities were carried out under the nose of the commander of the local German gendarmerie, who was billeted in the rectory. Together with his wife, Jan Smółko rescued the Turek brothers and four members of the Goldzin family.<sup>1644</sup>

During the occupation, Jan and Władysława [Władysława] Smolko [Smółko] were AK [Home Army] activists who lived in the town of Tykocin in the Białystok [Białystok] district. In his official capacity as organist and registrar at the local church, Smolko had access to the birth and death registries. In January 1943, before the first Aktion in the Białystok ghetto, Michael Turek and his brother, Menachem, were smuggled out of the ghetto by a Polish acquaintance who hid them temporarily in his home. The Smolkos, after being approached

<sup>1643</sup> Kazuczyk Family, RD; Testimony of Mira Kwasowicer-Glikfeld, JHI, record group 301, no. 2007; Marianna Kazuczyk, *Memory and Identity*, Internet: <http://pamiecitozsamosc.pl/en/marianna-kazuczyk-her-husband-son-zygmunt-maria-kazuczyk>.

<sup>1644</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 497; Rogalewska, *Getto białostockie*, 190.

by the acquaintance, took the Turek brothers in, provided them with Aryan papers, and supported them financially for about a year and a half, until the liberation.<sup>1645</sup>

Rev. Łosiewski encouraged Bronisława Chwiesińska, a parishioner who turned to him for guidance, to shelter Pejsach (Henryk) Zdrojewicz, whom the priest had befriended earlier. Zdrojewicz and Bella Białostocka remained in the care of Bronisława and her sons, Eugeniusz and Ludwik, until the arrival of the Soviet army.<sup>1646</sup>

**A**fter escaping from Tykocin, Szmuł (Shmuel) Ismach (b. 1932) moved about in the vicinity passing as a Catholic Pole and working as a farmhand. While residing with the Wnorowski family in Makowo, in the parish of Kobylin, his employer took him to church to make his confession at Eastertime, a religious duty. The boy didn't know what to say to the priest, and waited for the priest to question him. All went well. After the war, he was reunited with his mother and brother.<sup>1647</sup>

**T**wo Jewish girls from Knyszyn, Szulamit (Shulamit) Pitluk and Perla Choroszucha, both born in 1941, survived the war under false identities, in the care of Polish families. The children's Jewish origin was widely known or suspected, as they lived openly with their new families.

Szulamit Pitluk (later Sharon Silver) became Anna, the daughter of Regina and Czesław Ostrowski. Szulamit had been brought to the local police station as an abandoned child, and then taken in by the Ostrowskis. She was baptized by Rev. Kazimierz Cyganek, the vicar of Knyszyn. After the war, Szulamit was kidnapped by her uncle during the night and brought to the United States.

Perla Choroszucha became Regina, the daughter of Bronisława and Stanisław Jaromiński (Jeromiński) of the village of Chobotki. Several Polish famers were involved in her rescue, with the acquiescence of local officials. She too was baptized by a priest in Knyszyn for the sake of her cover.<sup>1648</sup>

<sup>1645</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 727–28.

<sup>1646</sup> Tykocin—Kolonie Rowki, Społeczne Muzeum Żydów Białegostoku i regionu (Museum of the Jews of Białystok and the Region), Internet: <https://www.jewishbialystok.pl/Tykocin--kolonie-Rowki,5540,7574>; Testimony of Małgorzata Finkiel-Zdrojewicz, Institute of National Remembrance Jedwabne investigation, July 21, 2001.

<sup>1647</sup> Testimony of Szmuł Ismach, JHI, record group 301, number 2735; Testimony of Shmuel Ismach, SFV, Interview code 7800.

<sup>1648</sup> Testimony of Stanisław Jaromiński, JHI, record group 301, no. 1468; Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 738; Krzysztof Bagiński, "Wystawa 'Polacy ratujący Żydów,'" *Nowy Goniec Knyszyński*, no. 4 (142) (April 2016); "Sharon Pitluk Silver's Memories," April 1, 2018, Internet: <https://www.knyszyn.pl/asp/sharon-pitluk->

In his Sunday sermons, an unidentified priest in Grajewo, a small town northeast of Łomża, appealed to his parishioners to come to the aid of children—among them Jewish children—in the orphanage in nearby Szczuczyn. The priest in question may have been Rev. Aleksander Peża, mentioned earlier.

In response to the appeal, Franciszek and Regina Blaszkó took in four-year-old Benjamin Katz, whom they had baptized as Remigiusz. In 1947, they surrendered the boy to the Jewish Committee in Kraków.<sup>1649</sup>

The Catholic priest in Ostryna, a town northeast of Grodno, counselled the faithful at mass not to participate in the German persecution of Jews. He smuggled food into the ghetto.<sup>1650</sup> The pastor at the time was Rev. Józef Plewa.

Similarly, the Catholic pastor of Holszany, near Oszmiana—Rev. Józef Chomski, a Home Army chaplain—publicly rebuked those who wanted to plunder Jewish property. In his sermons, he condemned the killing of Jews and urged his parishioners not to harm Jews. He arranged shelter for Jews in the convent of the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Family located near the church.<sup>1651</sup>

Shoshana Feigelson lived in Wilno until 1941. After the German conquest, she hid in a convent as a Polish woman for six months. In 1942, she left the convent and married a Christian. In 1944, she gave birth to a daughter named Anna in Holszany. Her Polish husband was conscripted into the Soviet Army and fell in battle. Shoshana moved inside the redrawn borders of Poland in 1946 and lived with her husband's family. She placed her daughter, Anna, in a Jewish children's home in Łódź. Their subsequent fate is not clear.<sup>1652</sup>

Fr. Andrew of Jesus (Andrzej od Jezusa, actually, Franciszek Gdowski) was the superior of the Discalced Carmelite monastery in Wilno and the pastor of

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silver8217s-memories,239,artykul,172,999; JoAnne Viviano, "Families Recount 'Incredible Scars' of Holocaust at Statehouse Commemoration," *The Columbus Dispatch*, April 10, 2013.

<sup>1649</sup> Righteous Medal Award Ceremony, May 28, 2019, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/pl/aktualnosci/ceremonia-sprawiedliwych-w-lazienkach-krolewskich-w-warszawie>.

<sup>1650</sup> Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part A, 932.

<sup>1651</sup> Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part B, 1057; Shepsl Kaplan, "The Outbreak of World War II," in Shabtai Kaplan and Meir Shli [Shely], eds., *The Life and Destruction of Olshan* (New York: JewishGen, 2016), 131; Testimony of Szabtaj Kaplan, YVA, file O.3/1828 (Item 3739737); Cyprian Wilanowski, *Konspiracyjna działalność duchowieństwa katolickiego na Wileńszczyźnie w latach 1939–1944* (Warsaw: Pax, 2000), 98. There were two priests by the name of Chomski residing in Holszany: Józef Chomski was the pastor; the other was Antoni Chomski. Jewish sources refer to the priest only by his surname.

<sup>1652</sup> Anna Feigelson, Ghetto Fighters House Archives (Israel), catalog no. 3135, registry no. 11478R"M.

St. Teresa of Avila Church, adjacent to the ancient city gate (Ostra Brama) which housed the chapel and revered icon of Our Lady of Ostra Brama.

Fr. Gdowski hid a number of Jews in the monastery. He tended to their spiritual needs by setting aside a well-camouflaged room which his “guests” used as a synagogue.<sup>1653</sup> Fr. Gdowski collaborated with Anton Schmid, an Austrian sergeant (Feldwebel) of the German army stationed in Wilno, who was in charge of a workshop that employed about one hundred Jews. Schmid helped a number of Jews to escape from the ghetto. Fr. Gdowski supplied false birth and baptismal certificates to some of those Jews, among them Hermann Adler, his wife, Anita Distler, a Viennese opera singer, and Luisa Emaitis.

A refugee from Germany, Adler fled to Czechoslovakia, then to Poland, arriving in Wilno when it was under Lithuanian rule. Following the German invasion of June 1941, Adler was confined in the ghetto. Like other Jews, he was conscripted for labour duties outside the ghetto. One day, finding himself outside the ghetto past the curfew for Jewish workers, he had nowhere to go. He decided to put his fate in the hands of unknown priests. According to his testimony:

I heard the bells ring. It was the end of the mass at St. Theresa church. My legs carried me there. I rang the bell at the presbytery door. The older man introduced himself: the parish priest Andrzej Gdowski.

The church of St. Theresa, as well as the Chapel of the Gates of Dawn [Ostra Brama], belonged to the Monastery of the Discalced Carmelites at the time. There were other premises of the monastery next to the former defence wall of the city: cells of the brothers Carmelites, the library, the refectory and a beer house. The Discalced Carmelites looked after single elderly people, orphans, and served the parish of more than a dozen thousand church-goers.

Parish priest Andrzej (called Franciszek) Gdowski was not only a Christian of noble and humane soul. He had studies at Linz University, was consecrated as Father Andrzej at the Győr (Hungary) Discalced Carmelite Monastery, and he had supervised Carmelite fraternities ...

Ostra Brama Monastery with the Black Madonna [Mother of Mercy] Chapel was famous in the entire Polish speaking region to which Vilnius [Wilno] City belonged for quite a while. Then I, with no rights, persecuted fugitive of the ghetto, became friends with parish priest Andrzej Gdowski, who, risking his life would hide me in the times of danger.

Adler’s first-person narrative switches at this point to the third person:

Herman Adler used to receive shelter frequently at the Discalced Carmelite Monastery. To avoid being caught and locked in the ghetto he would rush to the Carmelite brothers and would often sleep in the monastery and it was there he started writing his poetry and prose books. However, for Anita the doors of the male monastery were closed. Hermann decided

<sup>1653</sup> Friedman, *Their Brothers’ Keepers*, 125–26.

to look for a place to hide his wife. Father Andrzej referred him to sergeant Anton Schmid, the head of the Wehrmacht distribution point. The parish priest had no doubts that Schmid would help. Quite recently Anton had visited the parish priest asking to issue a baptism certificate to one girl who had escaped from the ghetto. Anton Schmid was not German, he was Austrian, from Vienna. He hated the Nazis and would arrange a good certificate for Hermann too. Actually, Schmid gave much more: he let the Adler couple stay in his official three-room-flat. Father Gdowski got them the documents. These were the passports of the members of the parish [who had] died and [were] secretly buried, which relatives agreed to give to the persecuted ghetto fugitives. When living in Schmid's flat, Hermann used to visit the Discalced Carmelite Monastery. He was not the only guest there. Other fugitives found shelter in the monastery, next to the railway. It was a group of Jews who managed to escape from a train of people deported on 14 June 1941. Here they believed better times would come when the deportations were over. However, better times did not come, the Germans occupied the city and the fugitives had to stay in the cellars of the monastery.

When living in the flat of the head of the distribution point, Hermann and Anita were safe but they also tried to help other ghetto prisoners. They persuaded Anton Schmid to transport the groups of prisoners to other towns where the liquidations were not taking place yet. Anton Schmid transported about 300 people from the ghetto with a government truck from Vilnius to Voronovo [Werenowo] or Bialystok [Białystok] to work in factories.

However, Anton Schmid was turned in by somebody and in the middle of January 1942 he was arrested by the Gestapo. During the search, the Adler couple were in the back room and managed to escape through another entrance. Once again the road led them to Father Andrzej. "Gdowski told us the addresses of his friends in Warsaw and provided us with the documents and we left."

Their way back to the West was probably even more agonizing than their escape to the East. The Adler couple were the witnesses and participants of the Warsaw rebellion. After Warsaw they were imprisoned in Hungary, [then] in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany ... However, they both survived ...<sup>1654</sup>

The Gestapo arrested all of the Carmelites, including Fr. Gdowski, in March 1942. They suffered in prisons and concentration camps for the duration of the war. Schmid was put on military trial and sentenced to death. He was executed by firing squad on April 13, 1942. Adler wrote about the heroic deeds of Schmid and Fr. Gdowski in his memoir *Ostra Brama: Legende aus der Zeit des großen Untergangs* (Zürich: Helios, 1945), and paid tribute to their heroism. Schmid was recognized by Yad Vashem, but Fr. Gdowski was not.

**F**r. Gdowski is also credited with rescuing Jewish children at the Carmelite boarding school in Wilno. One of the Jewish charges at this institution was Michael Stołowicki (Stolowitzky), who had settled in Wilno at the beginning of the war, after fleeing from Warsaw with his mother, Lydia, and his Catholic

<sup>1654</sup> Dalija Epšteinaitė, "Gates of Dawn Miracle," in Danutė Selčinskaja, ed., *Gyvybę ir duoną nešančios rankos / Hands Bringing Life and Bread*, vol. 4 (Vilnius: Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, 2009), 66–71.

nanny, Getruda Babilińska. His mother died shortly after their arrival in Wilno. The young boy was cared for by his Polish nanny, who passed him off as her own.

After the Germans occupied Wilno in the summer of 1941, Babilińska had to seek protection for young Michael, who not only was circumcised but also lacked proper identity documents. She confided in Fr. Gdowski, who agreed to take him into the church boarding school without charge. Fr. Gdowski was known to preach sermons about the importance of helping one's neighbour.

She [Getruda Babilińska] concluded that the church could be their only refuge. Michael remembered the first day he went there with Getruda. In a blend of fear and embarrassment, he followed her into the big hall of the Ostra Brama Church. The cement arches supporting the ceiling, the paintings of the crucified Jesus, and the gilded altar stirred mixed feelings in him. It didn't take Getruda long to make him understand why he had to go with her. He understood very well that, for the outside world, he was the son of a Christian mother, and the pretense he had to adopt was a pledge for his life. ...

The church was full of local residents and a group of German soldiers and officers who came to Sunday mass. The priest, Andras Gedovsky [Andrzej Gdowski], passed among the worshippers, nodding to people he knew. Michael looked at him with curiosity, examined his kind face and his white robe as he moved like an angel hovering toward the altar and sank down in prayer. ...

Father Gedovsky mounted the pulpit and preached a sermon about the importance of helping your neighbor, quoting the appropriate passages from the New Testament. ...

After mass, the priest stood in the door of the church, smiling, shaking hands with the worshippers, and exchanging a few polite words with everyone. ...

Getruda waited until everyone had gone and then went to the priest, who looked at her affectionately. Ever since Lydia's death, Getruda had come to church with Michael almost every Sunday.

"Father," she murmured, "can I talk with you in private?"

The priest looked at her gently, "Of course, my child."

She asked Michael to wait for her on a bench in the church, and let the priest lead her to the office. Once inside, the priest closed the door. His eyes looked at the woman's face lined with distress and anxiety. Out the window, the day turned grey and long shadows crept into the room.

Getruda wanted to speak, but tears choked her voice. Uncontrollable weeping racked her body. The priest put his warm hand on her shoulder.

"How can I help, my child?" His voice soothed her.

"I don't know what to do, Father," she said at last. "I don't know who to turn to."

He waited patiently for her to tell him her distress. ...

"It's about my child," said Getruda.

"The sweet child with the blue eyes sitting there outside?"

"Yes."

Fear of what she was to reveal in this room nailed her to the spot. Her body was shaking, but she knew she had to go on. The priest was the only person she could pour her heart out to, the only one she could trust.

She told him the truth and he looked at her with eyes opened wide in surprise.

“I didn’t realize that the child was a Jew,” he said.

She called Michael.

“Do you know who Jesus was?” asked the priest.

“The man everybody prays to,” replied the child. He remembered the prayers he had heard in church.

“And what is the Holy Trinity?”

Michael frowned and repeated what Gertruda had recited to him: “The Father ... the Son ... the Holy Spirit.”

The priest sprinkled holy water on him and said a prayer.

“From now on, you’re a Christian like all of us,” he said. “Tomorrow morning you’ll start attending the church school.”

“But,” she stammered, “I don’t have money to pay.”

“I’m not worried,” he said. “God will reward me.”

The priest sat Michael on his lap and stroked his hair.

“You want to hear a story?” he asked.

“Yes.”

“In chapter two of the book of Daniel, there’s a story of a king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, who woke up one night in panic after a horrible dream. In his dream, the king saw a statue with a head of gold. A big stone suddenly smashed the statue into slivers. The king called the sages of Babylon and asked them to interpret his dream. None of them could. When the prophet Daniel learned of this, he came to the king and interpreted. The statue, he said, is your kingdom. The stone symbolizes the kingdom of Heaven that decided to smash your kingdom to dust.”

A slight smile hovered over the priest’s lips.

“You know what is the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar?” he asked.

Gertruda nodded. The comparison with the Nazis was obvious.

“I promise you,” said the priest, “that the end of the wicked will be as the end of Nebuchadnezzar’s statue.”

She left with Michael and hurried home. The child was saved, at least for the time being, and that was what was most important. She wasn’t worried about his Christian baptism. She was sure that, just as Michael was born a Jew, he would go back to being a Jew when the war was over.

On the morning Michael was about to enter the school of Ostra Brama Church, Gertruda dressed him in his best clothes, packed up his belongings in a small suitcase, and went with him to Father Gedovsky’s office, where they were greeted warmly.

“Leave the boy here and go in peace,” he said. “Here he’ll be protected from every evil.”

Gertruda kissed Michael’s sad eyes.

“Don’t worry,” she said. “I’ll come to visit you often.”

The priest went with Michael to the school building next to the church, showed him his bed in one of the dormitory rooms, and then put him in class. The children looked at him with curiosity and at recess tried to size him up. He said what Gertruda taught him to say: that his mother was the widow of a Polish officer and that he was her only son. ...

Despite the strict studies and the fear that accompanied Michael day and night, life in the boarding school was rather comfortable. There was enough food, he had his own bed, and Father Gedovsky kept an eye on him. The children in the boarding school were

divided, as always, into better and worse. Some wanted to be his friend. Other looked for his weak points and teased him a lot. He was glad to make friends with children he was fond of, and avoided responding to the teasing from the others.<sup>1655</sup>

Stolowitzky recalled that he even became an altar boy.

I grew up as Gertrude's son. We lived together in an apartment in Vilnius [Wilno] very near the Vilnius ghetto. I used to see how they took Jews from the ghetto. I was outside it thanks to her. There was this very large sign outside our house that said, If you are caught hiding a Jew you will be executed without a trial.

Just outside the ghetto was the main church of Vilnius. Gertrude was Catholic, and she enlisted the priest's help in hiding me. I became an altar boy. Every Sunday, there I was, dressed in a white gown with a red apron.<sup>1656</sup>

The following account appears in *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*:

At the outbreak of war, Mr. Stolowicki [Stołowicki] was living in Paris. When the Germans occupied the city of Warsaw, Mrs. Stolowicka decided to escape with her four-year-old son, Michael, and his nanny, Gertruda Babilinska [Babilińska], a teacher by profession and a native of Gdańsk [Gdańsk] (Danzig). The three made their way to Vilna [Wilno], Lithuania, en route to Paris. When, however, the mother discovered that her husband had died, she suffered a stroke and, realizing that her days were numbered, asked Babilinska to do all she could to take her son to Israel. After Stolowicka died, Babilinska continued looking after Michael. After she informed some priests that the boy was Jewish, they took Michael on as an acolyte in a church in Vilna. Although the Germans were in the habit of conducting impromptu raids on the apartments of the refugees from Warsaw, Babilinska continued to look after Michael and care for his needs. Babilinska, who was fluent in German, worked as an amanuensis, writing petitions to the authorities on behalf of local farmers, for which she received eggs, dairy products which she used to smuggle into the ghetto for her friends. After the war, Babilinska returned with Michael to Gdansk to take leave of her family. Although her family tried to persuade her to stay, she stood by her promise to Michael's mother and took him to the displaced persons camps in Germany, and a passage was arranged for them on the SS Exodus. Despite assurances by members of the Hagana that they would look after the boy and make sure he reached Israel safely, Babilinska insisted on coming with him, declaring her willingness to throw in her lot with the other clandestine immigrants. Babilinska and Michael endured hardships on the journey to Israel, until the ship was ordered back to Hamburg. Undaunted, Babilinska embarked with Michael on the SS Transylvania, reaching the shores of Israel in 1948. Babilinska settled

<sup>1655</sup> Ram Oren, *Gertruda's Oath: A Child, a Promise, and a Heroic Escape During World War II* (New York: Doubleday/Random House, 2009), 188–93.

<sup>1656</sup> Leora Kahn and Rachel Hager, eds., “When They Came to Take My Father”: *Voices of the Holocaust* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1996), 150. This rescue is also described in Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous*, 227, and in Gay Block and Malka Drucker, *Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1992), 166–69.

in Israel, where she raised Michael as her son, and was awarded Israeli citizenship. She passed away in Israel at a ripe old age.<sup>1657</sup>

The Redemptorist Congregation, among them Fathers Franciszek Świątek and Leon Fraś, were engaged in rescue activities in Wilno, issuing birth and baptismal certificates, preparing for baptism Jews who wanted to convert, and providing hiding places and material assistance. Among those helped was the family of Rabbi Salit, who were sheltered by a Polish family, and a woman known as Mrs. Mościcka and her daughter. Unfortunately, the latter were denounced by a Jewish relative. Although tortured by the Gestapo, Mrs. Mościcka's daughter divulged no information about Rev. Świątek. Mrs. Mościcka and her daughter were executed. Warned about their fate, Rev. Świątek went into hiding.<sup>1658</sup>

Isaac Kowalski, who was active in the Jewish underground in Wilno, described the assistance provided by a number of priests, among them Rev. Bolesław Sperski, the pastor of All Saints Church on Rudnicka Street, near the ghetto. Rev. Sperski counselled parishioners to help Jews and was known for his caring attitude toward the Jews. He permitted a tunnel to be dug from the ghetto to the church, by which Jews escaped from the ghetto.

There were occasions when priests met Jewish workers on the street and encouraged them by telling them that they would soon be free.

Our friend, the old Masha, told me one day, when she met me on the way to the ghetto from work, that her Pastor [Rev. Bolesław Sperski] from the “Wszystkich Świętych” [All Saints] church which was located only a few feet from the ghetto gates, advised her during confession that she should help us with everything possible.

The Jews in the ghetto knew about his [i.e., Rev. Sperski's] human attitude to our suffering people and dug a tunnel from the ghetto to the church. A few escaped on the day of the liquidation of the ghetto through the church to the city and then to the woods.<sup>1659</sup>

According to another report, Rev. Sperski sheltered a Jew in a crypt of the church for eight months.<sup>1660</sup>

<sup>1657</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 65–66.

<sup>1658</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 717; Maciej Sadowski, *Redemptoryści polscy w latach 1939–1945* (Kraków: Homo Dei, 2005), 325; Marian Brudzisz, “Redemptorist Ministry among the Polish in the Soviet Socialist Republics of Lithuania and Byelorussia, 1939–1990,” *Spicilegium Historicum Congregationis SSmi Redemptoris*, vol. 61 (2013): 57–121, at pp. 79–80, 94.

<sup>1659</sup> Isaac Kowalski, *A Secret Press in Nazi Europe: The Story of a Jewish United Partisan Organization* (New York: Central Guide Publishers, 1969), 217.

<sup>1660</sup> Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 385, based on J.M. [Józef Mackiewicz], “Ghetto wileńskie,” *Lwów i Wilno*, no. 17 (1947). This Jewish man survived the war and left for Italy. Stanislovas Rubinovas (b. 1930 as Aron Rubinov, or Rubinow) presents a rather odd attribution to

Pola Wawer, a young Jewish doctor from Wilno, mentions the assistance of Rev. Julian Jankowski, a vicar at All Saints Church, who obtained for her a birth and baptismal certificate under the name of Zofia Januszkiewicz from the parish in Podbrodzie.<sup>1661</sup> Rev. Witold Pietkun, another vicar at All Saints Church, helped his brother, Jan Pietkun, who was hiding three Jews, and then took the Jews in when they had to leave that hideout for their safety.<sup>1662</sup>

Isaac Kowalski mentions rescuers from a cross-section of Wilno's Christian population:

Professors [Aleksander] Januszkiewicz and Michajda [Kornel Michejda]<sup>1663</sup> helped their friends who were Jewish doctors.

... [Rev.] Dr Jazas Sztakauskas [Juozas Stakauskas], director of the government archives, together with a Lithuanian teacher Zemajtis and the Polish [Benedictine] nun Milkulska [Maria Mikulska], hid 12 Jews: Dr. Alexander Libo with wife and daughter, Grigori Jaszunski and wife, Engineer Jacob with wife and daughter, Miss Ester Jafe, Mrs. Bak and her son, the young artist Zalman [Samuel].

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Rev. Bolesław Sperski—as perceived by an 11 or 12-year-old boy—that is out of keeping with other accounts. In July 1941, Rubinovas's mother approached Rev. Julian Jankowski (misidentified as the pastor), asking to be baptized together with her son. After passing the test on religion, they were christened by Rev. Witold Pietkun. Rubinovas became an altar boy and his mother was employed as a housekeeper at the rectory. Several months later, Rev. Jankowski told her to leave because the canon, apparently referring to Rev. Sperski, learned of their presence and disapproved. Allegedly, Rev. Sperski told Mrs. Rubinov to surrender herself to the Gestapo or he would denounce them. Mrs. Rubinov and her son wandered in the countryside for the duration of the occupation, passing as Poles and begging for food and shelter. See the testimony of Stanislovas Rubinovas, SFV, Interview code 13165; Stanislovas Rubinas, *Miške ir scenoje* (Vilnius: Versus aureus, 2013). Rev. Sperski was arrested twice by the Germans, in the fall of 1941 and March 1942, and by the Soviets in December 1946. He was sentenced to five years in a labour camp, where he died in April 1951.

<sup>1661</sup> Pola Wawer, *Poza gettem i obozem* (Warsaw: Volumen, 1993), 17–18, 83–84. Roza Fartus also mentions the helpfulness of an unidentified priest from All Saints Church. After learning of her predicament, the priest allowed her to remain in the church until evening and provided her with a yellow patch that enabled her to join a group of Jewish workers returning to the ghetto. See the testimony of Roza Fartus, JHI, record group 301, no. 5589.

<sup>1662</sup> Tadeusz Krahel, "Il salvataggio degli ebrei da parte del clero dell'arcidiocesi di Vilnius nel 1941–1944," in Mikrut, *Perseguitati per la fede*, 643–61, at p. 657; Krahel, *Martyrologia duchowienstwa archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945*, 334. See also *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 607 (entry for Jan Pietkun).

<sup>1663</sup> On Kornel Michejda see *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 511–12. Doctors Kornel Michejda and Aleksander Januszkiewicz performed operations for Jews in the Wilno ghetto. Dr. Michejda collected a large sum of money from Poles to assist with the contribution that the Germans imposed on the Jews. See Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 22, 314.

Profesor Aka [Jan Oko], Professor Czizowski [Tadeusz Czeżowski],<sup>1664</sup> Professor Petruszewicz [Kazimierz Petruszewicz], lawyer Josef Czelecki [Józef Cielecki]<sup>1665</sup> helped hide some Jewish acquaintances. Merila [Maryla] Abramowicz-Wolska<sup>1666</sup> made counterfeit papers for Jews. At 16 Puhulanka [Pohulanka] Street she hid tens of Jewish people and helped them with food and money. Mrs. Wiktoria Grzmiliewska [Grzmielewska]<sup>1667</sup> hid scores of Jews in every apartment and showed friendliness to them. It is in place here to mention Mrs. Maria Fedeka [Fedecka],<sup>1668</sup> who saved a lot of Jews from death, by helping them to run from the ghetto. The above women carried out their mission from pure human motives.

A great many Aryan domestics showed human feelings for their employers, by helping them with food and in some cases, even hid them. Aryan governesses hid Jewish children, whom they helped to raise. Some help for Jews came from Catholic priests. Markowicz [Rev. Tadeusz Makarewicz, pastor of St. John the Baptist church], a Pole, and Lipniunas [Alfonsas Lipniūnas] had spoken to their people to give back Jewish property. Lipniunas was arrested. Father Krupowicius [Mykolas Krupavičius], who showed sympathy to the Jews was sent away to a German concentration camp, Tilzit [Tilsit]. Father Waltkaus [Mykolas Vaitkus] hid the Trupianski child in a Catholic orphanage, and helped save other Jewish children.<sup>1669</sup> ...

Eta Lipenholc tells about Leokadia Piechowska and others. ... “We were 24 people saved at this place called Tuskulany farm. ... The Polish people who kept us for a whole year until the liberation, were Mrs. Stankiewicz and Mrs. Gieda.”

Dr. Anthony Panski [Antoni Pański], the Social Democrat, helped the writer Herman Kruk financially. ...

In his book Balberiszki [Balberyszski]<sup>1670</sup> describes a neighbor, Kozłowska [Zofia Kozłowska], who returned golden valuables even after the Balberiszkis had been in the ghetto for quite some time and thus helped them to overcome hunger and need.

<sup>1664</sup> On the Czeżowski family see *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 160. On the rescue activities of Professor Tadeusz Czeżowski, Dr. Jan Janowicz, and Maria Fedeka, see the account of Alexander Libo in Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, 320.

<sup>1665</sup> On Józef and Maria Cielecki see *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 146; Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 176–77.

<sup>1666</sup> On Maryla and Feliks Wolski see Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 466; Wawer, *Poza gettem i obozem*, 42–43.

<sup>1667</sup> On Wiktoria Grzmielewska see Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 211, 466; Wawer, *Poza gettem i obozem*, 42–43. Grzmielewska helped in the rescue of Szmerke Kaczerginski, who was sheltered by Maryla and Feliks Wolski, as well as Adolf and Lena Smilg. She was recognized by Yad Yashem in 2018.

<sup>1668</sup> On Maria Fedeka see *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 212; Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 194.

<sup>1669</sup> The archival records of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum in Vilnius identify additional Lithuanian clerics (who came to Wilno after that city was given over to Lithuania in 1939) as rescuers of Jews: Vincentas Dvaranauskas, Klemensas Razminas, Norbertas Skurskis, Juozas Vaičiūnas, Stasys Valiukėnas, and Jonas Žemaitis. See Viktorija Sakaitė, “Lietuvos dvasininkai—žydų gelbėtojai,” *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 2 (12) (2002): 222–32.

<sup>1670</sup> Mendel Balberyszski, *Stronger Than Iron: The Destruction of Vilna Jewry 1941–1945: An Eyewitness Account* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2010).

Victoria Nazmilewski [Wiktoria Grzmielewska], Maria Fedecki [Fedecka] ... Maria Wol-ski [Maryla Wolska], at one time or other, helped the partisan-poet Szmerke Kaczerginski and other Jews. ...

Jadzia [Janina] Dudziec was a practicing Catholic. She was in contact with the Scheinbaum-group and supplied them with small arms. She perished August 13, 1944.

Irena Adamowicz was also a devoted Catholic. She was a very active scout-leader and very friendly with some Chaluz-leaders. Irena volunteered to be a courier for the Hechalutz and travelled many times to various ghettos in Poland and Lithuania. ...

In the last days before Vilna [Wilno] was liberated, Esther Geler, wounded by a bullet, Robotnik and Feiga Itkin, the last survivors of the H.K.P., managed to escape. They came to a Polish woman in the Antokol section of Siostry Miłosierdzi [Miłosierdzia—Sisters of Charity] Street, where Mrs. Guriono let them sleep in the basement and gave them food, until the liberation of the city. ...

It is also worthwhile commenting those nationals who, although they did not proffer any direct help, yet they made believe they did not see the Jew, disguised as an Aryan, when they met him in the street; they did not run as informers to the authorities ...<sup>1671</sup>

The aforementioned Kornel Michejda, who was recognized by Yad Vashem, sheltered two colleagues from the Stefan Batory University, Michał Reicher and Ignacy Abramowicz, in his summer cottage in Gulbiny, near Rzesza, outside of Wilno. Archbishop Romuald Jałbrzykowski entrusted them to the care of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, who relocated to Gulbiny after their convent in Wilno had been shut down by the Germans.<sup>1672</sup>

Kornel Michejda, a professor in the Stefan Bathory [Batory] University in Vilna [Wilno], was known before the war for his liberal views and as a friend of the Jews. When the Germans occupied Vilna in June 1941, Professor Michejda gave asylum to his friends Professor Michal [Michał] Reicher and Professor Ignacy Abramowicz, moving them to a hiding place on his summer estate in the nearby village of Gulbiny. In order to keep the presence of the two Jewish fugitives secret, Professor Michejda handed the estate over to nuns who had nowhere to live after the Soviet authorities, which had ruled Vilna until the German occupation, drove them out of the convent that had been their home. Paid by Michejda to do so, the nuns were required to care for and safeguard the two Jewish fugitives and provide for their every need. Reicher and Abramowicz remained in their hiding place under the protection of Professor Michejda until their liberation in September 1944. After the war, they remained in Poland, earning reputations as outstanding men of science.<sup>1673</sup>

Herman Kruk, the chronicler of the Wilno ghetto, describes the reaction of the largely Polish population of Wilno to events set in motion by the ghettoization of the Jews in September 1941.

<sup>1671</sup> Kowalski, *A Secret Press in Nazi Europe*, 216–25.

<sup>1672</sup> Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 44–45. Michał Reicher became the deputy head of the medical corps of the Wilno District of the Home Army.

<sup>1673</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 511–12.

Today [September 8, 1941], at Ostra Brama [a chapel, located above this ancient gate, housed the icon of the revered Madonna of Ostra Brama—Ed.], there was a prayer in honor of the martyrdom of the Jews. People say that Jews are now bringing in full bundles, which they got in the city as gifts from Christians in the street.

In the street, at a Maistas [meat cooperative established by the Soviet authorities], masses of Christians brought packages of meat and distributed them to the Jewish workers marching to the ghetto.

The sympathy of the Christian population, more precisely of the Polish population, is extraordinary.

[September 15th] Christians come to the ghetto. People say that Christian friends and acquaintances often come. Today a priest came to me, looking for his Jewish friends.

[May 6, 1942] From Vilna [Wilno] and the whole area, masses of young men are being taken for work in Germany. Yesterday one of those groups was led through Szawelska Street and a lot of Jews saw them. In the street, guarded by Lithuanians, they stormily sang the national battle song [actually, the Polish national anthem], “Poland Is Not Yet Lost,” and as they approached the Jewish ghetto, they shouted slogans:

“Long live the Jews!...”

A mood I only want to note here.<sup>1674</sup>

**R**aizel Medlinski (later Nachimowicz, b. 1908), a widowed school teacher, and her daughter Batia (b. 1938), managed to escape from the Wilno ghetto and survived the war in the countryside with the help of a number of Poles, including two priests. Rev. Hieronim Olszewski, the vicar of St. Teresa’s Church (adjoining Ostra Brama), provided her with a false birth and baptismal certificate, and Rev. Aleksander Łukaszewicz, pastor of Konwaliszki, extended his protection.

We were in the ghetto on the Gaon Street, near the main gate. Real troubles began. There was no food to eat, but I was always a vigorous woman. I got a connection with Polish people, who sent me packages from the lofts tied to a rope. ... I thought all the time about how to escape from the ghetto. ... Another day, when I lay with my daughter, a Polish man appeared. This was probably the doorkeeper of the building. They sent him to check and to report if Jews were left in the building. I told him that I was a teacher; and I worked not far from there. He understood our situation and had pity on us. He went away; I didn’t even notice when. He came back with some bread and milk. He told me that if I want to survive, I have to come to the same place and he will take us to a wide road. I learned that they used to put a ladder to the loft; and the corridor led to a tailor shop, where Jewish tailors worked for the Germans.

I went back to the ghetto early in the morning. I found my mother-in-law in the ghetto. She was an old woman; I couldn’t escape together with her. I already thought of leaving the ghetto. Sunday, before the action, before the liquidation of the second ghetto, I went to the loft, keeping my daughter by hand, I knocked. The doorkeeper came and took us through the ladder to a wide street. I didn’t have an exact plan but I wanted to go to Lipówka.

<sup>1674</sup> Kruk, *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania*, 109–10, 112, 280–81.

I knew some people there. It was a suburb of Vilna [Wilno]. I knew a Polish woman there, who worked in my house. They received us in a friendly way. We spent a few weeks there, with my daughter, but the neighbors began to look and understand that Grisha is hiding a Jewish woman with a child. I had a feeling that we had stayed there long enough and had to leave the place. One nice day, early in the morning, I took my girl and went to the town. I knew that our ghetto was already liquidated. Nobody survived. I didn't know what to do. ... My plan was to leave my daughter in an orphanage and escape Vilna. I went to Rase [Rossa Street]. A cloister [of the Sisters of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary] was there, full of priests. A priest was coming toward me. I saw him for the first time in my life. I asked him who was in charge of the orphanage. ... I spoke to him Polish and I told him that I am a teacher and he was a teacher too. He pitied us and took us to his room. I cry out there all the bitterness of my heart. He already planned how to save me. He told me to come back in a few days. When I came back, he asked me what I want to be called. He probably kept stamps, so I got a birth certificate for me and my daughter. When I got the documents, I went back to Lipówka, to my Pole. People from the neighborhood used to visit him. One of them took my daughter and me to Wielkie Soleczniki [a town distant 45 km from Wilno]. We came to the governor [reeve?]. He already had the information from my Pole, that I am not entirely "kosher" in spite of speaking not bad the Polish language and having Catholic papers. One must run the risk a little. We learned that the Goy didn't want to take a risk. He was afraid to lose his head. He often declared that he can't keep me any more. He told me that not far from him, just a few kilometers away, is a big forest. In the forest lived a forester, a very good man. He would be able to hide me for some time. So I went to meet the forester. For the time being, I left my girl there, in Wielkie Soleczniki. When I came to the forester, he told me that he could not take such a risk, but that not far from there, I don't remember how many kilometers, I could find a property named Umiastów with a very good priest and an orphanage. They would receive me there. I came to Umiastów and found no priest living there. He lived in a town named Konwaliszki and had some influence over the orphanage. So, I went to the priest from Konwaliszki [Rev. Aleksander Łukaszewicz] and told him all the truth about me, who I was and who gave me the papers. He took out a book with the addresses of all priests and saw that I was not lying. He wanted to help me. He went to the orphanage in Umiastów and asked the woman-master of the house to take me with the child into the property. ... She didn't want to accept me in the house in any terms. It was Sunday. The priest [Rev. Łukaszewicz] received me very well with good food on the table. I don't remember his name, but the other priest, who provided me the papers, was named Olszewski [Rev. Hieronim Olszewski]. He used to pray in Ostrobrama [Ostra Brama]. When the priest from Konwaliszki didn't obtain anything, I sat with him and asked for advice on what to do next. We decided, both of us, that I had to visit Umiastów once again and beg the orphanage master to let us join the house. I went alone. I left the child behind. Her first question was: "Why did you come again? I already spoke to the priest. I can't accept you. I don't have enough maintenance for the children." I told her: "Listen to me. You are still a religious woman, a Catholic. You go each time to the priest to confess and when you see a woman being drawn down, you don't want to help."

After a long discussion, after many ups and downs, she finally allowed me to stay the first few weeks in Konwaliszki. I took my daughter with me; and we stayed there three to

four weeks. After that, I couldn't stay any longer in Konwaliszki. I got a connection with one teacher from the area, who advised me to go to Dziewieniszki to find a teacher who was now a village head. His name was Kucharski. "Go to him; show him your documents; and ask him to book you in." One morning, I went to Dziewieniszki. I didn't tell him the truth. I showed him the certificate of birth and he asked me about the other documents, but he understood everything. He quoted the sentence of the Polish poet Słowacki: "Shall the living not lose hope." He took my document, went out to his office and told to his secretary Stieszka: "Take her document from the woman and book her on the list of our village." To Stieszka came many people from the area; and he turned to Kucharski, the head of the village in these words: "I will not do it! How do you know who the woman is?" The head of the village answered nothing, opened the door in silence and stepped in into his office. The secretary booked me in temporarily in Umiastów. During the time, when I was in the property of Umiastów. I worked as a nurse, but most important, I didn't have to appear as a Jew. When Christmas came, I knew all the Christmas carols, which I learned years ago in the Polish teacher's seminary. I joined in the Christmas carols with them. I used to sit with all the children, about 40–50 orphans, on my knees, together with my daughter, making the sign of the Cross, praying all the right prayers, and going to the church from time to time. My daughter was exceptionally religious. She used to sit at night near the bed on her knees and pray all the prayers. One day two young and pretty girls came to visit us, Zosia and Wanda. Zosia told Wanda not to say who she is. But when I looked at Wanda. I recognized her as one of my students from school, a Jewish girl, probably a member of Arkin family. They owned a bonbon factory in Vilna. She was a cousin to them.

Wanda, of course couldn't tell that she doesn't know me. Silently, they used to say that a Jewish community grows up here. But from where did the girls come? Kucharski knew all my secrets. The girls worked near Vilna, in a place with an aerodrome; and one day a German said to them: "Dear children, run away from here. They are going to get rid of you. At the end of the war, I will know where to find you." They were young and pretty girls ... Kucharski knew my secret; and he let them stay here for a while. Meanwhile this event happened: a Polish woman, whose two sons were with us in Umiastów, informed [the authorities in Lida], that Kucharski employed Jews and she, the former wife of an officer, can't get a job there. Finally, came a complaint against Kucharski. They sent a German Commission to find the truth. When the Germans came, the girls hid themselves. I walked around with a kerchief on the head. They didn't even notice that I am Jewish and went away. After this, the girls couldn't stay with us one minute longer. The Polish woman who informed Lida was shot as a black market dealer. ... In 1943, when they changed our master, a Lithuanian came to replace her. This was a time when some Belarus regions became a part of Lithuania. All the benefits went to the Lithuanians. Then, the Lithuanian government came and sent us a Lithuanian master. The old woman master knew all my secrets. She went to meet the priest who said: "Let her still stay here." It seems that the priest did for others what he did for me, so they caught him and shot him. ...

I had a feeling that the earth is burning under my feet; and I wanted to run away from there. But at this time, our master was still a Pole, Wołkowski. He told me: "Everybody knows everything about you here and nobody will hurt you. ..." This held me back and thanks to this, I could stand it. Sometimes, we had to hide in the fields and in the woods.

I stood it until 1944, before the end of the war. I saw Vilna in flames. I was 65 kilometers from Vilna. It was a terrible fire. We saw a big part of Vilna houses burned out.<sup>1675</sup>

Many priests of the archdiocese of Wilno, in northeastern Poland, are known to have extended help to Jews. According to Polish sources, Rev. Mieczysław Akrejć, the dean and pastor of Brasław, together with his sister who resided in the rectory, cared for a young Jewish girl that had been left behind in an orphanage when Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941.<sup>1676</sup> According to a Jewish testimony, the Brasław priest sheltered and fed Jews.<sup>1677</sup>

A Jewish memorial book catalogues the assistance provided by a number of priests from Brasław and the surrounding area:<sup>1678</sup>

- Rev. Akrejć of Brasław, who had generously contributed to the levy imposed on the Jewish community by the Germans, died of apoplexy on June 25, 1942, when a group of Jews took refuge on his property on the day the Germans were liquidating the ghetto in that town.<sup>1679</sup>

<sup>1675</sup> Testimony of Szoszana Roza (Medlinski) Gerszuni Nachimowicz, YVA, file O.3/3956 (Item 3558370).

<sup>1676</sup> Krahel, *Martyrologia duchowieństwa archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945*, 67.

<sup>1677</sup> Testimony of Khena Bokman, SFV, Interview code 24088. Bokman's brother, Shakhna Bandt, stayed at the priest's rectory for two days when he ventured out of the Brasław ghetto.

<sup>1678</sup> Ariel Machnes and Rina Klinov, eds., *Darkness and Desolation: In Memory of the Communities of Brasław, Dubene, Jaisi, Jod, Kisłowszczizna, Okmienic, Opsa, Plusy, Rimszan, Slobodka, Zamosz, Zaracz* (Tel Aviv: Association of Brasław and Surroundings in Israel and America, and Ghetto Fighters' House and Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1986), 124 ff., 259, 571–72, 575, 595–96.

<sup>1679</sup> This version is based on the memorial book, *Darkness and Desolation*, where Yitzchak Reichel related, at p. 259: "After this, I had no chance of returning to our bunker. I ran toward the lake. I wanted to swim to the other shore, but unfortunately on that side were Germans with machine guns, and they shot anyone who succeeded in approaching. I stayed close to the ground, lacking strength. Recovering slightly, I raised my head and saw Jews running toward the priest's yard. I too began to crawl toward his house. A large group of Jews had gathered there, even though the Germans were shooting at us. I entered one of the buildings near the priest's house and went up to the attic. Above I saw an opening, through which it was possible to go down into the granary, which was locked on the outside. I entered and dug myself into a pile of straw. After a number of hours the Germans arrived, accompanied by local police, and they opened fire on the Jews who were hiding in the priest's buildings. With the first shots, the priest, a good-hearted man, came out and saw the scale of the tragedy befalling the Jews of his town. He became very upset, suffered a heart attack and died immediately. In those hours, the killers didn't enter the granary where I was hiding. I stayed there for three days."

According to another version, Rev. Mieczysław Akrejć was shot by the Germans for trying to help Jews who had fled while taken for execution. See Tadeusz Krahel, "Ks. Mieczysław Akrejć—dziekan brasławski," *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 12 (December 2001); Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 126, 195;

- Catholic priests, such as the one in Słobódka, provided encouragement to peasants who confided that they were harbouring Jews.<sup>1680</sup>
- A Catholic priest supplied David of Bizne (?) and a young boy with crucifixes to wear round their necks to help them pose as Christians.
- After sheltering the five-member Barkan family of converts in Krāslava, Latvia, near the Polish border, for a time, that priest turned to a priest in Plusy (also known by the older spelling of Plussy), on the Polish side of the border, identified as Bilcher, but probably Rev. Franciszek Bilsza, the local pastor, who found the Barkans a safe home with the family of Michał Kiżło in Szemielki (Szemelki) and later provided medicine when the charges fell ill.<sup>1681</sup>
- A priest named Petro from Belmont and priests from the villages of Prozoroki (given as “Prysaroki”) and Ikażń (given as “Ikaznia”).
- An unidentified priest, probably Rev. Jan Michał Skardyński, helped Józefa Sawicka in sheltering Rachel Gurewicz and her two daughters, Hanka and Riwetka, in the village and parish of Urbany, near Braślów.

There is more information about some of these rescues later in the text.

According to Jewish sources, Catholic priests from Braślów—Szlenik, Kowalski, and Wasilewski (their exact identities have not been established; Wasilewski may have been an Orthodox priest)—“gave some material and spiritual help to the Jewish population” and “reprimanded those involved in excesses committed against the Jews.”<sup>1682</sup>

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Tadeusz Krahel, “Il salvataggio degli ebrei da parte del clero dell’arcidiocesi di Vilnius nel 1941–1944,” in Mikrut, *Perseguitati per la fede*, 643–61, at pp. 656–57.

<sup>1680</sup> Testimony of Boris Berkman in Machnes and Klinov, *Darkness and Desolation*, 445 ff.: “After few nights of walking, I arrived to the village of Berkovyszyna [Borkowszczyzna] and to Mylkavitz [Milkiewicz], the peasant who was one of our family friends. ... I told him what had happened to the Jews and to our family and asked him for a place to hide. For my delightfulness, he agreed immediately. At the same day, Mylkavitz and his boys, which were about the same age as I was, prepared me a place to hide in the barn. I stayed here for an extended time. During one of the days, the boys of Mylkavitz told me that their father had already discussed with the priest in Słobodka [Słobódka] the fact that he provided me with a shelter in his house. The priest told him that it is a great righteousness to save a hunted Jew, even if a strong element of danger is embedded in it. That man was known for his good treatment of the Jews.”

The pastor of Słobódka during the German occupation was Rev. Stanisław Kuderewski. Rev. Bolesław Zając served as vicar from 1943 to 1945.

<sup>1681</sup> Testimony of Anna (Niuta) Zelikman in Machnes and Klinov, *Darkness and Desolation*, 124 ff.; Entry for “Kizhlo” under Belarus in *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 8. Rev. Pēteris Rudzītis was the dean of Krāslava from 1940 to 1946.

<sup>1682</sup> Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part B, 1170.

During the liquidation of the Braślaw ghetto in June 1942, Avraham Biliak and his family turned to a priest named Petro in the nearby village of Belmont. According to Polish sources, the prewar pastor of the parish was Rev. Wincenty Bujnowski, who died in 1946.

We knew our shelter was just temporary; we had to flee. Even before the massacre, my father had gone to speak with farmers from the neighboring villages. They showed a willingness to help us when needed. One of them was our friend Petro—the priest from the Belmont church [Belmont was about seven kilometers southeast of Braślaw]. On Friday night [June 5], we decided to try our luck. We went out: Father, my sister Masha and her husband Yankel [Glazer], my sister Libka, my brother Tevka and me. Mother remained in the hiding place with her two grandchildren—Masha's children. With them also was my sister Gutka [Sara-Gutka], who didn't want to leave mother alone with the children. We decided: We'll find a safe place, then come back and take them with us.

At the entrance to Belmont, there was a large bridge, well guarded by the Germans, so it was necessary to go around it. We asked for help from an acquaintance who lived near the bridge. After midnight he put us all into a boat, made a big detour far from the bridge and brought us into Belmont. The priest was surprised to see us and happy that we'd come. He'd thought for sure that we'd been killed. He received us with food, drink and tears in his eyes, and promised to help us survive. First, he took us into the church and locked it. To his congregation he said, "It's better for the church to be locked and not used as a hiding place by undesirables who are passing through." On Sundays, he'd return us to his house and open the gates of the church to the worshippers.

A number of days after the massacre, the oppressors passed through Braślav and announced on loudspeakers that all those who were hiding could come out; nothing bad would happen to them. My mother, my sister, the children and many others with them who had survived believed the announcements and went outside. All of them were gathered into the yard of the Judenrat and some days later they were all taken to the pits; their end was like those who'd gone before them.

Yankel, Masha's husband, decided to return to Braślav and bring the children, mother and my sister. We didn't yet know that they'd already surrendered themselves and been killed. When he reached Braślav, he was caught; they beat him and killed him. The priest [in Belmont] began to look for safer places for us. He took Masha to a farmer in the village Zaravtzi [Ozierawce], where they hid her under a large Russian stove; the chickens were also kept there. Father, me, Tevka and Libka he brought to the village Piatoshki [Pietuszki] to two brothers who weren't married. They hid us in the cellar under the cowshed, and at night we'd go up in the attic, where we had a lot of air and a larger living space than in the cellar. We paid them generously for all of their kindnesses: the lodgings and the food, the communication between us and the goodness of their hearts. For just one thing was compensation impossible—the fear. Whoever hid a Jew lived in constant fear. The villagers were warned continuously not to hide Jews, and woe to the person who had a hidden Jew found in his house. His fate, the fate of his family and his possessions, was sealed. The house and its contents would be burned, the animals taken, and the entire family would be killed. Once the brothers hinted to us that a few of us would have to find another place [to hide]. We heard that in Opsa [18 kilometers southwest of Braślav] a ghetto still existed; we had acquaintances there. We decided to separate: Father and my sister Libka would

stay where they were, my sister Masha would move to a neighboring village, and I and Tevka would go to Opsa. We said our goodbyes, and we parted from the brothers who'd put their lives in danger because of us. They told us how to go on the roads and paths, through the forests and villages. On the way, villagers helped us. All the time, we faced dangerous threats; we were afraid but continued onward.<sup>1683</sup>

A priest in Dryświaty warned Nachum Kasimow of the impending deportation of Jews to Brasław, where they were being killed. Nachum, his wife Musia Levine, and their young three children (Rita, Miriam, and Harold) were sheltered by various Polish farmers, among them “Vlatsky.” They survived the war. Nachum and Musia recalled in 1945, “Many peasants were shot for harboring Jews (e.g., the peasant Zapoz).”<sup>1684</sup> The pastor of Dryświaty at the time was Rev. Edward Godlewski.

[Harold] Kasimow, his parents, and his two sisters spent 19 months and 5 days hiding from the Nazis in a hole dug in the floor of a cattle barn, covered over with boards and straw. He was 4 years old when they went into hiding in the hole. They called it the grub, which means hole. Sometimes, they even called it the keyver—the Yiddish word for grave. “We were already buried there,” Kasimow says. “If something happened, that could have been our grave.” ...

Kasimow was born in a small village about a hundred miles north of Vilnius [Wilno], which is now the capital of Lithuania. At that time, it was part of Poland. His father, Norman [Nachum], was a fisherman and a prosperous businessman who owned houses in two villages, one in Turmantas [Turmont], which is now in Lithuania, and the other in Drysviaty [Dryświaty], which is now in Belarus. He was well known and liked in the area. “He treated people with dignity,” Kasimow says.

“My father was quite a heroic figure, actually,” Kasimow continues. “He had very good relations with the people in the surrounding area, including non-Jews, many of whom were willing to risk their lives to help him.”

Kasimow’s family was one of only five Jewish families left in the village after the first year of German occupation. All the others had been transported to concentration camps or killed on the spot. ...

In April 1942, the local priest came to warn Kasimow’s father that they should hide or run; he had learned that the Nazis planned to finish off the last few Jews in the area. Eventually, 95 percent of the Jews who had lived in that area of Poland before the war were killed. Virtually no children survived. The few who did survive did so with the help of Polish Catholics, Kasimow says.<sup>1685</sup>

<sup>1683</sup> Testimony of Avraham Biliak in Machnes and Klinov, *Darkness and Desolation*, 241–42; Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Braslaw/Braslaw.html>.

<sup>1684</sup> Rita Kasimow Brown, *Portrait of a Holocaust Child: Memories and Reflections* (Jerusalem and New York: Gefen, 2010), xvi, 9, 17.

<sup>1685</sup> Jackie Hartling Stolze, “Defying the Darkness: Three Children Who Survived the Holocaust,” *The Grinnell Magazine*, Summer 2008, Internet: <https://www.grinnell.edu/news/defying-darkness>.

Examples of assistance by village priests in the vicinity of Głębokie, in north-eastern Poland, are described in the following passage from a Jewish memoir:

We were taken to the main jail [in Głębokie]. In front of the building a police commander motioned to the guard to take us to the basement. In this two storey building the basement held all those who were condemned to death. ... As we descended the steps to the basement two Belorussian guards welcomed us with a severe beating. We were told to sing Russian songs and dance. Each time we were struck by their rifle butts until both of us collapsed bleeding and unconscious on the cement floor.

When we regained consciousness we were lying on wooden boards covered with straw. Two Roman Catholic priests had dragged us into the room and lifted our bodies onto the boards. They were sitting by us as we awoke. The priests had been arrested by the Germans and condemned to die. One was from Prozaroki [Prozoroki] and the other was from Ikażń [Ikażń]. They knew from their training how to speak to people near death and they tried to give us moral support. The other prisoners were escaped Russian prisoners of war. They all knew we had only hours to live.

When my mother heard we had been arrested and we were to be shot she ran directly to the Judenrat (Jewish Council). Her screams and tears caused a great commotion and forced the council to take steps to try and save us. Within hours a large amount of gold coins and jewelry were collected. The Judenrat had a connection with the Gestapo, a Jewish girl named Peske. She was young, extremely good looking and intelligent. She had developed an intimate relationship with the captain of the Gestapo and we found her in his office when we were escorted to see him. The gold had been used to arrange our release. Peske understood that the only way she could save our lives was by claiming she knew us well and that we had worked for the Germans in Głębokie [Głębokie] for a long time. ...

Several days later we discovered that all the prisoners in the basement had been taken to Barock [Borek forest near Berezwezc] and shot. The actual executions were performed by the local collaborator police under the supervision of the Żandarmeria (Gendarmarie) and German police. The two priests were in that group. ... Later, when we met Jewish survivors from the vicinity of Prozaroke [Prozoroki] in the forest, we discovered more about the priest. He had been personally friendly towards Jews. In his Sunday sermons he had urged his congregation to keep their hands clean of the slaughter of Jews and to aid them where possible.<sup>1686</sup>

According to Polish sources, Rev. Władysław Maćkowiak was the pastor of Ikażń, and his vicar was Rev. Stanisław Pyrtek. They were arrested in December 1941 for their ardent preaching and for illegally teaching religion to children. They were detained in the jail in Brasław before being transferred to the jail in Głębokie,

<sup>1686</sup> Peter Silverman, David Smuschkowitz, and Peter Smuszkowicz, *From Victims to Victors* (Concord, Ontario: The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, 1992), 246–47. When Peter Silverman, his two brothers, Jack and Genya, and his cousin, David Smuschkowitz were sheltered by the Lahun family, Agnieszka Lahun confided in her priest in Borodzienicze, who offered encouragement. *Ibid.*, 132; Written statement of Peter (Pejsach) Smuszkowicz, November 18, 1993 (in the author's possession).

together with Rev. Mieczysław Bohatkiewicz, who was arrested in the border town of Dryssa in January 1942. All three of these priests were taken by German gendarmes and Belorussian policemen on March 4, 1942, to Borek forest, near Berezwezc, outside Głębokie, where they were executed.<sup>1687</sup> The pastor of Prozoroki at the time was Rev. Czesław Matusiewicz, who continued to work in this area for the duration of the war.<sup>1688</sup>

Rev. Józef Kowalczyk sheltered and protected two Jewish children, Mikhail and Galina Lekago, at his rectory in Zadoroże and in the hamlet of Hajduszowo. When the police found out about the rescue, the children were transferred to a Soviet partisan unit.<sup>1689</sup>

The following account refers to assistance provided to Jews by priests in Duniłowicze and Wołkołata, near Głębokie, as related in another memoir.

I know of heroism also among the village priests in White Russia [prewar Eastern Poland] during the years of Nazi occupation. The parish priests of Dunilowicze [Duniłowicze] and Wolkołaty [Wołkołata] were feeding and sheltering Jews along with escaped Russian prisoners of war in their parsonages. When the Gestapo found out that the priest of Wolkołaty [Rev. Romuald Dronicz] was hiding Jews, they sent a local policeman to arrest him. The policeman, however, felt uneasy about arresting a man of God.

“I can’t arrest you, Father,” he said to the priest. “Why don’t you ask your guests to leave your parsonage and then go underground yourself?” The priest, for his part, did not want to endanger the policeman’s life and insisted that the policeman carry out his orders. When this valiant priest arrived at Gestapo head-quarters, he was shot at once.<sup>1690</sup>

In fact, Rev. Romuald Dronicz, the pastor of Wołkołata, was arrested by the Gestapo in June 1942, imprisoned in Głębokie, and executed in Berezwezc together

<sup>1687</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 38–39, 58; Walerian M. Moroz and Andrzej Datko, eds., *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945: Duchowni i świeccy z ziem polskich, którzy prześladowani przez nazizm hitlerowski dali Chrystusowi ofiarę życia świadectwo miłości* (Marki-Struga: Michalineum, 1996), 9–18; Tadeusz Krahel, “Nasi Męczennicy,” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, May 1999; Tadeusz Krahel, “Błogosławieni Męczennicy z Berezwezcza,” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 131 (March 2001); Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 185–86, 210–11, 227–28.

<sup>1688</sup> Krahel, *Doświadczeni zniewoleniem*, 84–85.

<sup>1689</sup> Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 118; Tadeusz Krahel, “Il salvataggio degli ebrei da parte del clero dell’arcidiocesi di Vilnius nel 1941–1944,” in Mikrut, *Perseguitati per la fede*, 643–61, at p. 657. Based on Iarmusik, *Katolicheskiei kostel v Belorussii v gody vtoroi mirovoi voiny (1939–1945)*, 105. The priest is misidentified as Bernard Kowalewski in these sources.

<sup>1690</sup> Joseph Riwash, *Resistance and Revenge, 1939–1945* (Montreal: n.p., 1981), 144.

with four other Polish priests on July 4, 1942.<sup>1691</sup> The pastor of Duniłowicze at the time was Rev. Czesław Kardel.

The rescue activities of Rev. Kazimierz Doroszkiewicz, the pastor of Dołhinów, northeast of Wilejka, are mentioned in several sources. Rev. Doroszkiewicz intervened on behalf of Jews who were arrested by the Germans on their entry in June 1941, he provided large quantities of food to the local ghetto, and he sheltered Jews in the church attic and parish rectory. After the war, he was held in great esteem by Jewish survivors.<sup>1692</sup> The town's memorial book includes the following account by Leyb Dimenshteyn.

The 22nd [June] 1941 the Nazi storm began. With shattering power the German armies attacked Soviet Russia from all sides. By the time we arrived at a decision by the third or fourth day the German units had already captured our town.

There was nowhere to hide—not in our houses or other hiding places.

Three days after they entered our town, 36 Jews were arrested—young and old—and were confined to a certain shop at the marketplace, accused of being Communists. If the Communists would not surrender all the prisoners would be shot. The families and relatives of those arrested tried everything to free them. They tried everything they could.

They even went to the Holy Ark in the synagogue, visited graves at the cemetery and finally asked the Polish priest to intervene—a very good, liberal man and a friend of the Jews.

At the time there were German officers in the priest's house. His intervention actually helped; the officers received 4 bicycles, 2 pairs of boots and 3 watches. The prisoners were freed—after they were arrested they were beaten without stop for 24 hours. By 10 o'clock at night these unhappy people went home.

<sup>1691</sup> Tadeusz Krahel, "Ks. Romuald Dronicz," *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 123 (July 2000); Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 195.

<sup>1692</sup> Tadeusz Krahel, "Ksiądz Kazimierz Doroszkiewicz," *Drogi Miłosierdzia*, no. 25 (September 2012); Tadeusz Krahel, "Ksiądz Kazimierz Doroszkiewicz z Dołhinowa," *Drogi Miłosierdzia*, no. 124 (December 2020); Tadeusz Krahel, "Il salvataggio degli ebrei da parte del clero dell'arcidiocesi di Vilnius nel 1941–1944," in Mikrut, *Perseguitati per la fede*, 643–61, at p. 656. See also Arye-Leybl Falant, "My Life's Struggle and Survival in Horrific Dark Years," in Josef Chrust and Matityahu Bar-Razon, eds., *Esh tamid-yizkor le-Dolhinow: Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Dolhinow ve-ha-seviva* (Tel Aviv: Society of Dolhinow Emigrants in Israel, 1984), 330–31, translated as *Eternal Flame: In Memory of Dolhinow*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/dolginovo/Dolginovo.html>, where Falant states: "The German headquarters were at the Catholic priest's; this is where they brought me and put me in a cell near the church. My aunt—Keleh Fufman had a good relationship with the priest. She came running and intervened with him and others to set me free. The priest also got involved and tried to help. Unfortunately this was fruitless! It did not help. I was imprisoned and held in order to be shot ..."

Beginning of March 1942 another group of Nazis arrived with an order to the “Judenrat.” The Jews must place all of their fine furniture in the marketplace. At the same time they had to bring 500 eggs and 50 chickens. In the event this will not be delivered, there will be severe consequences. What was to be done? Jews brought out a bit of furniture and ran to the Polish priest. He helped provide the eggs because by now the Jews had none. The murderers left this time too.<sup>1693</sup>

**D**uring the liquidation of the ghetto in Łyntupy, near Święciany, by Lithuanian police, Irene Mauber Skibinski, then a young girl of about six, and her mother escaped and took shelter with Rev. Józef Pakalnis, the local parish priest, who instructed his housekeeper to hide them in the cellar of the rectory. They remained there for about ten days before moving on. They survived the occupation with the help of a number of Polish peasant families.<sup>1694</sup>

My mother crawled through the window and fell on the ice. She lost her shoes on the way. She pulled me out and we ran. People were peeking through windows and quickly hiding behind the curtains. My mother ran to the local priest, whose name was Father Pakalnis. We knocked at the door. His housekeeper opened the door and told us to leave immediately, but Father Pakalnis overheard our voices and asked us to come in. He was happy to see us alive. He told my mother he owed his life to her because my mother had protected him from being sent to Siberia by the Russians. He told his housekeeper to take us to the cellar and keep us there until things quieted down.

We stayed in the cellar for about ten days. ...

It was time for us to leave. Father Pakalnis gave my mother his old boots. We had to find other clothes for me to wear, since it was a small town and people could easily recognize me just from my clothing. My mother always dressed me in the finest clothes she could get. At that time my coat and hat were of a blue color, and my mother wanted me to be less conspicuous.

And so we left. We walked in the snow, and once in a while villagers gave us rides. Most of the villagers knew my family because they had worked for my father, transporting wood from the forest to the processing place at the railroad station. When we asked for shelter, they refused, saying they could not keep us, but they said they would not report us to the police because my parents had treated them well.

With no place to hide, my mother decided to go to the Svenciany [Święciany] ghetto. I do not remember much about life there. We had a corner of the floor in a very crowded room. There was no food. Our former housekeeper Amelia, who lived in Svenciany with her sister, found out we were in the ghetto. She started bringing bread whenever she could and passing it to us through barbed wire. ...

When we saw the first Red Army unit, we felt free. In Pabradzie [Podbrodzie], we met some Jewish families. We did not stay long, because we were anxious to get to Łyntupy. ...

<sup>1693</sup> Chrust and Bar-Razon, *Esh tamid-yizkor le-Dolhinow*, 330–31, 613–14, 617, translated as *Eternal Flame: In Memory of Dolhinow*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/dolginovo/Dolginovo.html>.

<sup>1694</sup> Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part B, 1088.

We went to see Father Pakalinis, the priest who helped us at the moment of extreme danger. My mother did not coach me, she did not have to. I understood quite well I owed my life to him and many other kind people. I buried my face in his kind hands and cried.<sup>1695</sup>

**P**ola Wawer, a young Jewish doctor who escaped from the Wilno ghetto with her parents, recalled a Catholic priest who worked closely with a rabbi in Łyntupy to provide material assistance to refugees from other towns, including her family.<sup>1696</sup> Rev. Kazimierz Mitka, the pastor of Balingródek, near Święciany, rescued J. Szapiro and L. Orman from Podbrodzie.<sup>1697</sup>

**C**hana Mirski (later Hana Shachar) was born at the end of 1939 or in early 1940. Her paternal grandfather, Nathan Mirski, entrusted her for safekeeping to his acquaintance, Stanisław Świetlikowski, who smuggled her out of the Podbrodzie ghetto, northeast of Wilno, in September 1941. (Chana had been brought to Podbrodzie in early 1940, following her mother's death in Głębokie soon after she was born.) Stanisław and his wife, Katarzyna, had the child, now called Anna, baptized as if she were their own. Given her age at the time, it would have been apparent to the priest, even if he had not been told, that the child was probably Jewish. The resulting birth and baptismal certificate greatly facilitated the cover-up. Likewise, the Świetlikowskis' neighbours would have also figured out that the sudden new addition to their family was a Jewish child. Nobody denounced them.

In 1946, the Świetlikowski family resettled within the new Polish state borders. Chana was transferred to a Jewish children's home in Łódź in 1947. In 1948, she was reunited in Palestine with her father, who had settled there shortly before the war broke out.

Chana Shachar (née Mirski) was born in 1940 in the town of Głębokie. Her father had immigrated to Palestine in 1939. Her pregnant mother was supposed to follow him, but then war broke out, and she could not leave the country. In her despair at finding herself alone with a young baby during wartime, she took her own life. The baby was put in the care of her paternal grandparents, in the town of Podbrodzie. In June 1941 the German army

<sup>1695</sup> Irene Mauber Skibinski, "Through the Eyes of a Child—My Childhood in Łyntupy," in Kanc, *Svinzian Region*, col. 1446.

<sup>1696</sup> Wawer, *Poza gettem i obozem*, 36.

<sup>1697</sup> Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 118; Tadeusz Krahel, "Il salvataggio degli ebrei da parte del clero dell'arcidiocesi di Vilnius nel 1941-1944," in Mikrut, *Perseguitati per la fede*, 643-61, at p. 653. These sources are based on J. Marinow, "Dać świadectwo," *Czerwony Sztandar* [Vilnius], May 21, 1987. For confirmation of Rev. Kazimierz Mitka's rescue activities (providing false documents and finding shelters) based on the archival records of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, see Viktorija Sakaitė, "Lietuvos dvasininkai—žydų gelbėtojai," *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 2 (12) (2002): 222-32.

invaded the area. All Jews were ordered to move to the ghetto, and rumors about mass murders in neighboring towns started to spread. Understanding that they were all in mortal danger, Chana's grandfather decided to try to save her. He contacted an acquaintance of his, Stanisław Świetlikowski, and asked him to take the little girl.

Stanisław Świetlikowski and his wife, Katarzyna, were poor farmers who lived with their three children—Jan, Maria, and Piotr—in a nearby village. Chana, a toddler not yet two years old, was handed over to Świetlikowski, along with her grandparents' milking cow to help provide for the child. The rescuers' daughter Maria recalled in her testimony that "one day, when we returned from school, there was a little girl in the house who could not yet walk and did not speak but three words. Father said, 'We have this child, and we need to respect her, love her, and watch out for her, so no harm will come to her.'" The Świetlikowskis had Chana baptized and registered as their fourth child. They were constantly concerned about a possible denouncement by the neighbors, who figured out that the sudden new addition to the "Świetlikowski family was a Jewish girl. This, however, did not stop the Świetlikowskis from caring for her. From the moment she arrived at their home, they treated her as a member of the family, a beloved youngest child. "They were a very loving family," wrote Chana in her testimony, "and I was the apple of my mother's eye. I never forgot them, never will, and I will carry them in my heart for the rest of my life."

Zvi Mirski, Chana's uncle, was long acquainted with the Świetlikowski. He was hiding in forests in the area of Podbrodzie after jumping off a train that was taking him to Ponar [Ponary, a mass execution site on the outskirts of Wilno]. He took it upon himself to watch over little Chana, and from time to time he came to visit her. He would come at night, and the Świetlikowskis would leave a window open so he could enter without anyone noticing. After the war Zvi returned to Podbrodzie. A single man without any means, however, he could not care for his little niece, so she stayed with the Świetlikowskis. Maria would bring Chana to visit her uncle, until he immigrated to Palestine in 1945. In 1947 a man from the Jewish Coordinating Committee arrived at the Świetlikowskis wanting to take Chana. Stanisław Świetlikowski fiercely objected to being parted from the girl he had raised as his own for six years. He refused offers of money and was only finally convinced by the argument that Chana had a father waiting for her in Palestine and that there she would receive an education he could not afford to give her.

In 1948 Chana arrived in Israel and was united with the biological father she had never met. For the first few years, she kept in touch with the Świetlikowskis, exchanging letters and packages with the help of her uncle Zvi, as she could not read or write Polish herself, but this connection was cut off at some point. Chana never forgot her adoptive family and never gave up on reconnecting with them. In 2005 she finally managed to locate Maria, the only member of the Świetlikowski family still alive. In 2006 Maria came to Israel for a visit and the three—Chana, Zvi, and Maria—were finally reunited, 60 years after they had all last met in Podbrodzie.<sup>1698</sup>

**A**fter fleeing from their hometown of Podbrodzie, Ethel Engelson (then Engelcyn) and her two young sons, Irving (b. 1930) and Morris (b. 1935),

<sup>1698</sup> Świetlikowski Family, RD.

made their way to the home of a Polish woman. Their stay there was interrupted when a Lithuanian policeman came around searching for Jews on the run. The woman's teenage son ferried them across a river to help them escape. They eventually spotted the steeple of a church and decided to approach it. The exact locality and priest are not identified; Church historian Tadeusz Krahel has established that it was probably the village of Korkożyszki, whose pastor was Rev. Waclaw Grabowski. Here is Morris Engelson's account:

Suddenly, way, way in the distance, there is a spire—there is a very tall building, and the tip of the building can just be seen between the trees. It turned out that this spire was the top of a church. My mother followed the direction of this building that we could see, and after a while we came out in a clearing. There was a village there, and in the village there is a church with a very tall spire or steeple ...

My mother just came to the church and knocked on the door. She had no choice. A woman came out. She was the housekeeper. She explained that the priest was not there. He had heard that the Jews were being killed, and he went in to see if he could help in some way. I doubt that he could help, but anyway he went. But he had given her instructions what to do if Jews should happen to show up, if Jews had escaped and they happened to come to the church. And she said what we needed to do was go to a certain place, to a certain house, to a certain individual, tell him that the priest had sent us, and he would help us. So that's about all she said. And she gave instructions, she gave directions to my mother where in the village to go and find this person.

So we went. We got to this house, and the individual happened to be in. He came out. My mother explained that the priest said that he could help us, and he said yes he could. ...

It turns out that he was one of a whole range of individuals that were part of a smuggler gang, or a smuggler group. ... The priest knew who he was and everything was just fine. It was OK to do it, apparently. And this fellow was called an honorable smuggler. He was not out to kill the Jews or anything else. He could have gotten a good bounty by handing us over.<sup>1699</sup>

The smuggler took the Engelsons to the ghetto in Soły, where Ethel's sister resided and where Ethel's husband, Wolf, later found them. With the help of two Polish brothers Adam and Bronisław Sienkiewicz, Wolf brought the Engelsons to the Sienkiewicz family's farm near Podbrodzie. Later, the Engelsons stayed in the barn of the Bogdanowskis (or Bogdanowicz), a large and very poor

<sup>1699</sup> Morris Engelson, "The Story of My Survival," 2009, Internet: [http://www.kesserisrael.org/pdfs/Morris\\_Transcript.pdf](http://www.kesserisrael.org/pdfs/Morris_Transcript.pdf). Irving Engelson states that the church they approached was in Podbrodzie, but this does not match the topographical description provided by his brother, Morris. See Irving Engelson, "Podbrodz—As I Remember," Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Pabrade/pab000.html>.

Polish family; subsequently, they moved in with yet another family. All four of them survived the war.<sup>1700</sup>

In another interview, Morris Engelson, who was just a boy of six to nine years when this story unfolded, proffers extremely crude and demonstrably baseless charges against priests: “Many of the priests in that area were illiterate priests; they were peasants themselves. And they were very anti-Semitic.”<sup>1701</sup> Obviously parroting views picked up from his parents or milieu, Engelson demonstrates that even among highly educated Jews anti-Catholic sentiments can be as ignorant, prejudicial and deeply imbedded as anti-Semitism.

It is trite knowledge that priests were among the most educated groups in Polish society. They had to attend seminary for at least several years before ordination; they had to read and know the Bible thoroughly. Even someone unfamiliar with the clergy’s schooling could not help but notice that priests read the gospel every Sunday. His blanket condemnation of priests as “very anti-Semitic” is also questionable. Jews who actually had dealings with priests in the interwar period present a very different picture. While priests were undoubtedly influenced by theological biases, as were rabbis, day-to-day relations with Jews were generally proper.<sup>1702</sup>

<sup>1700</sup> Oral history interview with Morris Engelson, March 26, 1990, USHMM, Accession no. 1990.427.1, RG-50.030.0068; Testimony of Morris Engelson, SFV, Interview code 48155; Irving Engelson, “Podbrodz—As I Remember,” Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Pabrade/pab000.html>.

<sup>1701</sup> Testimony of Morris Engelson, Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education, Internet: <https://www.ojmche.org/oral-history-people/morris-engleson/>.

<sup>1702</sup> There are many favourable references in Jewish accounts regarding the Catholic clergy during the interwar period. The Zionist daily *Nasz Przegląd* published a number of articles that mention priests who came to the assistance of poor and unemployed Jews and who spoke out against anti-Jewish excesses. Accounts by Jewish students also contain many favourable references to priests who were catechists at schools. See Anna Landau-Czajka, “Polacy w oczach ‘Naszego Przeglądu,’” *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*, no. 4 (2011): 491–506. The following accounts corroborate our observation that—stereotypes to the contrary notwithstanding—moderate Jewish opinion viewed the Polish Catholic clergy with considerable respect and even appreciation. Were it the opposite, the phenomenon of significant numbers of conversions, especially among highly educated Jews, would not have existed. The list below, which includes many provincial settings, is far from exhaustive.

- Moshe Shlomo Ben-Meir (Idel Treshansky), ed., *Sefer yizkor Goniadz* (Tel Aviv: The Committee of Goniadz Association in the USA and in Israel, 1960), 475–76, translated as *Our Hometown Goniadz*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/goniadz/goniadz.html> (a priest in Goniadz);
- Mendl Gelbart, ed., *Sefer ha-zikaron: Sokolow-Podlask* (Tel Aviv: Residents of Sokolow-Podlask in Israel and in the USA, 1962), 197, translated as *Memorial Book Sokolow-Podlask*, Internet: [https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokolowa\\_podlaski/Sokolowa\\_Podlaski.html](https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokolowa_podlaski/Sokolowa_Podlaski.html) (ignoring picketers, a priest shopped in a Jewish store in Sokołów Podlaski);

- Kanc, *Svinzian Region: Memorial Book of 23 Jewish Communities*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/svencionys/svencionys.html>, translation of *Sefer zikaron le-esrim ve-shalosh kehilot she-nehrevu be-ezor Svintsian*, col. 1159 (Rev. Piotr Pruński of Połusze);
- I. M. Lask, ed., *The Kalish Book* (Tel Aviv: Societies of Former Residents of Kalish and the Vicinity in Israel and U.S.A., 1968), 88–89 (a priest in Błaszki calmed agitated crowds of Poles);
- Shtokfish, *Sefer Drohiczyn*, 5 ff. (English section) (a priest in Drohiczyn);
- Damian S. Wandycz, ed., *Studies in Polish Civilization: Selected Papers Presented at the First Congress at the Polish Institute of Arts & Sciences in America, November 25, 26, 27, 1966 in New York* (New York: Institute on East Central Europe, Columbia University; and The Polish Institute of Arts & Sciences in America, 1970), 391 (Rev. Wontorek, a catechist at a high school in a small town);
- Bachrach, *Sefer zikaron kehilot Proshnits*, translated as *Memorial Book to the Community of Przasnysz*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/przasnysz/przasnysz.html>. (Rev. Józef Piekut, the local pastor, was a good friend of Yitzhak Perzhentsavsky, the last rabbi of Przasnysz);
- “Jeżów” in *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Polin*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1976), 81–84, translated as *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities in Poland*, Internet: [https://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/pinkas\\_poland/pol1\\_00133.html](https://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol1_00133.html) (at the time of the town fire in 1931, the priest and local Poles hastened to save Jewish children and property from the flames);
- Haskell Nordon, *The Education of a Polish Jew: A Physician's War Memoirs* (New York: D. Grossman Press, 1982), 90–91 (a priest who taught religion at a provincial high school in central Poland);
- Bruno Shatyn, *A Private War: Surviving in Poland on False Papers, 1941–1945* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1985), xx–xxi, 62–64 (Rev. Jakób Szypuła, a catechist at a high school in Jarosław);
- Samuil Manski, *With God's Help* (Madison, Wisconsin: Charles F. Manski, 1990), 26 (the rector of the Piarist high school in Lida);
- Rachela and Sam Walshaw, *From out of the Firestorm: A Memoir of the Holocaust* (New York: Shapolsky Publishers, 1991), 7–8 (priests in Wąchock);
- Alice Birnhak, *Next Year, God Willing* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1992), 73 (a catechist at a school in Kielce);
- Feldenkreis-Grinbal, *Eth Ezkera—Whenever I Remember*, 542 (Rev. Adam Szymański, the rector of the diocesan seminary in Sandomierz);
- Agata Tuszyńska, “Uczniowie Schulza,” *Kultura* [Paris], no. 4 (1993): 39 (priests in Drohobycz);
- Alina Cała, “The Social Consciousness of Young Jews in Interwar Poland,” *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 8 (1994): 48 (a catechist in Krasne);
- Szyja Bronsztejn, “Polish-Jewish Relations as Reflected in Memoirs of the Interwar Period,” *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 8 (1994): 78–79 (Rev. Józef Niemczyński of Kraków);
- Faye Schulman, *A Partisan's Memoir: Woman of the Holocaust* (Toronto: Second Story Press, 1995), 24 (a priest in Łunin, in Polesia);
- Sam Halpern, *Darkness and Hope* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1996), 31 (priests in the vicinity of Chorostków);

- Samuel Honig, *From Poland to Russia and Back, 1939–1946: Surviving the Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (Windsor, Ontario: Black Moss Press, 1996), 233 (a priest in the Dębniaki district of Kraków);
- Michał Rudawski, *Mój obcy kraj?* (Warsaw: TU, 1996), 32 (Rev. Aleksander Zaremba of Jeziorzany, near Kock);
- Darcy O'Brien, *The Hidden Pope: The Untold Story of a Lifelong Friendship That Is Changing the Relationship between Catholics and Jews: The Personal Journey of John Paul II and Jerzy Kluger* (New York: Daybreak Books/Rodale Books, 1998), 53, 72 (Rev. Leonard Prochownik of Wadowice);
- Henry Zagdanski, *It Must Never Happen Again: The Memoirs of Henry Zagdanski* (Toronto: Colombo, 1998) (a catechist in Radom);
- Marek Urban, *Polska... Polska...* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny IN-B Instytut Naukowo-Badawczy, 1998), 20–23 (Rev. Błaszczyk, a catechist in Lubartów), 30–31 (Rev. Borowski, a catechist in Lublin);
- Cholawsky, *The Jews of Bielorussia during World War II*, 278; Interview with Norbert Kransnosielski, USHMM, Accession number 2009.322, RG-50.030.0644 (Rev. Jan Grodis of Nieśwież);
- Entries for “Tomaszow Lubelski” and “Szczebrzeszyn” in *Pinkas ha-kehilot: Polin*, vol. 7 (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1999), 237–41 (Rev. Julian Bogatek of Tomaszów Lubelski), 577–80 (Rev. Jan Grabowski of Szczebrzeszyn), and Shuval, *The Szczebrzeszyn Memorial Book*, 32 (Rev. Jan Grabowski of Szczebrzeszyn);
- Naomi Samson, *Hide: A Child's View of the Holocaust* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 45–46, 147 (a priest in Goraj);
- *Dereczin*, 325 (a priest in Dereczyn);
- Ungar and Chanoff, *Destined to Live*, 66–67 (Rev. Hankiewicz and Rev. Leszczyński in Krasne, near Skałat);
- Marcus David Leuchter, “Reflections on the Holocaust,” *The Sarmatian Review* [Houston, Texas], vol. 20, no. 3 (September 2000) (a village priest near Tarnów);
- Rosa Lehmann, *Symbiosis and Ambivalence: Poles and Jews in a Small Galician Town* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), 98 (Rev. Walerian Rapała of Jaśliska and Rev. Paweł Smoczeński of Królik Polski, two villages near Krosno);
- George Lucius Salton, *The 23rd Psalm: A Holocaust Memoir* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 7 (a priest in Tyczyn, near Rzeszów);
- Krzysztof Dawid Majus, *Wielkie Oczy* (Tel Aviv: n.p., 2002) (a priest in Wielkie Oczy);
- Lena Allen-Shore, *Building Bridges: Pope John Paul II and the Horizon of Life* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2004), 114–15 (three Polish priests who taught or visited the author's high school for girls in the town of Jasło—Rev. Józef Gayda, Rev. Eweryst Dębicki, and Rev. Jan Pasek);
- Sandberg-Mesner, *Light From the Shadows*, 30 (Rev. Józef Adamski of Zaleszczyki);
- Lindeman, *Shards of Memory*, 75–76 (a priest in Radom);
- Ziobroń, *Dzieje Gminy Żydowskiej w Radomyślu Wielkim*, 177 (Szymon Leibowicz of Radomyśl Wielki, near Tarnów, recalled Rev. Jan Curyło, the local pastor, as his father's friend); Testimony of Jack Honig, SFV, Interview code 18869 (Rev. Curyło was on friendly terms with the Jewish community);
- Artur Szyndler, “A Rabbi Comes to a Priest,” *Oś—Oświęcim, People, History, Culture*, no. 35 (November 2011), 6–7 (Rev. Jan Skarbek, the pastor of the Catholic parish in Oświęcim, developed a close friendship with Eliyahu Bombach, the town's chief rabbi);

- Diane Wyshogrod, *Hiding Places: A Mother, a Daughter, an Uncovered Life* (Albany: State University of New York Press–Excelsior Editions, 2012), 271 (a priest in Żółkiew, north of Lwów);
- Mizgalski and Sielski, *The Jews of Częstochowa*, 371 (the Pauline monastery in Częstochowa used the services of a Jewish printing press);
- Testimony of Irene Skolnick, Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh and Irene R. Skolnick, *In the Shadow of Majdanek: Hiding in Full Sight: A Holocaust Survival Story* (Sanibel, Florida: Stella 15 LLC, 2013) (priests and nuns in Przemyśl);
- Goldenberg, *Before All Memory Is Lost*, 173–74 (a priest in Bodzanów near Płock);
- Dina Drori and Erez Grinboim, *Dina, Surviving Undercover: From the Darkness of the Holocaust to the Light of the Future* (Lexington, Kentucky: CreateSpace, 2018), chapter 1 (the rabbi of Koszyce, near Kraków, struck up a friendship with the local priest);
- Majuk, *Shtetl Routes*, 113 (a priest in Wojślawice);
- Testimony of Sender Apfelbaum, YVA, file O.3/2882 (Item 3557420) (Rev. Dominik Wawrzynowicz, the pastor of Włodzimierzec in Volhynia);
- Interview with Abraham Kolski, March 29, 1990, USHMM, Accession no. 1990.368.1, RG-50.030.0113 (the pastor of Izbica Kujawska);
- Interview with Felix Horn, July 19, 1994, USHMM, RG-50.030.0294 (priests at a largely Catholic high school in Lublin);
- Interview with Sonia Heidocovsky Zissman, May 25, 1995, USHMM, RG-50.030.0332 (a priest in Zdzięcioł, in Polesia);
- Interview with Herman Taube, USHMM, Accession number 2010.92, RG-50.106.0182 (Rev. Jagła of Łódź helped Taube professionally);
- Testimony of Michal Friedman, 2004, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/michal-friedman> (Rev. Feliks Sznarbachowski of Kowel);
- Testimony of Aleksander Ziemny, January–May 2004, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/aleksander-ziemny> (Rev. Jan Kanty Surowiak of Rabka);
- Testimony of Lejba Solowiejczyk, 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/leon-solowiejczyk> (a priest in Dzisna);
- Testimony of Salomea Gemrot, 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/salomea-gemrot> (Rev. Józef Cieślik of Rzeszów; the parish priest of Przybyszówka near Rzeszów; a priest in Gorlice);
- Testimony of Ewa S. (Stapp), September 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org> (Rev. Konieczny of Lwów);
- Testimony of Helena Bibliowicz, SFV, Interview code 6485 (Rev. Jan Kunicki of Grodno);
- Testimony of Louis Hofman, SFV, Interview code 13655 (a priest in Konstantynów near Biała Podlaska);
- Testimony of Sol Glick, SFV, Interview code 15900 (a priest in Błonie near Warsaw);
- “Chaja Estera Stein (Teresa Tucholska-Körner): The First Child of Irena Sendler,” PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/your-stories/chaja-estera-stein-teresa-tucholska-korner-first-child-irena-sendler> (Referring to Rev. Franciszek Fijałkowski of Cegłów, near Mińsk Mazowiecki, Aron Stein’s daughter recalled, “It was pleasant to watch my father, wearing his gabardine and a long beard, strolling along with the priest in a cassock at his side.”);
- The Dobkowski Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-dobkowski-family> (Izrael Lewin, a Jewish tailor in Wizna, sewed cassocks for priests and uniforms for Polish soldiers);

Engelson's views are by no means isolated. Bernard Schuster, another Jewish survivor, states, with an air of presumed authority, that priests were "by and large, uneducated drunkards."<sup>1703</sup> Shtetl folklore like this often had little to do with reality. (Such entrenched attitudes have undoubtedly coloured the unfavourable opinions regarding the wartime behaviour of the Polish Catholic clergy.)

Rev. Witold Szymczukiewicz, the vicar of Rukojnie parish, near Wilno, was instrumental in saving the lives of several Jews by furnishing them with false documents and finding shelters for them. When they were being deported by the Germans, the Jews of Rukojnie requested that Rev. Szymczukiewicz say a mass for them. In 1966 he was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile for rescuing his high school friend, Faiga Reznik, and her son, Jonatan.

Witold Szymczukiewicz, a priest, lived in Rudomino, near Vilna [Wilno], during the war. One day an old acquaintance of his told him that she had recently been in Lida where she bumped into Faiga Reznik [later Zipora Berkovicz Barkai], a high school friend of Witold [from Drohiczyn]. Faiga asked her to relay a message to the priest that she needed help in getting Aryan papers for her and her son [Jonatan, b. 1937]. "Obtaining such documents was not a hard task for me. Therefore, I sent the documents that Mrs. Reznik and her son needed via an acquaintance. I was glad that I could help them and save someone from death. I did this not as a priest, but as a human being," wrote Szymczukiewicz in his testimony to Yad Vashem. Witold "took us out of the Lida ghetto, brought us to his home and later to Vilna, where we stayed [with Jadwiga Romanowska, a trusted parishioner] under the cover of being 'Christians' until the end of the war," wrote Jonatan Barkai, Faiga's son.

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- Testimony of Tzipora Gross, Virtual Shtetl, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Internet: <https://sztetl.org.pl> (a priest in Sarnaki, near Łosice, engaged Jewish workers to milk cows and prepare Kosher dairy products for Jews).

Here is a sampling of favourable references to members of the Catholic Church's hierarchy in the interwar period:

- Rudawski, *Mój obcy kraj?*, 43 (Bishop Henryk Przeździecki of Siedlce);
- Aleksy Petrani, "Ks. Kazimierz Bukraba biskup ordynariusz piński (1885–1946)," *Nasza Przeszłość: Studia z Dziejów Kościoła i Kultury Katolickiej w Polsce* [Kraków], vol. 37 (1972): 209–42, at pp. 213, 215 (Bishop Kazimierz Bukraba of Pińsk);
- Lehmann, *Symbiosis and Ambivalence*, 103, 112 (the bishop of Przemyśl);
- Leo Cooper, *In the Shadow of the Polish Eagle: The Poles, the Holocaust and Beyond* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2000), 63 (Bishop Adolf Szelążek of Łuck);
- Aleksandra Klich, "Teodor Kubina: Czerwony biskup od Żydów," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, March 1, 2008 (Bishop Teodor Kubina of Częstochowa);
- Sitarek, Trębacz, and Wiatr, *Zagłada Żydów na polskiej prowincji*, 24, and Bronowski, *They Were Few*, 3 (Bishop Marian Leon Fulman of Lublin);
- Testimony of Henryk Prajs, 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/henryk-prajs> (Cardinal Aleksander Kakowski, archbishop of Warsaw).

<sup>1703</sup> Testimony of Bernard Schuster, SFV, Interview code 7458.

He added that Witold also arranged papers for another friend of the Rezniks, Jadwiga [Edzia] Szejniuk Bergman, and helped other Jews as well.<sup>1704</sup>

Szymczukiewicz took his refugees to the house of Jadwiga Romanowska in Vilna [Wilno]. Romanowska, who worked at the local hospital, looked after the refugees and saw to all their needs. When it became clear that the neighbors were suspicious about her tenants, Romanowska found an alternative hiding place for the Rezniks, but continued to provide them with food and other necessities.<sup>1705</sup>

Rev. Giedymin Pilecki, the pastor of Hermaniszki and chaplain of the Nowogródek region of the Home Army, sheltered two Jewish women from Wilno in his rectory. He provided a birth and baptismal certificate to Dawid Lipnicki, whom he baptized as Andrzej, and placed him in the home of his sexton, Wacław Misiuro. Rev. Pilecki also supplied food to the Wilno ghetto.<sup>1706</sup>

According to a Jewish woman from Nowogródek, Rev. Michał Dalecki, the local pastor, spoke out for Jews.<sup>1707</sup> Jewish historian Leonid Smilovitskii (Smilovitsky) attributes Rev. Dalecki's execution by the Germans to his pro-Jewish activities. He was among sixty prominent Poles arrested in the Polenaktion of June 1942. Another victim of that mass execution was Rev. Józef Kuczyński, the pastor of Wsielub, near Nowogródek, whose arrest Smilovitskii also attributes to the help he extended to Jews.<sup>1708</sup>

Brocha Bernan escaped from the Wilno ghetto with her three young sons in the fall of 1941. They made their way to the vicinity of Porudomino, south of Wilno, where they hid in the forest. They survived by begging for food from local farmers. Brocha decided to entrust her two youngest sons to two Polish families. Kazriel Bernan was taken in by Apolonia (Polina) Tarasewicz and her husband, a childless couple. Samuel Bernan was taken in by Monika and Ludwik Koszyc. In order to pass as Poles, the boys were baptized, most probably at the Catholic church in Porudomino, and secured birth and baptismal certificates in the names of Antoni Kasiński and Michał Kasiński, respectively. The administrator of the parish at the time was Rev. Florian Markowski. Both boys survived the war. Their mother and oldest brother disappeared.

<sup>1704</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 807. See also Fayga Reznik, "My Savior Was a Catholic Priest," in Shtokfish, *Sefer Drohiczyn*, 484–90; Testimony of Zipora Feiga (Reznik) Berkowicz Barkai and Jonatan Berkovicz Barkai, YVA, file O.3/2827 (Item 3560228); Tadeusz Krahel, "Kapłani wśród 'Sprawiedliwych...'" *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 161 (September 2003).

<sup>1705</sup> Jadwiga Romanowska, RD.

<sup>1706</sup> Krahel, *Martyrologia duchowieństwa archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945*, 337.

<sup>1707</sup> Testimony of Sulia Rubin, SFV, Interview code 5799.

<sup>1708</sup> Smilovitskii, *Katastrofa evreev v Belorussii 1941–1944 gg.*, 132.

Tragedy also befell Apolonia. While her husband was away, she learned that someone had denounced her. Warned of a police raid, she told Kazriel to hide in the forest. When the police arrived, they found children's clothes, seized Apolonia, and set fire to the farm buildings. Apolonia was beaten and then shot to death on January 1, 1943. She was recognized as Righteous among the Nations by Yad Vashem in 2013, under the name of Polina Tarasevich, at the behest of Kazriel Bernan, now Anatolii Kasinskii.<sup>1709</sup>

After her escape from the Wilno ghetto in the summer of 1942, Joanna Malberg made her way to the home of Wincenty and Jadwiga Antonowicz, casual acquaintances from before the German occupation who lived in the village of Gowstany. The Antonowiczes gave her a warm welcome and prepared a hiding place for her behind a closet in their daughter's bedroom. Later, when the Germans began rounding up local Jews, Malberg was sent to Wincenty's mother's home, where their daughter, Lucyna, took care of her.

In the winter of 1943, the Antonowiczes obtained Aryan papers for Malberg, under the name of Bronisława Malinowska, from the local village head (*wójt*) and Rev. Witold Banczer, the pastor of Niemenczyn. Malberg was then able to live openly in the nearby town of Niemenczyn, where she worked as a private French teacher until the Germans were driven out of the area in July 1944. Since Malberg had a marked Semitic appearance, she was widely suspected of being Jewish. The Antonowiczes assisted in the rescue of 24 other Jews, all of them fugitives from the HKP labour camp (Heereskraftfahrpark or Army Motor Vehicle Repair Park) in Wilno.<sup>1710</sup>

During the liquidation of the Wilno ghetto in the autumn of 1943, the sisters Genia Cichanowska and Lea Letman escaped and appeared unexpectedly on the doorstep of Eleonora Paszkowska, a widow who lived with her two daughters, Genowefa and Irena, on a small farm near Głębokie. Two weeks later, Moshe Lewin (Morris Levin), the sisters' brother, arrived at the farm with his wife, Miriam, who was pregnant. When Miriam gave birth to a baby girl, the residents became very anxious because the child would not stop crying. The child was left by her father with a note saying that she was not christened and Jewish. The woman who found the infant took her in and had her baptized. The priest announced in church that the foundling was Jewish. After the Soviet entry, the

<sup>1709</sup> Teresa Worobiej, "Nie ma większej miłości...: Wojenna historia mieszkanki Porudomina," *Tygodnik Wileńszczyzny*, November 20–26, 2014.

<sup>1710</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 58–59; Antonowicz Family, RD; Testimony of Wacława Dobrzyńska, JHI, record group 301, no. 5427.

child was reclaimed by her father but died soon after. Another source of danger for the rescuers was Lewin's habit of praying very loudly.<sup>1711</sup>

Rev. Jan Sielewicz, the pastor of Worniany, near Wilno, helped a number of Jews by organizing hideouts for them with parishioners in the surrounding villages. He was assisted in this undertaking by the vicar, Rev. Hipolit Chruściel.<sup>1712</sup> Rev. Sielewicz was awarded by Yad Vashem in 2000. He was nominated by Zvi Borodo, formerly Hirsz Borodowski, who escaped from the ghetto in Wilno with his mother.

In June 1942, after the father, Avraham Borodowski, and son, Arie, were murdered at the Ponary murder site near Wilno (today Vilnius, Lithuania), the mother, Genia-Szeina (née Lurie), with her 13-year-old son Hirsz (later, Zvi Borodo) fled the Vilna [Wilno] ghetto for the surrounding villages in order to seek safety. A Polish acquaintance in one of the villages sent them to the priest Jan Sielewicz in the town of Worniany (Vilnius-Troki County, Wilno District), telling them that he was helping Jews and would also assist them. The priest Sielewicz indeed took them under his protection and sent them to farm families in the surrounding towns and villages who needed working hands in exchange for food and lodging. Their employers did not know that they were Jews. However, when they were asked to register at the local police [as they were required to do], both returned to Father Sielewicz for a temporary hiding place until he could find them work and secure lodging elsewhere. In 1943, while a new hiding place was being sought for Genia and her son Hirsz, they learned that the priest had died. The mother and her small son returned to wandering through villages and towns until the liberation by the Red Army in the summer of 1944. When he grew up, Hirsz Borodowski became a well-known opera singer in Israel, under the name of Zvi Borodo.<sup>1713</sup>

Borodo recalled:

We wandered in the forests for a long time before we reached the village of Worniany. Here we learned that the Catholic priest Jan Sielewicz was helping helped rescue Jews. The priest placed people like us in distant colonies (hamlets) in the vicinity of Worniany and Świr. They were poor farmers who fed us country bread and soup. It seemed to us then that there was nothing more delicious on earth. And we helped out with their work. And thus, thanks to the truly saintly man Jan Sielewicz, my mother and I survived.<sup>1714</sup>

<sup>1711</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 588; Paszkowski Family: Interview with Genowefa Jankowska, PRP, Internet: <<https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/pl/historie-pomocy/wywiad-z-genowefa-jankowska>>.

<sup>1712</sup> Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part B, 1153; Tadeusz Krahel, "Kapłani wśród 'Sprawiedliwych...,'" *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 161 (September 2003); Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 101, 111, 115, 123; Tadeusz Krahel, "Il salvataggio degli ebrei da parte del clero dell'arcidiocesi di Vilnius nel 1941–1944," in Mikrut, *Perseguitati per la fede*, 643–61, at p. 650.

<sup>1713</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 614.

<sup>1714</sup> Tadeusz Krahel, "Kapłani wśród 'Sprawiedliwych...,'" *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 161 (September 2003).

Some of the Jews that Rev. Sielewicz placed with his parishioners had been directed, and sometimes transported personally, to the countryside by Rev. Michał Sopoćko, professor of theology at the Stefan Batory University in interwar Wilno. Rev. Sopoćko was the spiritual advisor of the recently canonized Sister Faustina (Faustyna Kowalska). His rescue activities included providing Jews with birth and baptismal certificates (some of the Jews underwent conversion voluntarily), sheltering Jews temporarily, and finding hiding places for them with Poles in the countryside. One member of a Jewish couple helped by Rev. Sopoćko wrote:

Rev. Sopoćko was deeply concerned about the fate of the Jews who were already suffering repression, and helped many of them. Some of these persons underwent baptism, which he prepared us for. ... At the beginning of September [1941], a ghetto was created in Wilno. Thanks to Rev. Sopoćko, who furnished us with fictitious documents and placed us under the care of [Rev. Jan Sielewicz], the dean of Worniany, we were able to get by until the spring of 1942. Afterwards, we managed on our own ... Rev. Sopoćko was highly respected in Wilno, and helped many people at the risk of his own safety. Our salvation and survival in those years is thanks to the help of many people, but at the beginning of that chain stood Rev. Sopoćko.<sup>1715</sup>

Among those Rev. Sopoćko assisted were Dr. Aleksander Sztajnberg, who assumed the name Sawicki, and his wife, Franciszka Wanda (née Berggrün); Dr. Erdman, who became Benedykt Szymański, his wife, and their daughter; and Dr. Juliusz Genzel and his wife.<sup>1716</sup> The following account attests to Rev. Sopoćko's dedication to rescuing Jews.<sup>1717</sup>

On the eve of the German occupation, Franciszka-Wanda Sawicka (née Berggruen) lived with her husband, a doctor, in Vilna [Wilno]. After the occupation, before the establishment of the ghetto, the Sawickis decided to go into hiding. Polish acquaintances of theirs referred them to a priest [Rev. Michał Sopoćko], who agreed to help them. In September 1941, the priest found a separate shelter for each of them with friends of his. Franciszka-Wanda Sawicka was sent to Anna Dolinska [Dolińska], who gave her a warm welcome although she was a stranger and saw to all her needs, without expecting anything in return. After Dolinska, an activist in the Polish underground, obtained Aryan papers for Sawicka and

<sup>1715</sup> Tadeusz Krahel, "Ratowanie Żydów przez bł. ks. Michała Sopoćkę," *W Służbie Miłosierdzia* [Białystok], no. 11 (November 2008).

<sup>1716</sup> Dr. Juliusz Genzel was sheltered in Wilno by the Sisters of the Angels, and survived. See Agata Mirek, "Udział siostr zakonnych w ratowaniu ludności żydowskiej w Polsce w latach 1939–1945 na przykładzie wybranych zgromadzeń," in Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 135–60, at p. 154.

<sup>1717</sup> Supplemented by information from YVA, file M.31/8361; Anna Dolińska, RD; Tadeusz Krahel, "Ratowanie Żydów przez bł. ks. Michała Sopoćkę," *W Służbie Miłosierdzia* [Białystok], no. 11 (November 2008); and Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 101, 114–15; Krahel, *Martyrologia duchowieństwa archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945*, 398.

her husband and supplied them with clothing and other necessities, the Sawickis left Vilna for [Worniany, where they were welcomed by Rev. Jan Sielewicz, and then taken by Rev. Hipolit Chruściel to the hamlet of Kuliszki near Worniany. They stayed there for several months before relocating to the hamlet of] Onzadowo [Onzadowo] near Oszmiana, where they lived as Polish refugees until the area was liberated in July 1944. While living in Onzadowo, the Sawickis occasionally went to Vilna to visit Dolinska, whom they considered their guardian angel. After the war, Dolinska was arrested by the NKVD for belonging to the AK [Armia Krajowa or Home Army] and exiled to Siberia for eight years. After her release, she moved to an area within the new Polish borders, where she renewed contact with the Sawickis, who had moved to Warsaw.<sup>1718</sup>

Sheina Steinberg (later Epstein, b. 1924) was brought to a safe house opposite a church in Wilno by a Polish woman who had taken an interest in her. She remained there for several days while being instructed in the Catholic prayers she needed to know to pass as a Pole. Rev. Sopoćko provided her with a birth and baptismal certificate under the name of Janina Kowalewska, and she was directed to a Polish family in Landwarów, not far from Wilno.<sup>1719</sup>

The Gestapo got wind of Rev. Sopoćko's activities and detained him for several days. When he learned that they were coming after him again, in March 1942, Rev. Sopoćko fled to the countryside. He hid for two years at the convent of the Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus in Czarny Bór, on the outskirts of Wilno, where he had previously directed Jews. Rev. Sopoćko assumed a false identity, working as a gardener and carpenter. Several Jewish families also hid in the convent until the Soviet army arrived.<sup>1720</sup>

Rev. Sopoćko mentions other priests who were engaged in rescue activities. Rev. Tadeusz Makarewicz, pastor of St. John the Baptist Church, and Rev. Jan Kretowicz, pastor of the Bernadine Church of the Seraphic St. Francis and St. Bernard, baptized Jews who desired to convert.<sup>1721</sup>

In her testimony, Ida Lewkowicz Kaplan states that she received forged documents from Rev. Makarewicz.<sup>1722</sup> He exhorted his parishioners to return Jewish belongings given over to them for safekeeping.<sup>1723</sup>

<sup>1718</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 182.

<sup>1719</sup> Testimony of Sheina Epstein, SFV, Interview code 8050.

<sup>1720</sup> Agata Mirek, "Udział sióstr zakonnych w ratowaniu ludności żydowskiej w Polsce w latach 1939–1945 na przykładzie wybranych zgromadzeń," in Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 135–60, at p. 139.

<sup>1721</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 52–53, 422–23.

<sup>1722</sup> Testimony of Ida Lewkowicz Kaplan, YVA, file O.3/3643 (Item 3557228).

<sup>1723</sup> Julija Šukys, "*And I Burned with Shame*": *The Testimony of Ona Šimaitė, Righteous Among the Nations* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2007), 69. Ona Simate states: "The Polish priest Markiewicz [sic] did a great deal to ensure the return of Jewish belongings." She mentions a sermon of his that she heard and his confronting parishioners directly.

At the request of Anastazja Bitowt, the nanny to whom Ruth (b. 1939) had been entrusted by her mother, Masza Siemiatycka (Śmiaticki), Rev. Kretowicz agreed to baptize the child, knowing that she was Jewish. Ruth assumed the identity of Irena Siemiatycka. Both she and her mother survived, passing as Polish Catholics, assisted by several Poles.<sup>1724</sup>

Stefania Dąmbrowska's family owned a manor in Orwidów Dolny, near the city of Wilno, where a number of Jews found shelter: Stefan and Natalia (Nata) Świerzewski (Świerzawski), Miriam Kurc,<sup>1725</sup> Sonia Tajc, Lusja Wajnryb, and Artur and Helena Mińkowski (who later moved to another hiding place and perished). Recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile, Dąmbrowska mentions the assistance of two priests from Wilno: the aforementioned Rev. Kretowicz and Rev. Henryk Hlebowicz (misidentified below as Chlebowski).

Rev. Hlebowicz provided a birth and baptismal certificate to Miriam Kurc, who became Maria (Marysia) Nowicka. Rev. Kretowicz provided a birth and baptismal certificate to Lusja Wajnryb, who became Helena Snarska. Lusja had escaped from a transport to the death camps. She was placed with Rev. Kretowicz's brother, Onufry Kretowicz, in Orwidów Górny.<sup>1726</sup> The Plechoć and Alejski families participated in the rescue effort in these adjoining hamlets,<sup>1727</sup> yet only Dąmbrowska was awarded by Yad Vashem.

<sup>1724</sup> Anasztazja Bitowtowa, RD; Testimony of Anastazja Bitowtowa, YVA, file O.3/2338 (Item 3556105). For confirmation of Rev. Jan Kretowicz's rescue activities based on the archival records of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, see Viktorija Sakaitė, "Lietuvos dvasininkai—žydų gelbėtojai," *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 2 (12) (2002): 222–32 (Kretovič).

<sup>1725</sup> Miriam Kurc's rescue is described in *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 164–65, which misspells the rescuer's surname as Dąbrowska. Her grandparents managed to smuggle three-year-old Miriam out of the Wilno ghetto and place her in the care of a Polish acquaintance who obtained Aryan papers for her. Since the Polish acquaintance was unable to look after her, she handed Miriam over to a friend, Stefania Dąmbrowska, who looked after Miriam and raised her as her daughter, without expecting anything in return. In July 1944, when Miriam's grandmother came to reclaim her, she found her granddaughter safe and sound.

<sup>1726</sup> See also Stefania Dąmbrowska, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-dambrowska-stefania>; <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-dambrowska-stefania>; Testimony of Stefania Dąmbrowska, SFV, Interview code 32872; Stefania Dąmbrowska, European Resistance Archive, Internet: [https://www.resistance-archive.org/en/testimonies/stefania-dambrowska/#/clips/BgVHtuDr1ow?\\_k=s59vv9](https://www.resistance-archive.org/en/testimonies/stefania-dambrowska/#/clips/BgVHtuDr1ow?_k=s59vv9); Stefania Dąmbrowska, European Resistance Archive, Internet: [https://www.resistance-archive.org/en/testimonies/stefania-dambrowska/#/clips/TfsMCOeGqpc?\\_k=9yzbm1](https://www.resistance-archive.org/en/testimonies/stefania-dambrowska/#/clips/TfsMCOeGqpc?_k=9yzbm1); Stefania Dąmbrowska, Internet: <http://dmst16wapo.blogspot.com/2009/04/>.

<sup>1727</sup> Leszek Augustyn Rzeźniczak, "O ratowaniu Żydów w Orwidowie koło Wilna," *Znad Wilii*, no. 4 (2018): 100–2. After the arrival of the Soviet Army, one of the Jews assisted by the Plechoć family accused them falsely of having stolen some fabric he had hidden away, and threatened them with deportation to the Gulag. The NKVD officer who accompanied

The first to come to the manor in Orwidów Dolny in the Wilno region were a pair from the Dąbrowicz family, with their goat Sabina. “They were not Jews, though I am unsure where the goat was descendent from.”

Later on there appeared: Stefan Świerzewski with his wife Nata, a Catholic from a Jewish background.

“I called together all the workers and asked: The Świerzewskis want to go to Warsaw. I am offering them the opportunity to stay, but you must decide. And everyone answered: Miss, let them stay, because if we help them here maybe someone will help our people in Russia too.”

Ms. Dąmbrowska’s mother was transported deep into Russia in 1941.

It continued like this: she went to Wilno, she stopped for a visit with the Fedeck family, they had a house and were hiding a young married couple on their veranda, the Mińkowskis. He was a lawyer from Sosnowiec and she was the daughter of a well-known dentist from Wilno. They asked if she would take them in. By all means, the house is large.

Then she was in Wilno again. “Ma’am,” someone turned to her, “you can save a child.” The girl was named Miriam [Kurc] and was three years old, she was blond and spoke only Russian, they carried her from the ghetto.

The last to come was Sonia Tajc, the granddaughter of the Nitsons, wealthy landowners [from Karoliszki near Niemenczyn]. She was 15 years old and did not speak Polish very well. What to do? She came up with an idea: Sonia [called Stasia] will herd the cattle with Janusz, so they will have to leave early in the morning and return after dusk.

But that’s not all. There were also acquaintances from the poets’ group “Po Prostu,” different Jews who stayed two or three days, and also Helena Snarska, whose real name was Lusja Wajnryb, who had jumped from a train heading to Treblinka and had somehow made it to Wilno to the priest, Father [Jan] Kretowicz, who, like Father Chlebowski [Henryk Hlebowicz], managed to obtain birth certificates for Jews.<sup>1728</sup>

**E**manuela and Stanisław Cunge, along with their son Jan (b. 1934), natives of Łódź, took refuge in Wilno at the beginning of the war. They converted to Catholicism under the guidance of Rev. Leon Puciata, a professor at Wilno’s Stefan Batory University and the archdiocesan seminary. The Cunges passed as Poles in the vicinity of Żodziszki, near Smorgonie, where they mixed in the company of many friendly and helpful Polish and Belorussian landowners and professionals, some of whom were aware of their Jewish background or suspected it. Emanuela enjoyed the protection of Rev. Paweł Czapłowski, the pastor of Żodziszki, who was executed by the Germans for his involvement with the Polish underground.<sup>1729</sup>

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this Jew rebuked him sternly: “A Pole saved your Jewish life and you want to send him to Siberia.”

<sup>1728</sup> *Polacy ratujący Żydów w czasie Zagłady / Poles Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust* (2008), 45.

<sup>1729</sup> Emanuela Cunge, *Uciec przed Holocaustem* (Łódź: Oficyna Bibliofilów, 1997), 129, 137–38, 178, 182–83, 193, 207, 234–35, 253, 261, 273, 277; Tadeusz Krahel, “Il salvataggio degli

In addition to the Cunge family, Rev. Puciata protected the Holcman family.<sup>1730</sup> He placed Helena Kac and her sister with Janina Strużanowska, who sheltered a large number of Jews in her home in Kolonia Wileńska, on the outskirts of Wilno.<sup>1731</sup> Rev. Lucjan Pereświat-Sołtan, a priest in Kolonia Wileńska, was also assisting Jews and finding safe houses for them with his parishioners.<sup>1732</sup>

After escaping from the Kaunas ghetto, Hasya Grin (or Grün, later Chasia Geselewitz, b. 1922) stayed briefly in Kaunas with her friend Ona Buzelytė. Ona was sheltering two seminarians who had escaped from Wilno, and it was getting dangerous to keep Hasya. Ona obtained a false birth and baptismal certificate for Hasya from a priest she knew and sent her to Wilno. Polish nuns at St. Casimir's convent sheltered her there.

The assistance of Rev. Puciata, referred to earlier, is also mentioned in this context. According to one version, the nuns welcomed Hasya warmly but she couldn't stay there long, because the persecution and arrests of the Polish clergy in Wilno had begun. According to another version, fearing that her true identity had been discovered, the nuns placed her with the Anužis family. In any case, Hasya survived the war, living with members of the Anužis family, Lithuanians, in Wilno and Kaunas.<sup>1733</sup>

Barbara Turkeltaub (née Gurwicz, b. 1934 in Wilno), called Basia, and her younger sister Leah (later Kalish, b. 1936), called Lusia, were smuggled out

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ebrei da parte del clero dell'arcidiocesi di Vilnius nel 1941–1944,” in Mikrut, *Perseguitati per la fede*, 643–61, at p. 650; Krahel, *Martyrologia duchowieństwa archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945*, 348.

<sup>1730</sup> Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 101; Tadeusz Krahel, “Il salvataggio degli ebrei da parte del clero dell'arcidiocesi di Vilnius nel 1941–1944,” in Mikrut, *Perseguitati per la fede*, 643–61, at p. 650.

<sup>1731</sup> Justyna Giedrojc, “Dwie znaczące daty Polskiego Studia Teatralnego w Wilnie,” *Kurier Wileński*, November 13, 2015, Internet: <https://kurierwilenski.lt/2015/11/13/dwie-znaczące-daty-polskiego-studia-teatralnego-w-wilnie/>; Ilona Lewandowska, *Tak teraz postępują uczeni ludzie: Polacy z Wileńszczyzny ratujący Żydów* (Vilnius: Instytut Polski, 2019), 124.

<sup>1732</sup> Aleksander Dawidowicz, “Shoah Żydów wileńskich,” in Elżbieta Feliksiak, et al., eds., *Wilno–Wileńszczyzna jako krajobraz i środowisko wielu kultur: Materiały I Międzynarodowej Konferencji, Białystok 21–24 IX 1989*, vol. 1 (Białystok: Towarzystwo Literackie im. Adama Mickiewicza, Oddział Białostocki, 1992), 267. For confirmation of Rev. Lucjan Pereświat-Sołtan's rescue activities based on the archival records of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, see Viktorija Sakaitė, “Lietuvos dvasininkai—žydų gelbėtojai,” *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 2 (12) (2002): 222–32 (Peresviat-Soltan).

<sup>1733</sup> Anužis Family, RD; Anužienė (Vilnonis) Elena, Vilna Gaon Museum of Jewish History, Vilnius, Internet: <http://rescuedchild.lt/content.php?id=908>; Testimony of Hasyah Geselevich, SFV, Interview code 45574.

of the Wilno ghetto by a Polish farmer named Kubicki. He took them to his home in Wierszuliszki, a village outside of Wilno. Since the farmer's family was going hungry and sheltering the young girls had become too dangerous (Leah had a very Semitic appearance), the girls decided to leave this home, and they hid in nearby brick factory.

One day, they heard an approaching wagon. As it drew near, the girls could see that it was driven by a priest. He suspected that the girls were Jewish. Later known to them as Fr. Jan—probably Fr. Jan Kozak, a catechist—the priest had them climb into the back of the wagon and covered them up with hay so that they would not be seen. He took them to the home of Benedictine nuns on a farm located in Ponary.

The two girls were later moved to a Benedictine convent in Wilno. They continued to live in the convent, being well treated, for two years after the war ended, until they were found by their mother, Mina Gurwicz. Mina took another Jewish girl, Halina Lewkowicz (later Brudner), who had also been sheltered by the nuns, and she reclaimed her son, Hanoch (later Henry Grant), who had been cared for by a Polish family.<sup>1734</sup>

After this incident with the buses [where children were seized from the children's center in the ghetto attended by Barbara and Leah], Barbara's father sat down and explained as much as he could about the realities of war for her Jewish family. "My father put me on a little stool and lowered himself to the same level and said, 'Basha, there is a terrible war going on. In order for us to survive we need to separate. You will go with your sister to a farmer. Mother is going to stay in the ghetto and there's a special place where she's going to hide.' She was expecting a baby then. My father and two older sisters were going to the partisans. He told me, 'Never admit that you speak Yiddish and never say your last name. Say a bomb fell on your house and you don't know where everyone is and you're lost. And you are always to take care of your sister.'" As Barbara's father said all this, her mother was standing next to her, crying, and "I was clutching to her dress and she was holding my sister and she was praying."

So Moishe and Mina [Gurwicz] made arrangements with a farmer whom Barbara and Leah were taught to call "Uncle," but whose last name may have been Switzky [Kubicki]. The family knew him because he made regular deliveries of milk to them before there was a ghetto. Switzky put them in his wagon, covered them up with hay, and slipped them past bribed ghetto guards. "We were lucky. Sometimes the Nazis would stick bayonets into wagons like this but they didn't do that this time." They went to his home in the nearby village of Wierszuliszki. The Gurwiczes gave the farmer and his wife some money or jewelry to cover the costs of extra mouths to feed, and Barbara said the Switzky family probably did this more for the money than for any altruistic reason. [The risk assumed by the farmer and his family was hardly commensurate with any compensation the girls' parents had given for sheltering them.—Ed.] But, she said, Switzky "wasn't a bad person."

<sup>1734</sup> Testimony of Barbara Turkeltaub, SFV, Interview code 14190.

The Switzky family “had a whole bunch of children, like five or six kids,” Barbara said, though none of them knew that she and her sister were Jews. ...

Mrs. Switzky was a nervous woman, Barbara said, who was “afraid for her own family.” It was clear to Barbara that the woman was not happy with her husband’s decision to hide Jewish children, and she did not hide her angst well. ...

Barbara and Leah stayed with the Switzky family for just four or five months, during which time they never saw their own parents. Only later did they learn that their mother, hiding in the sewers of Vilna as the Germans were destroying the ghetto, had given birth to their brother, Henry, who Mina had tried—but failed—to abort.

Then one evening at the farm Barbara overheard Mrs. Switzky tell her husband that the next day he must go to the German authorities and turn in these Jewish children to receive the award being offered—some sugar. [This was likely done to scare the girls into leaving on their own, as those who turned in Jews whom they had sheltered risked severe punishment.—Ed.]

“So I was afraid to wait until the morning,” Barbara said. As her sister slept that night, Barbara sneaked into the pantry and cut off some bread from a large loaf. While in the pantry, she saw some jars of what she took to be honey on the shelf. So she slathered some on a piece of bread and went to wake up Leah, who always seemed to be hungry. ...

After Barbara got Leah dressed, they slipped out of the house and took off quickly down the road in the dark. “I didn’t know where to go, just down the road,” Barbara said.

The girls were cold and tired, and Leah was not happy to be running in the dark. So eventually they located the brick kiln where Father Jan found them and from which he took them to the Benedictine convent. ...

It was still dark when the clip-clop clip-clop of horse hooves awakened Barbara Gurwicz and her little sister, Leah, near the brick klin where they had found rest and warmth. Barbara looked up and saw a priest driving a buggy. He slowed and gazed at the girls, and they at him, but then he drove on. So not knowing what else to do, Barbara (called Basha) and Leah went back to sleep. ...

An hour or so later the priest returned. “this time he looked at us, and he stopped,” ... The priest asked the girls if they were Jews. Barbara’s father had prepared this little girl well for exactly this question. No, she lied. Bombs had fallen on their family’s house, she told him, and she and her sister did not know where anyone was. They were lost. That was the story she had rehearsed and rehearsed. And she thought she told it well.

The priest nodded and smiled. Barbara later decided that the man knew right then and there that the girls were, in fact, Jews. “Would you like to come with me to a safer place?” he asked. Barbara, speaking for herself and for her younger sister, said yes.

So the priest loaded them in his buggy, hid them under some blankets, and took them to a nearby convent run by Benedictine nuns on a farm not far outside Vilna [Wilno]. The priest, known to Barbara only as Father Jan (she never knew his last name) took them to safety, to survival, to a future that many times in the war before then had nearly been cut off. ...

When Father Jan drove up to the convent with the girls in his buggy, nuns quickly emerged and rushed them inside. They were fed, bathed, and given a warm bed. In a few days they were into a routine, rising early in the morning, attending Mass, then having

breakfast, after which came quiet time. Nuns began to teach them basic reading and math, and the girls had some housekeeping chores to do, too. ...

But rarely did they have anyone to talk with except themselves. The nuns generally spoke little, except when leading the girls in their lessons. None of them, for instance, ever asked the girls if they were Jewish. Rather, they simply taught them as if they were Catholic, instructing them in traditional practices. Barbara and Leah neither saw nor heard any other children at this convent, so it was a lonely existence, but not an unhappy one—especially for Barbara, who enjoyed the peace, the security, the rhythm of life, the tender care of the nuns, and the chance to draw pictures, read, and write poetry. Barbara, in effect, created her own tightly ordered world and became attached to the convent's structured pattern of life. She was baptized, took Communion, and learned to be an obedient Catholic. She believed the theology she was learning "very, very much," she told us.

There were, of course, special rules for the children—who the nuns knew were Jewish. "We were told not to venture from the house by ourselves. I usually was a very good girl and listened."

Usually. But not always. One day Barbara wandered into the forest adjacent to the convent. As she did so, she began to hear what she described as popping sounds in the woods. Curious, she moved toward them. "I stayed behind a tree," she said. "Then I saw a group of people undressed by a huge ditch. I began to hear voices. I saw a group of women undressed. Some were holding babies in their arms. The Germans were shooting randomly and the women and babies were falling. I was so stunned I couldn't move. I was like hypnotized. Very soon afterward, somebody grabbed me and carried me from there. It was one of the older nuns."

Barbara later learned that she had inadvertently wandered into the Ponary killing fields and watched Germans murdering Jews. The memory never left her, even though she "was told not to mention that. Forget about it. Erase it from my mind." [Since the two girls were sheltered on a farm north of Wilno, it is unlikely that they wandered into Ponary, which is located south of the city. The executions at Ponary were carried out by Lithuanians.—Ed.]

The nuns decided Barbara and Leah could not stay there any more. So they fetched Father Jan again, and that same day he took them to the main convent in Vilna. Again they hid under hay in his buggy. When they got there, nuns quickly took the girls inside, fed them, bathed them, and gave them their list of rules, including an important prohibition against going beyond the small area to which they were assigned inside the building. This time, Barbara listened and obeyed. While at this convent, she occasionally heard the voices of other children but almost never saw them. It was, she decided later, a way of making sure children did not give away other hidden children if pressured by the German authorities.

At this convent, Barbara and Leah fell into the rhythm of cloistered life. Nuns continued to teach them school subjects as well as prayers and other religious practices. But the girls' contact with the outside world was so limited that news of the end of the war did not reach them until 1947, two years after the fighting stopped. That was when their mother, who had been searching for them the whole time, finally found them. She had gone door-to-door, asking people if they had seen her two girls, one blonde, one with dark hair. Finally, a woman told her that she may have seen at least the blonde girl singing in the choir at a worship service at the convent.

Mina went to Mass to see for herself. And there she saw two girls she was sure were her own. She asked to speak to the priest who celebrated Mass there, Father Jan, to tell him of her search and to ask to meet with the girls.

“He came to me,” Barbara told us, “and said there is a woman who lost her children—he didn’t tell me that she was Jewish or anything—and is looking for them. She thinks that maybe you might be one of her children. Right away I was on guard. Everything in my background I had put away, far, far, away. I never forgot my parents. I never forgot my grandmother. But I thought that being a Jew must be something really, really bad if people are killing them and doing all those awful things. And I was scared to think about it.”

So Barbara did not want to see the woman who might be her own mother. She had found comfort and security in a Catholic convent and was loathe to lose it. “But then Father Jan came again and again. I think what an angel he was. He told me the lady is crying and looking for her children, so ‘would you please reassure her that you’ll help her to look for them?’ So that’s how I said OK.”

But the woman Barbara then met with did not match the image of her mother in her memory. That image was of a tall, strikingly beautiful woman with black shiny hair and shiny eyes. By contrast, this woman was “bent down,” wore glasses, and had a babushka over her gray hair. “I did not recognize her. But I started to talk to her and I said, ‘Don’t cry. You will find your children.’ And she said, ‘My daughter, Basha. I’m your mother.’ And I recognized the voice. But then I ran away. Isn’t that something? I was so scared. I just ran to the door. And they let me run.”

A few days later Father Jan came again and asked Barbara if she was ready to see her again. “I said yes. She was sitting there smiling. I remembered her smile. And she said, ‘My daughter, my daughter.’”

Leah reunited with her mother first. Somehow she was more ready than Barbara to reconnect. “She probably forgot my mom. But by their second or third meeting she just went to her like you wouldn’t believe. My mother hugged her and kissed her and Leah was sitting on her lap. I thought to myself, how could she do that and I could not? I had so many questions I wanted to ask her. I was angry with her. Why did she leave us? Why did we separate? There was so much emotion. Where was our father? There was anger about that. But she didn’t want to tell us everything.”

Out of this anger and this questioning, Barbara made an extraordinary demand of her mother. “When the time came for us to leave, my mother had to promise me that she would come to the church and she would convert and she would be coming to the Mass.”

Her mother, in turn, indicated to Barbara that she would do that, but in fact that was just a way of gaining custody of her daughter. Her mother never did convert, and Barbara, after a short time, became an observant Jew again.<sup>1735</sup>

<sup>1735</sup> Tammeus and Cukierkorn, *They Were Just People*, 140, 144–48.

Rev. Józef Obremski, the pastor of Turgiele, southeast of Wilno, issued false birth and baptismal certificates to Jews.<sup>1736</sup> Złata Rozhanska (Złata Różańska, later Zolotareva) was rescued by Stanisław and Bronisława Wiszniewski in the village of Dubinki, near Worniany. She was able to pass as Helena Wiszniewska thanks to false documents obtained from Rev. Piotr Niemycki, the pastor of Ostrowiec.

During World War II, Stanisław Wiszniewski, a forest warden, and his wife Bronisława, a childless couple, lived with Stanisław's elderly father on a remote farm in Worniany (Wilno District). In the autumn of 1943, Stanisław came across a Jewish girl, Złata Rużańska, who had succeeded in escaping from the Vilna [Wilno] ghetto on August 23, 1943, one month before its liquidation by the Germans. As she was terribly exhausted, he brought her home and he and his wife nursed her back to health. At Stanisław's request, Jan Niemycki [Niemycki], a priest from Ostrowiec, issued her a birth certificate in the name of Helena Wiszniewska, enabling her to live in the open. She learned Christian customs and accompanied the Wiszniewskis to church on Sundays. So well did she integrate into the life of the community that the [Lithuanian] policemen who arrived to check her identity, after being alerted by an informer, suspected nothing. In the course of time, Złata took notice that Bronisława was preparing more food than the three of them needed, but only after the liberation did she learn that the Wiszniewskis had also been helping a group of Jews from Ostrowiec and Gudogai [Gudogaj] who were hiding in the forest. In June 1944, upon the arrival of the Red Army, Złata found her younger sister, Cilia, who had also hidden in the area. Their parents did not survive. After the war, Złata settled in Vilnius [Wilno] and stayed in touch with the Wiszniewskis until their death.<sup>1737</sup>

Rev. Aleksander Hanusewicz, the elderly pastor of Raków, a small town east of Wołożyn, provided food to Jews confined in the ghetto. He sent food to the local orphanage of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary, under the direction of Sister Katarzyna Kral, which took in Jewish, as well as Polish and Belorussian, children. Rev. Hanusewicz also helped to place Jewish children with local farmers. After the German occupation ended, Rev. Hanusewicz asked the survivors who had returned to Raków whether there was anything he could do for them. They asked the priest to announce in the church on Sunday that those who had taken belongings from abandoned Jewish homes must return them.<sup>1738</sup>

<sup>1736</sup> Viktorija Sakaitė, "Lietuvos dvasininkai—žydų gelbėtojai," *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 2 (12) (2002): 222–32 (Obremskij), based on the archival records of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum.

<sup>1737</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 631.

<sup>1738</sup> Smilovitskii, *Katastrofa evreev v Belorussii 1941–1944 gg.*, 64; "Rakov under Nazi Occupation," 141, Internet: [http://www.eilatgordinlevitan.com/rakov/rkv\\_pages/rakov\\_stories\\_occupation.html](http://www.eilatgordinlevitan.com/rakov/rkv_pages/rakov_stories_occupation.html); Frącek, *Zgromadzenie Sióstr Franciszkanek Rodziny Marii w latach 1939–1945*, 127; Teresa Antonietta Frącek, "Siostry Franciszkanek Rodziny Maryi: Dzieliły się z Żydami chlebem, sercem, schronieniem," *Życie Konsekwane*, nos. 3–4 (131–32) (2018): 172–92, at p. 182; Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 119.

The following account describes the fate of a Jewish family from Wilno by the name of Perewoski, who took refuge in an area located near the town of Gródek, or Horodek, close to the prewar Polish-Soviet border. A number of Poles, among them Home Army members, as well as the local priest, came to their assistance. The pastor of Gródek at the time was Rev. Wiktor Gogoliński.

When war broke out, Shmuel and Dora Perewoski were living in Vilna [Wilno] with their two small children, Eli (Leszek) (b. 1935) and Celina (b. 1939). The family owned a lumber business. After the first wave of killings, Shmuel realized the hopelessness of the situation and in early 1942 decided to smuggle his family out of the ghetto. Tadeusz Korsak, a prewar business acquaintance, offered to help. The first to be taken out of the ghetto was Eli. Shmuel, who was employed in forced labor outside the ghetto, took his son out of the ghetto with him in the morning, concealing him among the lines of Jews marching to their work place. The children's former nanny, a non-Jew, was waiting at a pre-appointed place on the street, and took Eli to a temporary hiding place. Soon his mother and sister joined him. Then the nanny took them in a horse-drawn cart to Korsak's home in the village of Balcery (today in Belarus). Sometime later, Shmuel escaped from the ghetto and arrived in Balcery. The reunited family lived in the basement of the Korsak home under the guise of a Polish family. Young Eli even served in the local church as altar boy.

The danger for both families—the Jews and their rescuers—was very high. In addition to possibly being detected by the Germans, they were threatened by the pervasive enmity between ethnic groups in the region as well as political struggles between the Polish national underground and the Soviet-oriented partisans. One day in the summer of 1943, Shmuel was captured by Soviet partisans. The following day his body was found in the fields, riddled with bullets. Eight-year-old Eli, his mother and Tadeusz Korsak identified the body and secretly buried it. Many years later, Eli tried in vain to relocate the burial place.

Locals began to grow more and more suspicious of the family living with the Korsaks, and the situation became very precarious. Eli and Dora escaped to the forests and joined the partisans. Three-year-old Celina stayed with the Korsaks, who promised to take good care of her until the war was over. However, the Korsak family, too, fell victim to the turbulent times. A few months after the death of Shmuel Perewoski, Tadeusz Korsak and his two daughters were also murdered by Soviet partisans. Władysława, who had lost her entire family, took Celina and fled to her relatives, Jan and Maria Michałowski, who lived in the small village of Jerozolimka. Although the Michałowskis had five children of their own, they took in Celina and cared for her until liberation, when her mother and brother came to collect her.<sup>1739</sup>

Franciszka Dynin and her two children, Jerzy (later George, b. 1925) and Aviva Marcela, natives of Łódź, arrived in Horodyszczce, north of Baranowicze, at the beginning of 1942, posing as Polish aristocrats. Franciszka secured a position as German translator for the local mayor. The Dynins had been residing on the nearby estate of Count Jan Plater-Zyberk and his wife, Halina, where Aviva Marcela freely chose to be baptized by the local parish priest. The Plater-Zyberks,

<sup>1739</sup> Korsak Family, RD.

as well as the baroness of the Czernichów estate (their relative), maintained a conspicuous friendship with the Dynins, who adopted the aristocratic sounding name of Dunin when they moved to Horodyszczce, thus bolstering their guise.

To further augment their credentials, the Dynins frequented the local Catholic church. Jerzy became an altar boy and stood on excellent terms with the priest, Rev. Stanisław Ryżko. His mother, however, fumbled through the religious rituals. Jerzy recalled, “Mother was the one who fared the worst in church. ... I would see her make mistakes in the prayers: she didn’t cross herself on time, and she forgot to kneel at the proper times.”

Given their ostensible social status, it is difficult to imagine that the priest did not see through their guise, though discretion would have prevented him from expressing suspicion. The protection of the Platers and the priest no doubt figured heavily in the Dynin family’s survival, as rumours began to circulate that they were actually Jewish. Jerzy became involved with the local branch of the Home Army, and his mother supplied intelligence, thanks to her position in the mayor’s office.<sup>1740</sup>

Rev. Antoni Mackiewicz, the pastor of Mir, is mentioned in several accounts, as are the Sisters of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Resurrectionist Sisters). Rev. Mackiewicz refused the demand to identify wealthy Jews from among the 190 Jews driven to the market square by the Gestapo in July 1941.

During a German Aktion in November 1941, some 30 Jews were hidden on the grounds of the convent of the Resurrectionist Sisters, where Rev. Mackiewicz had taken up residence. During the liquidation of the ghetto in August 1942, two young Jewish women took refuge in the convent. At the request of Jews, the nuns took in some belongings for safekeeping and returned them after the war.<sup>1741</sup>

Rev. Mackiewicz was arrested in the summer of 1942, together with two dozen members of the local Polish intelligentsia. He was imprisoned in Stołpce, and then transferred to the Kołdyczewo concentration camp, where he was executed on November 14, 1942.

On the 19th of July [1941], another section of S.S. men arrived from Steibitz [Stołpce], called on all Jewish homes, and chased out all, from the age of 15 to 60 years, into the market

<sup>1740</sup> George Dynin, *Aryan Papers* (Bloomington, Indiana: Archway Publishing, 2014), chapters 5 through 8, especially at pp. 125–26.

<sup>1741</sup> Aniela Wójcik (s. Maria Euzebia CR), “Zgromadzenie Sióstr Zmartwychwstania Pana Naszego Jezusa Chrystusa: Prowincja warszawska,” in *Żeńskie zgromadzenia zakonne w Polsce 1939–1947* (Lublin: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski, 2002), 77; Agata Mirek, “Udział sióstr zakonnych w ratowaniu ludności żydowskiej w Polsce w latach 1939–1945 na przykładzie wybranych zgromadzeń,” in Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 135–60, at pp. 138–39; Monika Wiśniewska, “*Fortis mulieribus*: Zakonne sprawiedliwe wśród narodów świata,” *Życie Konsekwane*, nos. 3–4 (131–32) (2018): 96–112, at p. 106.

place. There they demanded goods which were hard to find due to the fires, nevertheless we took pains to deliver everything. After a few hours of fear, they fired shots into the air, ordered all to disperse, and to come tomorrow with yellow patches on the chest and back. We did not sleep that night. We realized that trouble had commenced, and who can tell how it will end. The next morning, the 20th of July, again they chased the Jews into the market. Meeting the priest of Mir, Mackiewicz, they asked him: “where live the wealthy Jews?” He answered that he was only the Catholic clergyman, and did not know anyone. In the market had gathered 190 Jews. Then the S.S. ordered the same hooligans to choose victims from the ranks. Then 19 men, 10 per cent of those present, were taken out and buried alive in the Yablonovchina [Jablonowszczyzna] forest.<sup>1742</sup>

At the very beginning, disregarding their own safety, the cantor and the rabbi’s son-in-law ran through the streets calling in suppressed, yet weeping voices, “Jews come out to your slaughter!” This was their way of warning about the imminent danger. They wanted to alert the people to the threat, hoping that somehow some will succeed in eluding the enemy. Some did. A few escaped by hiding with or without help from the Christian neighbors. Among those protected by Christian neighbors was the rabbi’s wife.

Mir had a convent of the Order of the Sisters of the Resurrection where four Polish nuns lived. During the day of destruction a number of Jews found shelter there. The frantic soldiers overlooked the place, as they did all other non-Jewish quarters.

During the Russian occupation, because of the spaciousness of the convent and the Soviet persecution of Poles, the Catholic priest, the Dean Antoni Mackiewicz, and his sister had decided to move in with the nuns. On November 9, [1941] some Jewish families came to the door of the convent. Mackiewicz let them in. Inside they pleaded: “Please have mercy on us, hide us!” “Because of my position I am not allowed to lie. If the Germans will ask me if there are Jews in my house, I will not be able to deny it. But in the yard there is a stable, a pig sty, a barn. All these places are open. I am not responsible for what is in the yard. Go out there. I don’t want to know about it.” The fugitives understood, they scattered and hid in all those places. They were spared. A few managed to survive the war.

For the rest of the onslaught Mackiewicz stood close to the window that faced the main road. Bewildered, helpless, unable to move, he watched. His eyes had a faraway strange look. As if transfixed, he seemed unaware of the silent tears that kept running down his cheeks. ...<sup>1743</sup>

Oswald Rufeisen, a native of the Żywiec area, found himself in Wilno when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. After fleeing Wilno in October 1941, Rufeisen was engaged as a farm worker by Lubomił Żukowski near Ponary. He was sheltered for a brief period in Nowa Wilejka by Rev. Stanisław

<sup>1742</sup> Miriam Swirnowski-Lieder, “The German Occupation and Liquidation of Our Little Town,” in N. [Nachman] Blumenthal, ed., *Sefer Mir* (Jerusalem: The Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora, 1962), 41 (English section).

<sup>1743</sup> Nechama Tec, *In the Lion’s Den: The Life of Oswald Rufeisen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 72–73.

Miłkowski, the local pastor, who also provided refuge to a 15-year-old Jewish girl.<sup>1744</sup>

Some time later, Rufeisen was directed by Michał Sobolewski to his brother, who lived in the town of Mir. There, Rufeisen, who spoke fluent German, decided to pass as a German. He was employed as an interpreter by the Belorussian police and German gendarmerie until his cover was exposed by a Jew in August 1942.

Rufeisen took shelter briefly with a Polish family, and then in the small convent of the Sisters of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Resurrectionist Sisters) in Mir. He remained with the nuns for 16 months, until December 1943, hidden in the loft of the convent's granary. To avoid detection by the Germans, he dressed as a nun when he came down from his hiding place. After the nuns were forced to leave their home and relocate to a building that held German supplies and was closely watched, Rufeisen decided to leave them for his safety and joined the Soviet partisans.

Euzebia (Władysława) Bartkowiak, the superior of the convent, was recognized by Yad Vashem in 2002.<sup>1745</sup> Three other nuns also resided at the convent, among them, Andrea Głowacka and Laurencja Domysłowska.

Since in Mir most Poles were removed from the official Nazi machinery, and because Oswald had more in common with the Poles than with the Belorussians, he decided to cultivate his relationships with Poles. ...

He also made a point of staying away from the Polish priest, Mackiewicz. ... He explains, "I did not trust the priest. I did not know him. Nor did I know that he had a positive attitude toward the Jews. This I discovered much later ..."

For the same reasons that he avoided the priest, he kept his contacts with the nuns to a bare minimum. ... Only much later the nuns served as intermediaries between Oswald and the Jews. This happened when Oswald supplied the Jews with blank document forms. Oswald had stolen these forms from his office. Such papers facilitated a move to the forbidden Christian world. He was told by his contacts that the nuns would deliver these items to the ghetto. ...

It is ironic that when the Russian occupation of Mir ended and the Nazis took over, the Polish priest, Mackiewicz, conducted a special mass thanking God for the termination of the Soviet occupation and the arrival of the Germans.

The night after Oswald saw the parked trucks, in the Mir region alone twenty-five Polish men and women, all defined by the Nazis as the intelligentsia, as leaders of their commu-

<sup>1744</sup> Halina Węzyk-Widawska, "Ksiądz Stanisław Miłkowski (1881–1961)," *Chrześcijananie*, vol. 7 (1982): 99–100; Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 54; Kraheil, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 117. For confirmation of Rev. Stanisław Miłkowski's rescue activities based on the archival records of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, see Viktorija Sakaitė, "Lietuvos dvasininkai—žydų gelbėtojai," *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 2 (12) (2002): 222–32 (listed as Milkovski and Volkovskij).

<sup>1745</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 532. See also the testimony of Oswald Józef Rufeisen, JHI, record group 301, no. 3726.

nities, were arrested. Balicki and the priest Mackiewicz were among them. In Mir only one Polish man was spared, the one who listened to Oswald's warning and ran away. In the vicinity of Nieśwież scores of other members of the Polish intelligentsia were rounded up.

Of the arrested all were taken to the prison in Stołpce, where they remained for about two months. From there they were transferred to the concentration camp in Kołdyczewo. ... In fact, these Polish arrests fit well into the overall Nazi policies that aimed at the elimination of the Polish elite. ...

This policy was put in effect for the entire country. In the [north]eastern part of Poland the Nazis tried to give the impression that moves against the Poles were not only initiated and executed by Belorussians but also motivated by Belorussian nationalists.

Eventually all the Poles arrested that night were gassed in special trucks in the Kołdyczewo concentration camp. ...

It was Sunday, August 16, 1942, five o'clock in the morning. Except for an occasional animal sound, the stillness in Mir was complete, a stillness soon interrupted by the pounding of wooden clogs against cobblestones and by a dangling of keys. The shoes and the keys belonged to Sister Nepomucena Kościuszek, who, still absorbed in her morning prayers, had come to open the convent's gate.

Suddenly through the half-opened space a man jumped into the courtyard. "Jesus Christ" escaped from the nun's lips, as her hand made the sign of the cross. She barely recaptured her composure when she recognized Oswald. She knew the authorities were looking for him. Oswald was guilty of two crimes: he was a Jew and he had betrayed the Germans. Each required a death sentence.

Confronted with this dangerous runaway, the nun quickly relocked the gate and then asked him to follow her into the house. Inside, Oswald met the Mother Superior, Euzebia Bartkowiak, and the only two other inhabitants of the convent, Andrea Głowacka and Laurencja Domysłowska. Of the four Laurencja Domysłowska, in her thirties, had as yet not taken her final vows.

Except for the Mother Superior, the rest of the women seemed frightened by the sudden appearance of this dirty, somewhat confused youth. They knew that his mere presence was endangering their lives. Speechless, they looked at their leader. The unspoken question each seemed to be raising was: "What are we going to do with him?"

"... After all, the [German] gendarmerie was right next to the convent! The threat was obvious. ... I had come to the convent with a request that they help me contact the Balicki family. ... I thought that the Balicki sisters would know about other places for me to stay at ... When I explained this to the Mother Superior she said 'no'. For the time being she forbade any outside communications, stressing that these young girls may not be able to keep a secret and thus others could learn about my whereabouts. She insisted, 'No one should know that you are here. We must pray to God to tell us what to do with you!' Then she explained that because it was a difficult and complicated situation only God can settle it. Instead of deciding by themselves they must wait for a sign from God."

But Euzebia Bartkowiak's reliance on God in no way interfered with her activities. She was enterprising, full of energy and determination. She concluded, "Until we know how to resolve this problem, we cannot send you away. You must wash, eat, and rest. After that we shall see." ...

Every Sunday during Mass the priest reads a special message from the Gospel. On that particular day he read about the good Samaritan. This is a story about a Jew who was robbed and wounded and left on the side of the road by his attackers. A priest passed next to the suffering man but did not bother to help him. Neither did a Levite. Only a traveling Samaritan took an interest in the helpless Jew. The Samaritan first attended to the man's wounds and then moved him to a nearby inn where he generously paid the innkeeper for keeping this stranger. Before the Samaritan left he assured the innkeeper that he will be coming back to check the condition of the patient. The story finishes with Jesus saying, "Go and do as he has done."

Listening to this sermon and particularly the last sentence, the two women felt that God had spoken to them. Euzebia Bartkowiak was especially convinced that God wanted them to save Oswald. Of the four nuns, two were less than enthusiastic about keeping him. They objected. But the Mother Superior would not be dissuaded. When it came to moral issues she followed her own conscience. Firmly, she overruled their opposition. ...

Conversion also led to other more concrete changes. "The two nuns, who initially opposed my stay in the convent, accepted me completely. Their approval coincided with my baptism. ... Soon not only did these nuns tolerate me but they were happy to have me there." ...

Grateful, Oswald was not surprised by the nuns' decision to shelter him. For him to shelter another human being was not extraordinary. Used to rescuing people, he had expected the nuns to do the same. Still, when he speaks about his four companions, he is full of admiration. He has a great deal of respect for their courage and is convinced that they were not concerned about the risk they were taking in sheltering him. Invariably, when referring to them he says that "they were wonderful women, they looked upon my stay there as a duty. There were no fears in that house, except during certain moments. They were definitely not scared, if they were they could not have allowed me to take my meals with them. ... They were like soldiers, for whom saving me was a duty ... they also had open tolerant attitudes toward Jews."

Actually Oswald's constant presence in the convent broke many of the house rules. When it was all over, in 1946, the Mother Superior went to the head of their order to discuss these transgressions. She wanted to know whether it was right for them to have disregarded so many established regulations. The head of the order, an old woman, said, "If we had created the Mir convent only to save this one man, we would have something to thank God for. Be assured that human life is much more important than all the rules." ...

Because the nuns were respected both by the civilians and the authorities, visits to their place were quite common. ... The presence of outsiders, however, was not always as uneventful. Among the frequent convent callers was a peasant woman, a Catholic and a Nazi-collaborator. Everyone knew that part of her income came from spying on civilians and denouncing them to the authorities. Still, they encouraged her visits, hoping that in the end they might lead her away from her sinful path.

One day, unaware that the woman was in the convent, Oswald, carrying a batch of wood, entered the living room to start a fire. When this guest noticed him, startled she stood up. She had recognized him—most local people would. It mattered little that Oswald disappeared quickly. The damage was done. In a split second, impulsively, she ran out of the house. In no time she returned, threw herself on her knees in front of the Mother

Superior, and swore she would tell no one about this dangerous encounter. Oswald feels that because of the possible peril, “right away the nuns should have asked me to leave. They did not. The Mother Superior chose to believe this untrustworthy person. She proved to be right. Although a Nazi collaborator, the woman told no one that she had seen me.”

... In Mir the authorities were concerned with the safety of their official buildings. To them one obvious solution was to surround these structures with barbed wire. If done, this would transform the heart of the town into a police area. But before this plan could be put into effect the Germans had to decide what to do with the convent located in the middle of their official buildings. This decision, in turn, called for an inspection of the place.

The formal visit to the convent occurred on a Sunday, when three of the nuns, among them the Mother Superior, were away in church in Iszkoldź [Iszkoldz]. Only one nun stayed home to protect Oswald. For him, indeed, the event was memorable. “Two policemen knocked. The nun opened the door but forgot to warn me. The men began to enter into the different rooms. Soon I could hear their heavy military boots quite close to me. ... My room had the usual wash basin. In front of it was a screen that was supposed to hide anyone who was washing.

At this wash basin was a shawl, a big, black shawl. The nuns gave it to me to keep warm. When I heard the heavy boots and the loud voices, practically in my room, I quickly jumped behind the screen and threw the shawl over it. This suggested that one of the nuns might be behind it. The men came in. They stopped not far from the screen. Amused, they commented that a nun must be behind it. They chuckled. Then I heard them leave the room. When they were out of the house, the nun appeared, pale and shaking all over. All I could do was pray.”

After this official visit the Nazis ordered the convent to move to Stara Miranka, a few miles away from Mir. The transfer had to take place by March 1943.

The new house consisted of four rooms and a barn attached to the main building. Because Oswald was well known in the area, he could not show his face. The actual move, therefore, had to take place in a number of steps. “As the nuns emptied the different rooms they locked me into one of them. On the last day, one of the nuns left for the new place very early in the morning, before anyone was up. That same evening, I, dressed as a nun, walked with the other three nuns to our new home.”

The new convent was not only smaller but also more exposed, without a garden, without a fence. At this time the Germans were becoming more and more nervous. Night searches for partisans were common. It would have been too dangerous for Oswald to sleep in such an exposed place. The barn became Oswald's sleeping quarters. This barn, although attached to the new convent, was used by the Germans as a storage place for food confiscated from the peasants. To avert partisan attacks, at night it was guarded by policemen. Each evening another group of policemen would come and watch the barn till dawn. Because of this watch, no Germans would dream of searching inside the barn.

In principle, those buildings belonged to the parish-church of Mir, but were being used by the authorities. In a small hall opposite the entrance a ladder served as the way to the attic of the barn. Every evening the Mother Superior, Oswald dressed as a nun, and a cat would climb up this ladder behind the standing guard. As they climbed the nun spoke to the cat, pretending that she was bringing it there to keep away the mice. Since the attic contained all kinds of food, the presence of a cat protected the food from mice. And so

the guard never considered interfering with this nightly pastime. Each morning after the policeman had left, Oswald still dressed as a nun, would sneak down and into the house.

... But peace was becoming progressively more elusive. In fact, the Germans were becoming more cruel and more violent. It was as if the loss of battles created a special need for victories against vulnerable civilians. The smallest crimes, often imaginary ones, were met with severe punishment.

Thus, for example, in a nearby town [Nowogródek], twelve nuns, suspected of feeding partisans, were executed. Raids into private homes became more frequent. As the terror grew, more natives joined the partisans. Escapes into forests, in turn, led to more violent Nazi retaliations. As usual, the losers were the innocent people who had little to do with such moves.

With this increasingly threatening situation, Oswald became concerned about the nuns' safety. He was convinced that he could avert disaster by leaving the convent. But he had no place to go. ...

And so, on December 3, 1943, in the evening, dressed as a nun, Oswald left the convent in the company of the Mother Superior. In a nearby forest he took off his robe. As he handed it to the nun, she cried, saying, "Come back in case of difficulties. Be sure to come back." Too upset to speak, Oswald nodded, knowing full well that this time he wouldn't be returning.

Still crying softly the nun blessed him and left.<sup>1746</sup>

Numerous testimonies gathered by Yad Vashem describe how priests—most of whose identities have not been established—assisted the rescue efforts of fellow Poles. The entries found in *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations* focus on the awarded rescuers, and the role of other helpers is often referred to without detail or overlooked entirely. The encyclopedia entries set out below that are sketchy or silent about these matters have been supplemented by other sources, where known. The entries are set out in their entirety, with parenthetical annotations, to show the context in which assistance was provided and the frequent reliance on Poles other than those recognized by Yad Vashem.

[1] Moshe and Chaviva Flechtman became acquainted with the Balul family through the mother, Wiktorja, a devout Christian in her sixties. The Baluls, who lived in Vilna [Wilno], made a living by selling food to the ghetto inmates and thereby became friendly with Moshe, who worked outside the ghetto. Wiktorja, who supplied him with free bread from time to time, offered her help if the situation deteriorated, and at the beginning of 1943 Moshe and Chaviva fled to the Baluls' home, where they were offered refuge by the parents, Wincenty and Wiktorja, and the sons, Franciszek and Antoni. Moshe stayed in Antoni's apartment and the latter supplied him with forged documents, which he used to obtain work from Polish farmers in the area. Chaviva, who was pregnant, gave birth to her eldest daughter in the Baluls' house, and they kept the baby carefully hidden. The family also helped other Jews who had fled from the ghetto by finding hideouts and obtaining Aryan document from them [with the assistance of priests<sup>1747</sup>]. Among those whose lives were

<sup>1746</sup> Tec, *In the Lion's Den*, 98–99, 163–66, 172, 173–76.

<sup>1747</sup> Testimony of Havivah Flekhtman, SFV, Interview code 19320.

saved by the Baluls was Jakow Jakubowicz, a 13-year-old boy who had escaped from the ghetto. The family received no payment for its assistance, which was motivated by purely humanitarian and religious principles.<sup>1748</sup>

[2] Helena Barcikowska lived with her two sons in the village of Wisniowiec [Wiśniowiec] in the Tarnopol district [actually, near Krzemieniec in Volhynia]. Following the Nazi invasion of the area in 1941, she found employment as an agricultural worker in the fields of a German-administered estate, where she became acquainted with two Jewish brothers from Warsaw, Adam and Michal [Michał] Gajlo [Gajło]. In 1942, when the Jews of the village were incarcerated in a ghetto, Helena decided to take the brothers into her home. Only Adam was able to take advantage of the offer, however, as Michal was bedridden. As a devout Catholic, Helena regarded the saving of human life as both a duty and a privilege. The danger of the undertaking was not lost on her, since the German and Ukrainian police were constantly searching for Jewish fugitives. The house was raided twice, and it was only owing to Helena's astuteness that her activities remained undiscovered. Adam Gajlo remained in hiding until October 1943. Helena requested no payment for sheltering him and, despite her dire financial situation, divided her meager earnings as a seamstress between her Jewish charge and her sons Tadeusz, aged 14, and Jozef [Józef], aged 13. The latter were actively involved in caring for Adam. They built a hideout for him beneath the house, brought him food, and kept the hiding place clean. At the end of 1943, Helena obtained a forged birth certificate for Adam [from the local Catholic priest<sup>1749</sup>] and, fearing the intrigues of her Ukrainian neighbors, fled westward with her children before the approaching Russian front. Adam escaped together with them, but afterwards their paths separated. Under his new name, Krzysztof Boleslaw [Bolesław] Sawicki—which he also retained after the war—he moved to Lancut [Łańcut], where he remained until the liberation.<sup>1750</sup>

[3] In 1941, a Polish woman carrying a baby a few months old appeared on the doorstep of the Bombases, a poor working class couple who lived with their five children in the town of Horodenka in the Stanislawow [Stanisławów] district. The Bombases rented a room to the woman, who came from Cracow, but after a while she moved in with her brother-in-law, who lived in the neighboring village. After a short time the woman vanished, leaving the baby behind. When she heard that the woman had disappeared, Zuzanna, the Bombases' ten-year-old daughter, felt sorry for the abandoned baby. On her own initiative, she went in search of the baby and brought him home, where she managed to persuade her mother, despite the latter's misgivings, to keep the child. The Bombases knew nothing of the baby's origins, until one day a neighbor told them that the child was the son of Moshe Pilpel, a Jewish pharmacist who had disappeared without a trace. Despite the danger, Rozalia Bombas decided to continue caring for the Jewish baby, whose first name she did not even know. Bombas obtained a Christian birth certificate for the baby from the local priest, stamped in the name of Krzysztof Ryszard Chodźba [Chodźba]. The Bombases treated Krzysztof as one of the family. Zuzanna, in particular, treated him like a younger brother and spent all her free time with him. Little Krzysztof stayed with the Bombases until 1947, when a representative of the Jewish Children's Rescue Committee turned up, introducing himself as the boy's uncle and asking for the child to be handed over to him, since the child's parents had perished. Rozalia and Zuzanna, however, refused to give up

<sup>1748</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 69.

<sup>1749</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 33; Knap, "Jak ci się uda uratować, pamiętaj", 52.

<sup>1750</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 75.

Krzysztof, whom they loved and on whose behalf they had risked their own lives and that of the rest of their family. When they realized that legally they did not have a leg to stand on, they agreed. The organization paid the Bombases for Krzysztof's upkeep during the occupation. Krzysztof subsequently immigrated to Israel, where he later changed his name to Zvi Pilpel.<sup>1751</sup>

[4] Maria and Olga Brzozowicz were friendly with Stanisława [Stanisława] and Jan Pastor, with whom they had studied in the town of Sarny, in the Volhynia district. In 1940, during the Soviet annexation, the NKVD imprisoned Maria and Olga's father, who was later exiled to the far north. The Brzozowicz sisters and their mother [Antonina] subsequently moved to Lwow [Lwów], where they rented a small apartment. Some time later, Stanisława and Jan Pastor also moved to Lwow, with their mother, Ela Karmiol, who had since remarried, and the two families resumed their friendship. In 1941, when the Germans occupied Lwow, Karmiol and her children were evicted from their apartment. In desperation, they turned to Antonina Brzozowicz and her daughters, who, despite their straitened circumstances and small apartment, immediately agreed to take them in. In time, Antonina's Ukrainian neighbors began suspecting her of hiding Jews and threatened to report her to the authorities. [Antonina Brzozowicz turned to a priest for guidance and he urged her to continue hiding her charges.<sup>1752</sup>] Undeterred, the Brzozowiczes vigorously denied the allegations and continued hiding the refugees. Stanisława, Jan, and their mother, Ela, stayed with the Brzozowiczes until they were liberated in July 1944. After the war, the two families moved to an area within Poland's new borders and remained friends for many more years.<sup>1753</sup>

[5] After the German occupation of Lwow [Lwów] in the summer of 1941, 18-year-old Hana Landau escaped the anti-Jewish pogroms [carried out by Ukrainians] that erupted in the city, during which her parents and brothers were killed. She went to the local church in the nearby village of Winniki, obtained Aryan papers made out in the name of her friend Czesława [Czesława] Bandalowska and returned under an assumed identity to Lwow. As she was known to be Jewish, however, she was arrested and interned in the Janowska concentration camp, but was later released after convincing the Germans that she was Christian. Armed with her Aryan papers, Hana subsequently moved to Cracow [Kraków], where she obtained work.<sup>1754</sup>

[6] In 1940, Stanisława [Stanisława] Butkiewicz was employed by Jakov and Hana Fajnsztajn, residents of Vilna [Wilno], to look after their baby daughter, Masha. Upon the German occupation of the city, the Fajnsztajns were interned in the local ghetto. Hana was sent daily to forced labor outside the ghetto and met Stanisława each day on her way to work. One day in the autumn of 1941, Hana took Masha and handed her over to Stanisława, requesting the latter to look after her daughter if she did not return. She never came back and the infant remained with Stanisława, who cared for her faithfully and obtained an Aryan birth [and baptismal] certificate for her [from a Catholic priest<sup>1755</sup>] on which she registered the child as her daughter, Maria Butkiewicz. Fearing denunciation by suspicious

<sup>1751</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 106.

<sup>1752</sup> Account of Stanisława Wincza and Jan Pastor in Kołacińska-Gałązka, *Dzieci Holocaustu mówią...*, vol. 5, 210.

<sup>1753</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 118.

<sup>1754</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 120.

<sup>1755</sup> Schelly Talalay Dardashti, "A Tale of Three Women and a Lost Family," *The Jerusalem Post*, March 16, 2007.

neighbors, Stanisława left her apartment and moved with Masha to the home of her relatives in a distant village. Masha remained under her assumed identity with her former housemaid, who selflessly jeopardized her life to save her. After the war, when it became known that Masha's parents had perished, Stanisława did not conceal the child's Jewish identity from her, although she raised her like a daughter in every way and took care of her upbringing and education.<sup>1756</sup>

[7] In the *Aktion* which marked the end of the Minsk-Mazowiecki [Mińsk Mazowiecki] ghetto in the Warsaw district, Zyskind Berger, father of two-year old Danuta and seven-month-old Barbara, was killed. Before being deported to Treblinka, Berger's wife managed to hand over her two daughters to Apolonia Chmielewska, her former neighbor. The unexpected appearance of the two little children in the house of Apolonia, who was unmarried, aroused the neighbors' suspicions and they began intimating that she was hiding Jewish girls in her home. After being subjected to threats and extortion, Chmielewska was forced to move Danuta and Barbara from one hiding place to another. [Apolonia was also helped by a priest from the Mińsk parish who provided a false birth certificate for the younger sister under the name of Jaworska.<sup>1757</sup>] Despite the danger, she constantly saw to the girls' needs and paid for their upkeep out of her own pocket. The search for a safe shelter for the two girls ended when Chmielewska found acquaintances in Minsk-Mazowiecki who were willing to look after Barbara for payment and placed Danuta with a foster family in Warsaw. Chmielewska frequently visited her charges, making them feel they had a mother who cared for them. As the front advanced toward Warsaw, Chmielewska, fearing she might lose contact with the girls, brought them back home. Even after the war, Chmielewska continued to bring up the girls as if they were her own, but never hid from them the fact that they were Jewish.<sup>1758</sup>

[8] Rachel Kalfuss was born in September 1941, in the town of Niepolomice [Niepołomice] near Cracow. When she was eight months old, her mother perished in the Belzec [Bełżec] extermination camp, and some months later, her father, too, was killed in the Stalowa Wola labor camp. Before being sent to her death, her mother gave her baby daughter over to an acquaintance, [Florentyna Stanek or Sławek], who passed her on to [Cecylia Dudzińska, who lived with her daughter] Helena Czartoryska, who lived in Kolbuszowa, in the Rzeszow [Rzeszów] district. Czartoryska, whose husband was being held in a prisoner-of-war camp, had given birth to a baby daughter in 1939, but she had died shortly after. [Dudzińska and] Czartoryska took in the Jewish orphan, [who had been baptized in Zwierzyniec near Cracow as Maria Skrzydlewska<sup>1759</sup>]. Despite threats by suspicious neighbors, and attempts at extortion, Czartoryska, with supreme dedication, and at great personal risk, raised Rachel-Marysia as her own daughter. In risking her life to save Rachel-Marysia, Czartoryska, who came from an aristocratic family, was guided by humanitarian principles, which superseded considerations of personal safety. After the war, relatives in Israel found out

<sup>1756</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 126.

<sup>1757</sup> Chmielewska Apolonia, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-chmielewska-apolonia>; "Wojenne matki i wojenne ojcowie," *MiM*, no. 2 (292) (March–April 2021): 16–17, Internet: <https://www.minsk-maz.pl/plik,6628,mim-marzec-kwiecien-2021.pdf>. After the war, every one in Mińsk knew of the girls' background, but the girls experienced no unpleasantness.

<sup>1758</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 138.

<sup>1759</sup> Piotr Czartoryski-Sziler, "Opowiem wam o swojej babci..." w.Poltyce.pl, March 24, 2018.

that Rachel Kalfuss was alive, and members of the Coordination Committee traced her to Czartoryska's home. In 1947, she was brought over to Israel where she was legally adopted by relatives who, thinking they were acting in her best interests, hid her past from her. It was only years later that Kalfuss discovered how Czartoryska had saved her life. Although she got in touch with her immediately, Czartoryska died shortly thereafter.<sup>1760</sup>

[9] Lucja [Łucja] Meister, followed by her brother, Bertold, escaped from the Przemyśl [Przemyśl] ghetto, in the Rzeszow [Rzeszów] district, with the help of forged documents which their friend, 19-year-old Zofia Komperda [later Dygdała], obtained for them. Komperda arranged for Lucja to move in with her aunt, who lived in a village near the town of Przeworsk. However, when neighbors began suspecting that Lucja was Jewish, Komperda arranged for her to be transferred to a nearby village, where Lucja worked in a local school [as a teacher and lived in the parish rectory—she had converted earlier<sup>1761</sup>] until the area was liberated in 1944. Although she survived the war, Lucja dies shortly thereafter [of typhus]. Komperda also arranged for Bertold Meister, Lucja's brother, to stay with her parents. Her father, who was a picture restorer, taught Meitner the secrets of his trade, and employed him as an apprentice. Komperda also trained Meister as a land surveyor, and sent him to the nearby village of Wola Zgłobińska [Zgłobieńska], where he worked in his new profession until the area was liberated in 1944. After the war, Meister remained in Poland.<sup>1762</sup>

[10] When the Postrags [Postrągs] and their eight-year-old daughter, Roza [Róża], were interned in the Tarnow [Tarnów] ghetto, in the Cracow [Kraków] district, Franciszka Dynowska, their former maid, endangered her life by providing them with food. In August 1943, a few days before the liquidation of the Tarnow ghetto, Dynowski provided them with forged papers [prepared on the basis of falsified baptismal certificates issued by a priest from a parish in Tarnów<sup>1763</sup>] and with the help of her son, Władysław [Władysław], smuggled them out of the ghetto. Postrag, who decided to join the partisans, was caught and shot dead. Dynowska took his wife, Regina, to her brother, who lived in the village of Plesna [Pleśna] near Tarnow, while Władysław took Roza to his uncle and aunt, Leon and Ludwika Dynowski, who lived in the nearby village of Krzyż [Krzyż], where he himself was staying. When the neighbors discovered that a Jewish woman was hiding in the village, Regina fled to Warsaw, where she registered as a Pole for work in Germany. Regina Postrag was sent to Germany, where she stayed until the liberation in April 1945. Back in Krzyż, the Dynowskis looked after young Roza devotedly, enrolling her in the local school and seeing to all her needs without expecting anything in return. Roza stayed with the Dynowskis until the area was liberated, after which she and her mother emigrated to the United States.<sup>1764</sup>

[11] In 1943, during one of the *Aktionen* in the Bedzin [Będzin] ghetto in Upper Silesia, 13-year-old Alina Potok [also Pottock] escaped from the transport and reached Warsaw. She made straight for the apartment of her parents' acquaintances whose address she had. However, after a short stay, Alina was told to leave. During her stay at the acquaintances' home, Alina got to know Leonard Gliniski [Gliński], a member of the AK [Home Army].

<sup>1760</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 157.

<sup>1761</sup> Dąbrowska, *Światła w ciemności*, 380–82.

<sup>1762</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 196–97.

<sup>1763</sup> The Dynowski Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-dynowski-family>.

<sup>1764</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 198.

When he heard that the acquaintance was planning to send Alina away or even hand her over to the authorities, Glinski begged him to keep Alina for a few more days, during which time he managed to obtain Aryan papers for her, including school certificates, an identity card, and a birth certificate [from St. Casimir's Church in Lwów<sup>1765</sup>]. Since her age on these documents was 16, she was able under her assumed identity to register for work in Germany. Thanks to his ties with the underground, Glinski arranged for her to go to Vienna, where she worked with a doctor's family with whom she stayed until the area was liberated. Throughout this time, Alina corresponded with Glinski.<sup>1766</sup>

[12] As school friends, Irena Gwozdowicz and Ludwika Rozen, from the town of Bursztyn in the Stanislawow [Stanisławów] district, spent a lot of time in each other's homes. Before the war, the Gwozdowicz moved to the town of Przemyśl [Przemyśl] while Ludwika and her parents remained in Bursztyn. After the German occupation, the Rozens were interned in the local ghetto and in 1942, when the Germans began liquidating the local Jewish communities, Ludwika fled from the ghetto to the Gwozdowicz in Przemyśl, where they gave her a warm reception. [When the Gwozdowicz had returned to Bursztyn for a visit, they brought food to the Rozens in the ghetto, left a note with their new address, and told Ludwika to seek them out if she was in danger. Ludwika reached Przemyśl on foot, exhausted, hungry and with high fever. A priest she met on her way gave her the birth certificate of Józefa Bałda, her peer who had recently died. Mrs. Matylda Gwozdowicz obtained an identity card for Ludwika in the same name.<sup>1767</sup>] ... [They] passed her off as the daughter of their maid, who, under Soviet rule, had been exiled to Siberia, and found work for her in a German soldier's [sic] club. ... Rozen stayed with the Gwozdowicz until the area was liberated in 1944.<sup>1768</sup>

[13] In July 1942, during the large-scale *Aktion* in the Warsaw ghetto, 11-year-old Michał [Michał] Motyl and his seven-year-old sister, Regina, escaped to the Aryan side of the city. Their father, too, escaped and found a hiding place in the town of Parczew, while their mother was deported to Treblinka. After wandering through fields and villages and suffering many hardships, the two children found their way back to their native town of Golub [east of Toruń] in Pomerania, where they turned to Jozef [Józef] Matuszewski and his wife, friends of their parents. The Matuszewskis, guided by humanitarian principles, which overrode considerations of personal safety or economic hardship, took the children into their home, looked after them, and saw to all their needs. One day, the Gestapo, alerted by informers, raided the apartment. Although they did not discover the children, the Matuszewskis decided to move them to a safer hiding place. They arranged for Regina to move in with their relatives, Franciszek and Władysława [Władysława] Kaczmarek, in the town of Chełmno and found another hiding place for Michał. The Kaczmareks made Regina feel at home, and with the help of their daughter, Teresa, looked after her devotedly, introducing her to neighbors as a relative whose house had been destroyed by bombs. [Regina, known as Irena Kwiatkowska, lived openly with the Kaczmareks. Her true identity was known

<sup>1765</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 151.

<sup>1766</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 237.

<sup>1767</sup> *Polacy ratujący Żydów w czasie Zagłady: Przywracanie pamięci / Poles Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust: Recalling Forgotten History* (Warsaw: Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland and Museum of the History of Polish Jews, 2009), 69.

<sup>1768</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 263.

by a priest and by a teacher.<sup>1769</sup>] They even kept up a correspondence with her father, who later perished under unknown circumstances. In risking their lives for Regina, the Kaczmareks were prompted by love of their fellow man, which overcame considerations of safety. Regina stayed with the Kaczmareks even after the area was liberated. In 1946, her uncle found her and took her with him to Israel, where, for many years, she carried on a correspondence with Teresa Kaczmarek. Regina's brother, Michal, also survived and after the war emigrated to the United States.<sup>1770</sup>

[14] During the occupation, Janina Klein, her daughter Janina (later Dylag [Dylał]), and her daughter and son-in-law, Halina and Tadeusz Dobrowolski lived on the fourth floor of a building in Elektoralna Street, Warsaw. The daughter, Janina, who was a member of the AK [Armia Krajowa; Home Army], and later participated in the Warsaw Uprising, worked in a jewelry shop in Warsaw, where she got to know Seweryn Ehrlich, an agent for a Swiss watch firm. In 1942, Ehrlich asked Janina if she knew of anyone who would be prepared to shelter his wife, Felicja. Janina, her mother, and sister decided to take in Felicja, even though there was a German casino in the building, and the doorkeeper was an ethnic German. After she arrived, Dobrowolski provided Felicja with "Aryan" papers [obtained from All Saints parish<sup>1771</sup>] in the name of Janina Bielarska. Halina then accompanied Felicja to the office of internal affairs, where an identity card was issued in her new name, which enabled the Kleins to pass her off as a relative. Felicja's husband remained in the ghetto while her two daughters, who had found hiding places, under assumed identities, in various apartments in Warsaw, used to visit their mother from time to time. The Klein children, who lived near the ghetto, gave food to the Jewish children who slipped out of the ghetto to the Aryan side of the city. On May 12, 1943, the Gestapo arrested Dobrowolski for providing Jews with false documents, and sent him to a concentration camp, where he perished, leaving behind a wife, and seven-month-old infant. Although the Gestapo raided the apartment twice, the Kleins continued hiding Felicja, until the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944. After the war, Felicja, whose husband perished with the Jews of Warsaw, immigrated with her daughters to the United States, where, for many years, they kept up close ties with the Kleins.<sup>1772</sup>

[15] In 1938, after Vienna's annexation to the Third Reich, Lola Holdengraeber and her daughter, Rita, left Vienna for Lwow [Lwów], Poland. In 1942, Lola and Rita left Lwow and escaped to Tarnow [Tarnów], where they turned to Mieczysław Kobylanski [Mieczysław Kobylański] and his sister, Jadwiga, former acquaintances of theirs. Despite their mother's misgivings, Kobylanski and his sister opened their door to the two Jewish refugees and sheltered them in their home without expecting anything in return. In due course, Holdengraeber, thanks to Aryan papers Kobylanski obtained for her, found employment in an SS officers' club. In late 1942, Holdengraeber and her daughter left Tarnow and moved to Warsaw. In Warsaw, the mother joined the *Gwardia Ludowa* (Peoples' Guard) and was arrested and sent to Auschwitz, where she perished. The daughter, Rita, returned to Tarnow, where Kobylanski and his sister looked after her until July 1943 [with the help of a priest,

<sup>1769</sup> "Rodzina Kaczmarków—Wywiad z Teresą Drewek," PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/pl/historie-pomocy/wywiad-z-teresa-drewek>.

<sup>1770</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 323.

<sup>1771</sup> Grądzka-Rejak and Namysło, *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, vol. 1, 129.

<sup>1772</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 349.

Kobyłański obtained a baptismal certificate for Rita<sup>1773</sup>], after which she returned to Lwow where she stayed until the area was liberated in July 1944.<sup>1774</sup>

[16] In 1942, shortly before the liquidation of the Sandomierz ghetto, Roma Glowinska [Głowińska] and her cousin, Gucia Glowinska, fled at their parents' insistence. Because of their Aryan appearance, the two were sure their Polish acquaintances would be prepared to put them up, but much to their surprise they found that this was not the case. Ironically, salvation came from strangers. One day, in the winter of 1942, upon arriving in the town of Piastow [Piastów], near Warsaw, they knocked on the door of Andrzej and Anna Kostrzewa, a childless couple who lived in a one-room apartment. Despite the fact that Kostrzewa earned a paltry salary as a school caretaker, the Kostrzewas took the two refugees in and provided them with forged birth certificates. Despite the forged certificate, Gucia was arrested in the street and disappeared without a trace. The Kostrzewas reassured Roma, who feared a similar fate, telling her: "God will protect us." Roma stayed with the Kostrzewas, who held themselves responsible for her safety and shared their meager fare with her, until September 1945. ... In risking their lives, the Kostrzewas were inspired by deep religious faith and love of their fellow man.<sup>1775</sup>

According to the memoir of Ruth Marks (Roma Glowinski):

Gucia and Roma went to the home of a former employee of the family who arranged for them to stay with Anna and Andrzej Kostrzewa, a Polish couple who lived in Prushkow [sic, Pruszków] near Warsaw. The Kostrzewas claimed that Roma was a distant relative whose father was a Polish officer killed by the Germans and whose mother died in the bombings in Lublin. Gucia also claimed to be a distant relative. The Kostrzewas acquired false papers for Gucia under the name Halina and a priest supplied a birth certificate for Roma under the name, Vislava Serafinska [Wisława Serafińska]. Andrzej had worked as a school concierge until the Germans closed the school. Anna supported the family by washing uniforms for German soldiers. To augment her meager wages, Gucia darned socks, and Roma did chores for neighbors. Gucia also sold food on the black market. She was arrested during one of her trips to Warsaw, and after revealing that she was Jewish, she was executed. After this incident, the Kostrzewa's neighbors began to suspect that Roma also was Jewish. However, despite the rumors and inherent danger, Roma became closer to the Kostrzewas, and Anna and Andrzej cared for Roma like their own daughter.<sup>1776</sup>

[17] Even before the establishment of the Dabrowa [Dąbrowa] Tarnowska ghetto in the Cracow [Kraków] district, Lucylla Chmura came to the aid of Ida Margulies, a widowed school friend of hers, and her son, Henryk. Chmura supplied them with Aryan papers, and advised them to move to the village of Czechow [Czechów] in the county of Pinczow [Pińczów], Kielce district. [With the help of a priest she obtained a birth certificate for

<sup>1773</sup> *Przywracanie pamięci Polakom ratującym Żydów w czasie Zagłady / Recalling Forgotten History For Poles Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust* (2007), 57.

<sup>1774</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 357.

<sup>1775</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 382.

<sup>1776</sup> "My Life-Story": Ruth Marks Memoir, USHMM, Accession no. 2006.242; Genia Glowinski, Photograph no. 64300, USHMM, Internet: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1152699>.

Henryk in the name of Marian Jackowski which he used until the end of the war.<sup>1777</sup> In their new home, Wojciech Kowalski, Chmura's fiancé and an engineer, employed Henryk as his assistant and helped his mother financially. In early 1944, when the police became suspicious of Ida's identity, she and Henryk moved to Cracow, with the help of Chmura and Kowalski. In Cracow, members of *Zegota* [Żegota] found jobs for them and watched out for their safety until January 1945, when they were liberated.<sup>1778</sup> [The Gestapo killed the landlord who had rented to Kowalski the office which was served as the Margulies' hideout in Czechów.<sup>1779</sup>]

[18] In July 1942, a seven-month-old Jewish baby was left on the doorstep of the Leszczyński [Leszczyński] home, in the village of Rozki [Rożki near Żółkiewka] in the county of Krasny-staw, Lublin district. The Leszczyńskis took the baby in and Sabina, one of the daughters, took responsibility for looking after it. Undeterred by the neighbors' assertion that the entire village would be in danger if the police discovered the baby, Sabina looked after it devotedly, showered it with motherly love, and despite her family's poverty saw to all its needs. The Jewish baby, who was christened Zygmunt Zolkiewski [Żółkiewski] in the local church, remained under Sabina's care until July 1945 [sic, 1944], when the area was liberated. Shortly after the war, Mendel and Rivka Wajc, the boy's parents, who had fled to the forests and joined the partisans, turned up at the Leszczyńskis' home. For reasons that were never clarified, the parents did not claim their child. ... The Jewish child remained with Sabina and was later transferred to a Jewish children's home near Lodz [Łódź].<sup>1780</sup>

[19] At the start of the German occupation of Poland, Laib Hersz [Leon] Grynberg, his wife, Ewa, and their daughter, Hanka [Chana, later Halina], fled from Warsaw and settled in Białystok [Białystok], in Eastern Poland, which was annexed to the Soviet Union. The Germans subsequently occupied Eastern Poland in June 1941. In February 1943, Grynberg managed to smuggle his daughter out of the local ghetto and, with the help of Polish acquaintances [Michał and Jadwiga Skalski, who took Hanka in for several weeks and taught her Catholic prayers and rituals so that she could pass for a Polish orphan], transferred her to the nearby town of Suraż. Klemens and Zofia Leszczyński [Leszczyński] and their son, Józef [Józef], agreed to take in ten-year-old Hanka without any preconditions or payment. They represented Hanka to neighbors as a Polish orphan from Warsaw, but in due course it was rumoured that the Leszczyńskis were sheltering a Jewish girl. [When the Leszczyńskis learned that Hanka was Jewish, at first they were terrified, but after discussing the matter with their priest, they decided to continue looking after her. Hanka was secretly baptized, and then made her First Holy Communion publicly to maintain her cover.<sup>1781</sup>] They saw to all her needs and educated her as if she were their own daughter. Hanka remained in this loving atmosphere until August 1944, when the area was liberated by the Red Army. Hanka's father survived [after jumping out of a train transporting Jews to Treblinka, he made his way back to Białystok where he stayed with the Skalskis] and after the liberation

<sup>1777</sup> The Kowalski Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-kowalski-family-0>.

<sup>1778</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 391.

<sup>1779</sup> The Kowalski Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-kowalski-family-0>.

<sup>1780</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 452.

<sup>1781</sup> Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 1, 183–84; Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 306; Grubowska, *Haneczko, musisz przeżyć*, 62–64; Rogalewska, *Getto białostockie*, 115, 215.

turned up at the Leszczynskis' home, where his daughter was delivered to him safe and sound. Hanka and her father stayed in Poland. In risking their lives to save Hanka, the Leszczynskis were guided by compassion and humanitarian principles only.<sup>1782</sup>

[20] One night during the occupation, nine-year-old Helena Tygier knocked on the door of Rozalia Lojszczyk [Łojszczyk], who lived with her three children in the village of Bukowa Stara, some 35 kilometers from Warsaw. Exhausted and grimy, Helena related how she had left her parents in the Warsaw ghetto and, at her mothers [sic] bidding, had escaped to seek shelter with Lojszczyk's mother, an old acquaintance of hers. Since Lojszczyk's mother had already passed away, Lojszczyk took Helena into her home, where she looked after her devotedly. Helena made occasional forays into the ghetto to bring her parents food. After a tip-off to the authorities, German soldiers turned up at Lojszczyk's home in January 1944 searching for the Jewish refugee. When she saw them entering the farmyard, Lojszczyk thrust a pail of milk into Helena's hand and pushed her out of the door. The Germans took no notice of her, thinking she was a local dairymaid, and when they failed to find the girl they were looking for, they left. Since it was far too dangerous for Helena to continue staying with Lojszczyk, Lojszczyk arranged for her to stay with her brother, who lived in the neighboring village and agreed to shelter her. Lojszczyk also obtained a baptism certificate from the local priest, which enabled her to find work in the flour mill. Helena stayed with Lojszczyk's brother until January 1945, when the area was liberated.<sup>1783</sup>

[21] Immediately after the war began, Izabela Malinowska, who lived in Vilna [Wilno], rushed to the aid of the Jewish refugees who began thronging to her for help. Taking advantage of her close acquaintance with numerous officials in municipal institutions, she helped the Jewish refugees by giving them advice and guidance. Malinowska worked in a coffee house that served as a rendezvous point for Jewish refugees and it was there that she met Efraim Jakiri. The two became friends and eventually fell in love. Jakiri moved into Malinowska's house, located in a suburb of the city. When the Germans occupied Vilna [in June 1941], Jakiri tried to flee from the city with the retreating Red Army but was unsuccessful. He returned to Vilna and was confined in the ghetto set up there. All the while, Malinowska helped by supplying him with food parcels when he arrived daily at the city's military base where he worked. Thanks to her acquaintance with the local priest, Malinowska managed to procure Aryan papers for Jakiri and took him back into her home after he fled from his place of employment. His presence in her home aroused the ire of the neighbors and Malinowska was forced to find Jakiri a safer place to hide. She was helped by a friend, a member of the Polish underground, who moved Jakiri to relatives of his who lived in the village of Kobylniki, near Lake Narocz. There he was represented as a student in need of country air because of the tuberculosis from which he suffered. In 1943, Jakiri joined the partisans. He was wounded in battle and after the liberation married Malinowska and they moved to an area within the new Polish borders.<sup>1784</sup>

[22] In the summer of 1941, Olga Jospa and her parents were deported from their home town of Husiatyn, in the Tarnopol district. After much suffering and hardship, the three Jewish fugitives arrived in the ghetto of Kopyczynce [Kopyczyńce], from which they fled just before its liquidation in early 1943. While they were still in the ghetto, Aniela Malkiewicz [Małkiewicz] approached the Jospa family, for whom she had done housework from the

<sup>1782</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 452–53.

<sup>1783</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 463.

<sup>1784</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 483.

year 1928, and without asking for any payment expressed her willingness to help them in any way she could. When they left the ghetto, the Jospa family came to Malkiewicz, who at first hid them in the attic of the local church. She subsequently moved them to a number of other hiding places in the surrounding villages. Despite the danger posed to her life, Malkiewicz continued to care for the three Jewish refugees until the liberation of the area in the summer of 1944.<sup>1785</sup>

[23] In June 1941, following the pogroms by the Ukrainians and Germans against the Jews of Lwów [Lwów] Regina Fern, 18, decided to leave her parent's [sic] home and travel to Warsaw using false Aryan papers [under the name of Józefa Malec provided to her by a priest at her school<sup>1786</sup>] that she had in her possession. But because of her Jewish appearance, Fern was forced to wander from one hiding place to another, until, thanks to an advertisement in the newspaper, she arrived at the apartment of the Mankowski [Mańkowski] family, who were looking for a housemaid. Upon her arrival at the Mankowski home, Fern represented herself as a Pole; however, the members of the Mankowski household immediately realized that she was Jewish. Despite this, they received her warmly and out of concern for her fate did not allow her to go out into the street and the three Mankowski sons did the shopping instead. Fern remained under the protection of her employer-rescuers until August 1944. She joined the ranks of the rebels [i.e., Polish underground] following the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944 and together with the other rebels was deported to a prisoner-of-war camp, from which she was liberated by the Allied armies. Irena Fejgin, who in 1943 was forced to leave her previous hiding place, also found asylum in the Mankowski home. The Mankowski family hid Fejgin without remuneration of any kind until they were able to find her a safer place outside the city, where she remained until the liberation in January 1945. After the war, Fern emigrated to Belgium and Fejgin remained in Poland.<sup>1787</sup>

[24] In July 1942, about three months before the final liquidation of the ghetto in the resort town of Busko-Zdroj [Zdrój] in the Kielce district, Helena Schmalholz and her two sons, Shimon and Yehoshua, fled from the ghetto. A member of the underground from the Peasants' Battalions (*Bataliony Chłopskie* [Chłopskie])—Józef Maślanka, a local commander) who had known the family before the war helped them escape from the ghetto, bringing them to the nearby village of Ruczynów [Ruczynów]. There he referred them to the farm of Wincenty and Jozefa [Józefa] Misztal, local-born farmers, also active in the underground, who lived with their son, Stanisław [Stanisław]. All three members of the Misztal family received the three Jewish fugitives warmly, without asking for or receiving anything in return, considering it their patriotic duty and part of their war against the common enemy. After a short time, Jozefa obtained Aryan papers for Schmalholz and her sons and represented them to their neighbors as relatives. Because of the special treatment that Schmalholz and her sons received from the Misztal family, no one in the village doubted that the mother and two sons were indeed relatives of their hosts. The three moved about freely in the village and slept and ate together with the Misztal family members, who also prepared an underground hiding place in case of a surprise search or if they should be

<sup>1785</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 485.

<sup>1786</sup> The Mańkowski Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/help-advertisement-story-mankowski-family> (see Zbigniew Mańkowski's second audio account).

<sup>1787</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 488.

betrayed. Schmalholz and her two sons remained in the home of the Misztal family until the liberation of the area in January 1945 and after the war left Poland.<sup>1788</sup>

According to Helena Schmalholz's testimony: "Maślanka gave me a letter for Mrs. Misztal ... with instructions that she accompany me to the local commune council administration (*gmina*). Risking her safety, she went with me to that office, and the priest and organist, who were privy to the activities of the underground, gave me papers showing me as Mrs. Misztal's sister, and on the strength of these documents I obtained employment in Busko-Zdrój."<sup>1789</sup>

[25] After the Jews of Warsaw were ordered to move into the ghetto, Abram and Felicia Gwiazda decided to seek refuge in one of the villages in the area of Otwock, near Warsaw. The situation worsened, and when Felicia Gwiazda was about to give birth, Katarzyna Monko [Mońko], the local midwife, was called in to help her. She determined that the conditions of the hideout could pose a danger to the lives of both the mother and child. Although she knew that Gwiazda was Jewish, she offered to hide her in her home, where she lived with her son and daughter-in-law, Mieczysław [Mieczysław] and Aniela. Gwiazda gave birth to a little girl in the home of the Monko family, and after it became clear that it was impossible for them to return to the hiding place, Gwiazda decided in desperation to abandon her baby in the train station. Monko expressed her firm opposition to this idea, and with the support of the local priest decided to keep the little girl and care for her until after the war. The little Jewish girl remained in the home of the Monko family, who treated her with devotion. After Monko died, her son and daughter-in-law continued to care for and raise the child. Eventually, a German soldier took the child with him to an army camp, where she was given over to a Polish woman, with the intention of bringing her to Germany. The Polish woman decided to flee from the camp and adopt the little girl as her own. However, Mieczysław and Aniela Monko kept track of the child, and after the war, when her biological parents arrived at the Monko home to reclaim their daughter, the Monkos gave them the address of the Polish woman. She refused to give them their daughter back, but thanks to the testimony in court of Mieczysław Monko and his wife, the child was finally returned to her parents. The family eventually immigrated to Israel ...<sup>1790</sup>

[26] Stanisława [Stanisława] Pacek was a teacher who lived during the occupation in the village of Prawiedniki near Lublin with her two sons, Leszek and Jerzy. After her entire family perished, 12-year-old Sara Kraus [later Kolkowicz, b. 1929] fled from the Warsaw ghetto. After much wandering, she arrived in Prawiedniki, where Pacek, a widow, took her in. She and her two sons took the girl under their wing and safeguarded her. Eventually, seven-year-old Basia Klig [later Batya Golan, b. 1925] and her mother [Chava-Chana or Hava-Hanna] also arrived at their home after fleeing from the Lublin ghetto and wandering for some time through the local countryside. In her testimony many years later, Klig would relate that Stanisława Pacek had been a wonderful woman who, motivated only by

<sup>1788</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 523.

<sup>1789</sup> Zuzanna Schnepf-Kończak, "Pomoc Polaków dla Żydów w czasie okupacji niemieckiej: Próba opisu na przykładzie Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata," in Engelking and Grabowski, *Zarys krajobrazu*, 229–30.

<sup>1790</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 526.

love of humanity and without asking for or receiving anything in return, gave the fugitives emotional and physical succour, teaching them how to preserve their human dignity even under inhuman conditions. Despite the danger to her life and the lives of her sons, Pacek persevered in her rescue efforts, doing everything in her power to help the people she had taken in. After the war, all the survivors immigrated to Israel.<sup>1791</sup>

Before arriving at the Paceks, the Kligs were helped by other Poles in the area, among them a Catholic priest in Bychawa (?) who provided medical assistance. The Pacek family also sheltered Reuben Finkelstein in their small farmhouse, after his mother's Polish benefactor had been imprisoned by the Germans for helping Jews.<sup>1792</sup>

[27] In 1941, before Irena Weksztein's parents were deported from Czestochowa [Częstochowa] to a forced labor camp, they found a way to make contact with Kamilla Pelc, who, motivated by her love of humanity and without asking for or receiving any remuneration, agreed to take their two-year-old daughter under her wing. Pelc, a war widow, lived with her son, Karol, and risked her life to smuggle young Irena into her apartment and obtain Aryan papers for her [from a priest who agreed to forge a birth certificate for Irena<sup>1793</sup>]. She represented Irena Weksztein to curious neighbors as her niece and cared for her as if she were her own. Over time, Irena grew very attached to Pelc and her son, looking upon them as her mother and brother. Despite the many dangers they encountered, Irena remained in their home until the liberation in January 1945. After the war, Irena's parents, who survived the war, came to take her with them. Because the young girl had become so attached to her adopted family, she refused to accept her real parents. Her refusal was so intense that they had to leave the girl with Pelc for a few more months. Irena eventually emigrated with her parents to France and kept in touch with Pelc for many years.<sup>1794</sup>

<sup>1791</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 573.

<sup>1792</sup> Testimony of Batia (Klig) Golan, YVA, file O.3 V.T/10176 (Item 8214111); The Pacek Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-pacek-family>; "Batya Golan (née Klig in 1933) About Her Life in Pruszków, Warsaw and Lublin Ghettos and the Polish Countryside," Virtual Shtetl, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Internet: <https://www.sztetl.org.pl/en/article/pruszkow/16,accounts-memories/11032,batya-golan-nee-basia-klig-in-1933-about-her-live-in-pruszkow-warsaw-and-lublin-ghettos-and-the-polish-countryside/>. Batya Golan's husband Motke, who was 8 months old when he came to Israel from Poland, disclosed: "I have disliked Poles for many years. When Batya wanted to watch a T.V. program in Polish—I would be annoyed—I even hated the language. The change came when I agreed to visit Poland with her some years ago: I suddenly realized the deep bond between Batya and the place of her birth: she remembered places and people so accurately after the many passing years, and they remembered her. I was greatly touched. Since then I love Poland and the Polish language and encourage her to watch Polish-speaking programs on T.V."

<sup>1793</sup> "Karol Pelc: Surviving the Holocaust," *Michigan Tech News*, vol. 33, no. 19 (January 26, 2001), reprinted from *The U.P. Catholic*, January 5, 2001. See also Internet: <http://karol-pelc.blogspot.com/2019/02/memories-of-childhood.html>.

<sup>1794</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 596.

[28] In September 1942, Lea Wicner's [Leah or Lucia Weitzner] mother [Gusta] shoved the 12-year-old out of the railroad car that was transporting the Jews of Hnizdyczow [Hnizdyczów]-Kochawina [near Żydaczów] (Lwow [Lwów] district) to the Belzec [Bełżec] extermination camp. Wicner returned to her village, where she joined up with an uncle [Mundek Feldman] who had [avoided] the transport [and was hidden by the Wohański family<sup>1795</sup>]. With his assistance, she obtained Aryan papers [from a Polish priest<sup>1796</sup>] with which she was able to reach Stary Sambor, where she went to the home of Feliks and Stefania Plauszewski, who were acquainted with her family. The Plauszewskis took Wicner in like a member of the family, taking care of her and not disclosing her Jewish origin to anyone, including their children. In early 1943 [1944?], the Polish residents of Stary Sambor were expelled to the west. The Plauszewskis, together with Wicner, reached Tarnobrzeg (on the Vistula River), but since Poles from Wicner's village had also been expelled to this area, it was feared that her identity would be revealed. Thus, the Plauszewskis decided to move Wicner to the home of Stefania Gos [Goś], Felik's sister, in Sobieska Wola (Lublin district). Gos and her husband, Edward, like the Plauszewskis, treated Wicner as affectionately and devotedly as a daughter until the area was liberated in July 1944. The two Polish families risked their lives to rescue Wicner purely for humanitarian reasons, without remuneration. After the war, Lea Wicner moved to Israel and stayed in touch with her rescuers' children.<sup>1797</sup>

[29] In March 1943, after the liquidation of the Cracow [Kraków] ghetto, Mr. [Leiser] and Mrs. [Ester] Kardisz [Kardisch] continued to work in the Optima factory on the Aryan side of the city, hiding their two children, Rena [Renia, b. 1933] and Romek, in the factory as well. There, they met Rozalia Poslawska [Paślawska], the wife of Boleslaw Poslawski [Bolesław Paślawski], a minor factory official. The Kardiszes felt that they could trust Paślawska and told her about their two children hiding in the factory. The story touched Paślawska, who had three children of her own, and she offered to hide the children in her home unconditionally. She told them she had connections with a Polish underground organization that helped Jews and if necessary could ask the organization for financial help to care for the children. Mr. and Mrs. Kardisz were eventually deported to a concentration camp and their two children remained with the Paślawski family. One day, a Polish neighbor happened to discover that the Paślawskis were hiding two Jewish children in their home and attempted to blackmail them. Paślawska refused to pay what he asked and he informed on them to the authorities. Paślawska was arrested with young Romek, but his sister, Rena, managed to escape and hide in a church. Paślawska was thrown in prison and tortured and only thanks to the confusion caused by the approaching front was she able to escape from prison and hide. Romek was murdered, but his sister, Rena, was returned to the Paślawski family by the priest who discovered her presence in the church. Of the parents, who had been deported to Bergen-Belsen, only the mother, Ester Kardisz, remained alive. ... Kardisz came to them sick and exhausted and they cared for her as if she were a member of the

<sup>1795</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 879.

<sup>1796</sup> Judy Labensohn, "A Real Survivor," *The Jerusalem Post*, May 1, 2000, Internet: <http://info.jpost.com/2000/Supplements/Holocaust/Holocaust.6023.html>: "With the help of a Polish priest who ran the local orphanage, Feldman arranged for Leah Weitzner to become Helena Lachovich [Lachowicz]." According to this article, Leah Wietzner was born in Lwów and was the only child of a judge in the Polish government who died when she was five. She grew up at her grandfather's estate in Kochawina, a village outside Lwów.

<sup>1797</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 620.

family and helped her and her daughter Rena to get back on their feet. Kardisz and her daughter eventually immigrated to Israel.<sup>1798</sup>

[30] Stefan Raczynski [Raczyński], who lived with his family in the village of Wegelina [Wiegielino] in the Vilna [Wilno] district, was superficially acquainted with Jews in the nearby town of Niemenczyn. In September 1941, after the massacre perpetrated by the Germans and Lithuanians against the local Jews, Jewish fugitives began turning up at Raczynski's home asking for help. Stefan and his family helped the Jewish refugees to the best of their ability and provided them with food and a temporary hiding place. Stefan's mother even looked after a baby whom a Jewish woman had abandoned on her doorstep. Thanks to her rescue work, her home became known as "the home of Abraham the Patriarch." In 1942, Raczynski became acquainted with Shoshana [Szoszana] Dezent, a young Jewish woman from Vilna who was hiding under an assumed identity in the surrounding villages and working in peasants' homes as a casual laborer. Dezent, who had lived in a town all her life, found it hard to adapt to village life. Fearing for her safety, Raczynski decided to protect her and whenever she was in difficulties arranged for her to stay with acquaintances of his in the nearby villages. In the spring of 1944, armed Polish nationalists, suspecting Dezent of being Jewish, attacked her and beat her almost to death. Raczynski immediately summoned the local priest, who testified that Dezent was not Jewish, thereby saving her life. Following this incident, Raczynski took Dezent home and looked after her until the area was liberated. After the war, Raczynski ... married Dezent. In 1960, the Raczynskis immigrated to Israel with their two children.<sup>1799</sup>

The above entry contains some inaccurate information and does not do justice to the Raczynski family, only one of whom, Stefan, was recognized by Yad Vashem. Neither was this honour bestowed on any of the many other Poles who took part in this extraordinary rescue, an operation carried out by a network of people.<sup>1800</sup>

After leaving the Wilno ghetto, Shoshana Dezent went to stay briefly with a Polish family her parents were acquainted with. They in turn took her to friends who provided her with a birth and baptismal certificate. Notwithstanding Shoshana's Semitic appearance, she was passed on to another woman, who brought her to the countryside, in the vicinity of Niemenczyn, where she worked some time for the local village head. Shoshana then found a more permanent position caring for a farmer's daughter with tuberculosis. It was there that she met Stefan Raczynski, a friend of the daughter's younger brother. When this sickly young woman passed away, Stefan's parents, Adolf and Maria Raczynski, agreed to shelter Shoshana and received her warmly. Stefan's parents owned a small estate in Wiegielino, also in Niemenczyn parish, on which they farmed. The family consisted of four children: two sons, one of them Stefan, and two daughters. The

<sup>1798</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 635.

<sup>1799</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 656–57.

<sup>1800</sup> See also the account of Soszana [sic] Raczynska in Isakiewicz, *Harmonica*, 87–105; Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 448; Rescuers Bios, "Shtetl," PBS Frontline, Internet: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shtetl/righteous/stephan.html>.

Raczyński family took in another small Jewish boy, and their home became a haven for a large number of Jews hiding in nearby forests who were also helped by the Raczyńskis' neighbours. Stefan's mother even prepared a joint Christmas and Hanukkah feast in her home, which was attended by these same Jewish fugitives.

Fearing a denunciation, Stefan found a position for Shoshana as a nanny and housekeeper with Mrs. Kosmowska, his former teacher. After Mrs. Kosmowska's home was burned down by the Lithuanian police, Stefan took Shoshana to his paternal aunt's home in a different locality, perhaps Balingródek. The aunt's home was invaded by bandits, possibly connected to a partisan group, who beat up Stefan and, suspecting Shoshana to be Jewish, wanted to do away with her. The aunt rushed to a priest who lived nearby for help. The priest vouched for Shoshana as a Catholic (even though she had never converted) and shamed the bandits. Stefan decided to transfer Shoshana to another locality, this time to his maternal uncle, where she remained until the Germans retreated from the area. Shoshana recalled:

Stefan [Raczyński] drove me to his father's sister, far away, and he said that, because the young ones were in danger, since both the Germans and Lithuanians were killing them [Lithuanian collaborators had staged raids on Polish homesteads—Ed.], he would seek shelter for both him and me.

And there was hardship again. Armed looters, some of them dressed in Polish uniforms, were attacking peasant houses and they were taking food as well as valuable things in order to have money for vodka. Such were the times, the law did not function. The war was the law.

And they caught Stefan and me. They thought it out at once that Stefan had got away from somewhere, since he wasn't from those parts, and that I was a Jewess he was protecting. They put me against the wall and wanted to shoot me, and they beat Stefan up. He kept repeating that it wasn't true that I was Jewish.

And Aunt ran to the vicar, who lived nearby, and told him that there was trouble brewing, because they wanted to shoot Stefan. The priest followed her immediately to the farm, looked at those bandits and asked, "And what are you doing here?"

"We want to cook this little yid's goose," they said.

"She's not a Jewess. I baptized her myself. And Stefan is a boy of our parish," said the priest.

And thus the priest saved our lives. Later, we learnt that those looters, who posed as freedom fighters, got into trouble, because news spread that they had attacked innocent people and that the priest had had to intervene. Their commander demoted them and they got imprisoned, or something like that.

From there we went to Stefan's mother's brother, to another parish, because we did not want to cause his aunt any more trouble. In fact Stefan had been born there, his birth certificate had been issued there.

What wonderful people they were, the uncle and his wife.<sup>1801</sup>

<sup>1801</sup> Isakiewicz, *Harmonica*, 96.

Toward the end of 1944, after the arrival of the Soviet army, Stefan Raczyński was arrested and imprisoned by the NKVD along with many other Poles in the Wilno area. Miraculously, he was released after repeated intercessions by Shoshana (whom he later married), who started a petition which some Jewish survivors whom Stefan had helped agreed to sign. The Raczyński family's property was confiscated by the Soviets, who incorporated the area into the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. Stefan and Shoshana moved to Poland in 1958, and afterwards they left for Israel.

[31] Before and during the war, Bronislaw [Bronisław] Rzepecki was the municipal secretary of Olesnica [Oleśnica] in the Kielce district, using his office during the occupation to aid beleaguered Jews. In the midst of the deportation *Aktionen*, Josef Mandelman contacted him and asked for his assistance. Mandelman's family was made up of six people: Josef, his wife, Andzia, three children—Tamara, Abraham, and Ruth—and a brother-in-law, Yisrael Tarkieltaub. Rzepecki utilized his position and connections and concealed the Mandelmans with peasant families in nearby villages for various periods. Initially the fugitives paid for their upkeep and Rzepecki went out of his way to deliver their money, which had been deposited with the town priest, to the rescuers. When the money ran out, Rzepecki took a loan from his brother to continue supporting the refugees. Despite the danger, he displayed fixity of purpose in his rescue mission until the Mandelmans were liberated in January 1945. Rzepecki acted to save Jews for patriotic reasons and for no material reward.<sup>1802</sup>

[32] During the occupation, Juliusz [Bożydar] Saloni and his wife, Jadwiga [Brzezińska], subsequently Strzelecka, lived in Warsaw and remained on friendly terms with Jews who they had known from their university days. After the Warsaw ghetto was established, they turned their home [in the Saska Kępa suburb] into a temporary refuge for Jewish acquaintances and friends who had fled to the Aryan side, until they could find permanent hideouts. In November 1942, a Jew named Josef Dab [Józef Dąb], who left the ghetto each day as a member of a group of laborers, contacted Saloni at his place of work and asked him to help take his wife, Barbara, out of the ghetto and arrange permanent shelter for Irene, his seven-year-old daughter, who was already on the Aryan side. Saloni and his wife, to whom Dab was a total stranger, made the rescue of the Jewish family into their personal cause. Within a short time, the Salonis removed Barbara Dab from the ghetto and placed her with relatives of theirs. In February 1943, they brought Irena to their home and gave her a birth certificate and baptism certificate in the family name of Jadwiga's brother [as Irene Teresa Brzezińska]. From then on, Irena posed as Saloni's orphaned niece in the care of her aunt, which is how the Salonis treated her. Saloni and his wife registered Irena as a Polish child in the local school and continued to care for her until the Warsaw Uprising in the summer of 1943. [Because of Irena's appearance and her performing a Jewish dance in public, the neighbours in the apartment building in which the Salonis resided realized that the child was Jewish, but no one betrayed them.<sup>1803</sup>] In February 1943, Dab joined them on the Aryan side and the Salonis equipped him with Aryan papers with which he found

<sup>1802</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 689.

<sup>1803</sup> Juliusz Bożydar Saloni, Archiwum Historii Mówionej, Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego, Internet: <https://www.1944.pl/archiwum-historii-mowionej/juliusz-bozydar-saloni,2273.html>.

work and housing. In November 1943, the Gestapo arrested Dab and placed him in Pawiak Prison. Out of concern that the Gestapo would also discover his wife, Barbara, Jadwiga contacted members of Zegota [Żegota], who moved her to a different hideout. Dab escaped from Pawiak prison [with Henry Krupnik, a Jew] and [they] made [their] way to the Salonis' home. [Along the way, being in an unkempt state and susceptible of attracting adverse attention, an unknown priest invited them into his rectory in the Powiśle district, where they washed and were fed.<sup>1804</sup>] The Salonis moved [them] to the nearby town of Grodzisk Mazowiecki, where [Dab's] wife was hiding [in the home of Stanisława Sławińska<sup>1805</sup>], and in October 1944 they were joined by their daughter and lived together until the liberation in January 1945. The Salonis also concealed 18-year-old Jurek Milejkowski for several weeks in May–June 1943 after he had escaped from a train bound for Treblinka. Milejkowski took part in the Warsaw Uprising and died in battle.<sup>1806</sup>

[33] During the occupation, Maria Sitko lived with her daughter, Wanda, in Sosnowiec (Upper Silesia). Starting in 1943, after the ghetto in the Srodula [Środula] neighborhood was liquidated, the Sitkos' apartment—living room, kitchen, and half-room, with neither running water nor indoor conveniences—served as provisional shelter for five Jewish refugees. Three of them—Leon Wajntraub, Jerzy Feder, and Nechamia Mandelbaum—had escaped from the ghetto; the other two, Frymeta Feder and Felicia Kac, had slipped out of the Auschwitz prisoners' death march in January 1945. Several fugitives were housed in the half-room; the others were placed in a hideout specially prepared for them under the kitchen floor. Sitko and her daughter were prompted to aid the Jewish refugees by profound altruism stemming from their religious faith. After a priest gave their rescue operation his blessing after they disclosed it to him in confession, the Sitkos offered the fugitives even greater assistance and never sought recompense. In one case, when the Gestapo searched their house for hidden Jews, the Sitkos resourcefully concealed their wards, thereby saving their lives. The Sitkos gave the five Jewish refugees devoted and sympathetic care until the liberation in late January 1945.<sup>1807</sup>

[34] In August 1942, with the liquidation of the Jewish community of Wiszniew in the Nowogrodek [Nowogródek] district, a number of Jews, including Mina Milikowska, escaped. After many vicissitudes and on the verge of despair, she reached the estate of Bagatelka, where she met a farmer by the name of Julian Słodzinski [Słodziński]. Słodzinski, guided by humanitarian principles which overrode considerations of personal safety, led her to his house and, with his wife's consent, offered her shelter there without expecting anything in return. Milikowska stayed with Julian and Bronisława [Bronisława] Słodzinski and their daughter, Regina, until April 1943, after which she joined a Jewish partisan company operating in the nearby forest, fighting in its ranks until the area was liberated.<sup>1808</sup>

As mentioned below, the Słodziński family also assisted other Jews and secured the help of a local priest in their rescue efforts.

<sup>1804</sup> Juliusz Bożydar Saloni, Archiwum Historii Mówionej, Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego, Internet: <https://www.1944.pl/archiwum-historii-mowionej/juliusz-bozydar-saloni,2273.html>.

<sup>1805</sup> Stanisława Sławińska, RD.

<sup>1806</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 694–95.

<sup>1807</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 711–12.

<sup>1808</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 724–25.

Julian Słodziński, along with his wife Bronisława, his daughter Regina and three younger children, worked on their farm in Bagatelka near Wiszniew. ... The Słodzińskis rescued Mina Milkowska [sic], one of the few Jews who managed to escape [from the ghetto in Wiszniew]. They knew Mina before World War II, when her father owned two shops and a mill. Regina shared a room with Mina. The Słodzińskis would tell their guests she was a babysitter. Mina joined a Jewish partisan group in 1943.

The Słodzińskis also rescued a Jewish woman who had escaped from the ghetto in Wilno. Regina does not remember her name. Having so-called “Aryan features,” the woman was able to openly help on the farm. After a month, a friend priest gave her a baptism certificate, and she left her shelter in Bagatelka. Her further life paths remain unknown.

Moreover, the Słodzińskis hid 6 Jews in their barn for about one month. One of them was the family’s former friend, Leon Kokin, and one was probably Mina’s brother. Regina remembers two other names: Dudman and Reiman. She never saw these Jews, as she would only bring them food and leave. However, they had contact with Julian, who would bring them food in the evenings. These Jews later joined the partisan groups.<sup>1809</sup>

[35] Before the occupation, Ela Pleszewska, an attorney, and Henryk Sosnowski, a judge in Cracow [Kraków], were colleagues. Already in September 1939, when the Germans occupied the city, Sosnowski foresaw the danger threatening the Jews and, guided by humanitarian principles, hid Pleszewska in his apartment. Since Pleszewska was known in Cracow, where she had many acquaintances and former clients, Sosnowski, fearing informers, asked his friend the priest for help. The priest, without even seeing Pleszewska, drew up an official document stating that Sosnowski and Pleszewska were husband and wife. Sosnowski and Pleszewska left Cracow, but fearing discovery despite possession of the document kept constantly on the move. Unemployed and with no fixed source of income, Sosnowski nevertheless managed to smuggle food into the Cracow ghetto for his “wife’s” family and helped some of them escape to the Aryan side of the city. Destitute, and persecuted both by the authorities and extortionists, the Sosnowskis were liberated in January 1945, after which they returned to Cracow and resumed their careers. Pleszewska died in Poland in 1965.<sup>1810</sup>

[36] Janina Straszewska and her daughter, Teresa, lived in Cracow [Kraków]. They met Ludwika Liebeskind in late 1941, when the inhabitants of the ghetto were sent to work outside the ghetto. In the summer of 1942, Liebeskind asked Straszewska to place Gizela Szwarz, her five-year-old niece, in hiding in her apartment. Straszewska agreed, sought no remuneration, and offered to shelter Liebeskind too. Straszewska provided the Jewish girl with a certificate of baptism and Liebeskind with a forged birth certificate. [They obtained the documents from a priest they knew in an outlying village.<sup>1811</sup>] After a while, Liebeskind found a way to move her mother and sister from the Plaszow [Płaszów] camp and, with Straszewska’s assistance, found them asylum in a rented apartment in town. Because her facial features left no doubt about her Jewishness, Liebeskind was arrested one day while riding the streetcar. Although she escaped and returned to the Straszewskas’ home, she was afraid to go outside from then on. Teresa, active in a Resistance movement, provided

<sup>1809</sup> The Słodziński Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-slodzinski-family>.

<sup>1810</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 741.

<sup>1811</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 516.

Liebeskind with a forged Kennkarte (identity card). Liebeskind and her niece, Szwarz, stayed in Straszewska's home until the liberation in January 1945.<sup>1812</sup>

[37] Maria Szczecińska [Szczecińska] lived in Staszów [Staszów], Kielce district during the war. She was a widow with five children. Between October 1942 (at which time the local ghetto was liquidated) and the liberation in August 1944, she hid 14 Jews in a specially designed bunker. They included Roman Segal, Rachmil Segal, Daniel Segal, Roza Goldfus (Roman's fiancée), Chaim Posmantier and his wife, Bina (also from the Segal family), Natan and Adela Band, the Wiener brothers—Nachman and Samuel—Hersh Goldberg, his wife, Tola (from the Piekarski family), their son, Efraim (Fromka), and Anna (Andzia) Piekarska. With their help, Maria dug a bunker underneath her home that was just large enough to enable people to sit or lie down. The Jews only left the hideout in the evening. All those who were hidden by Maria and her family survived until the liberation. Roman Segal and his fiancée died on their first day of freedom, the result of one of the last German bombings of the area. The rest immigrated to Israel, the United States, or Canada.<sup>1813</sup>

According to another account, Maria Szczecińska worked as a railway clerk and lived in a house near the railway station. When word reached her that the Gestapo was searching for hidden Jews, she guided her charges to a friend's farm on the edge of the nearby Goliw forest. She remained with them until it was safe to return to her house. A devout Catholic, Maria often questioned the risk to herself and her children. Eventually, she sought the advice of a priest in Kraków. The priest counselled her to continue to protect these unfortunate people.<sup>1814</sup>

[38] During the war, Jozef [Józef] and Antonina Szewc, along with their seven children and Jozef's parents, lived in the village of Niedzielska in the Zamosc [Zamość] district, where Jozef acted as the village elder. In late 1940, following the closure of the Warsaw ghetto, Fraida Rozental (later Cukier), who was then 16, found her way to Jozef's home. She possessed papers in the name of Irena Kiel. Jozef and his family sheltered her in their home. In May 1942, Jozef obtained a birth certificate for her that was confirmed by the local priest [the pastor of Wielącza] in the name of Halina Byk. These papers enabled Frieda to work in Germany for the remainder of the war. Jozef's wife, Antonina, as well as his parents, Marcin and Zofia, were also helpful. "Marcin Szewc even mailed a couple of letters to me in Germany," wrote Fraida Cukier in her testimony to Yad Vashem. After the war, she returned to Poland and remained there.<sup>1815</sup>

[39] In November 1939, Miriam Cederbaum, who lived in Lodz [Łódź], escaped with her two-year-old daughter, Celina, to Warsaw. When the Jews of Warsaw were herded into the ghetto, Cederbaum decided to flee to Staszów [Staszów] in the Kielce district, where she was born and where she had many childhood friends. In 1942, when the Jews of Staszów were also interned in the ghetto, Cederbaum decided to escape with her daughter and hide

<sup>1812</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 756–57.

<sup>1813</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 779.

<sup>1814</sup> Jack Goldfarb, "A Kaddish Deferred," *The Kielce–Radom Special Interest Group Journal*, vol. 2, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 16.

<sup>1815</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 785.

on the Aryan side of the city. After she tried in vain to find a refuge for herself and her daughter, Anasztazja Kurowska-Szczerbic [Szczerbic], a former neighbor of hers, offered to care for the little girl. Although Kurowska-Szczerbic looked after Celina devotedly, her presence endangered the landlords, who were underground activists. After obtaining Aryan papers for Celina with the help of her underground contacts [a relative approached a young priest who provided a genuine birth and baptismal certificate of a deceased child, knowing that it was for a Jewish child<sup>1816</sup>], Kurowska-Szczerbic asked her sister, Janina Szmurłło, who lived in Skarzysko[Skarżysko]-Kamienna, to take care of the little girl. Janina and her husband, Kazimierz, agreed and devotedly looked after Celina, whom they passed off as an orphaned relative. Celina stayed with the Szmurłłos until the area was liberated in January 1945, after which she was returned safe and sound to her mother. Together they immigrated to Israel, where, for many years, they kept up contact with their saviors.<sup>1817</sup>

For a brief period, Celina Cederbaum stayed at the parish rectory in Rytwiiany, near Staszów, whose pastor was Rev. Jan Fornalski.<sup>1818</sup>

[40] In the summer of 1942, before the ghetto of Pinczow [Pińczów] (Kielce District) was liquidated, eight-year-old Halina Fiszer's parents ordered the girl to flee to the home of Dr. Aniela Goldszmid, their acquaintance. Dr. Golszmid took her to her sister, Leonka Tarabula, who with her husband and three children lived in Miernów (Pinczow county). Despite their dire economic circumstances, the Tarabulas agreed to take in the Jewish girl, whom they had never met. ... The Tarabulas welcomed Halina as a niece in every sense and [to maintain her cover as a relative], Leonka had her baptized and equipped with a Christian birth certificate. Halina was raised lovingly and lacked for nothing ... Halina spent three years with the Tarabulas, a period that she subsequently recalled as a time of kindness that prepared her for normal life. After the war, Tarabula ... delivered Halina Fiszer to the Jewish orphanage in Cracow [Kraków], from which, along with other youngsters, she moved to Israel in 1950.<sup>1819</sup>

[41] Danuta Wolikowska (née Malinowska) was raised in Luck [Łuck] (in Volhynia), where she graduated from the Tadeusz Kosciuszki [Kościszko] state gymnasium, where she befriended a Jewish girl named Ida Dekelbaum (later Landsberg). In early 1941, Danuta's father was deported to Siberia. On June 21, 1941, Danuta went to Lwow [Lwów] to meet Ida, who was studying there. That very day [in fact, June 22], the German-Soviet war broke out and Lwow was bombarded. The girls decided to return to their family homes. Since all communication was cut off, they started out by foot towards Volhynia. They walked for five days but did not reach their hometown. In this situation they came to the conclusion that Ida had to conceal her origins, so she tore up her papers and threw them away. Danuta and Ida then managed to get to Włodzimierz Wołyński [Włodzimierz Wołyński], where Danuta's mother was living. ... Ida went into the ghetto. Danuta, however, began to work in the regional office where she managed to get papers for Ida, which allowed her to leave the ghetto and look for a way to earn some money outside the ghetto walls. In 1942, rumors spread about the liquidation of the ghettos. Danuta decided to hide Ida in her own rented

<sup>1816</sup> Testimony of Anasztazja Kurowska-Szczerbic, SFV, Interview code 30912.

<sup>1817</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 788–89.

<sup>1818</sup> Testimony of Anasztazja Kurowska-Szczerbic, SFV, Interview code 30912.

<sup>1819</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 809.

apartment. There, she fed her friend and took care of all her needs. When the liquidation of the ghetto began, she decided to take Ida out of town altogether. One day she drove a carriage near the house dressed as a local girl. She dressed Ida in the same manner and together they drove out of town. They reached the village where Danuta's mother worked as a teacher and Danuta introduced Ida as her relative and arranged a place for her to stay, leaving her under the care of the trusted school janitor but without telling him of her real origin. Danuta visited Ida often, bringing her food and clothing; at the same time, she continued to tell the locals that Ida was her relative. She also arranged to obtain proper documents for Ida through the local priest. Towards the end of 1943, Danuta reached the conclusion that due to the anti-Polish sentiments of the local Ukrainian population, Ida should leave the village. She gave her the address of friends in the Kielce area and sent her on her way with a group of Polish refugees. Ida got to Kielce, where she safely awaited liberation while working as a teacher in a nearby village. Throughout this entire period, Danuta's messengers maintained contact with Ida.<sup>1820</sup>

[42] Regina Zajackowska [Zajączkowska] lived with her son, Ryszard, and her daughters, Izabela Stasiuk and her family and Maria Janiak and her family, in Włodzimierz Wołyński [Włodzimierz Wołyński]. One day, Irena Gelman and her year-old daughter, Anna, appeared at their house. Irena had fled the Lwow [Lwów] ghetto (her husband had perished even before they entered the ghetto) and after a long journey arrived in Włodzimierz Wołyński. She represented herself to the local priest as a Polish woman whose entire family had been killed. She said she was looking for work. The priest directed her to the Stasiuk family to work as a maid and cook. Sometime afterwards, the Stasiuk family decided to move to Lublin out of fear of Ukrainian nationalists and invited Irena to come along with them. Izabela's mother, Regina Zajackowska, came to visit her daughter and advised Irena not to go to Lublin. At the same time, she offered help if Irena should have to flee Lublin in the future. Irena went with the family to Lublin but was forced to return to Włodzimierz Wołyński. She then went to Regina, who warmly welcomed her and her daughter (who was ill) into her home. ... After a few days, when Irena's daughter recovered, Irena decided to leave. She thanked Regina for her help and said that she did not wish to put her at risk anymore as, she explained, she was a Jewish escapee from the ghetto. Zajackowska smiled and told her that from the moment she first saw her and her child she knew they were not Polish, but that this did not change a thing. Regina agreed to keep Irena and her daughter with her ... Irena stayed with the Zajackowskis until the end of the war ...<sup>1821</sup>

[43] After a number of *Aktionen* launched by the Germans and Ukrainian nationalists against the Jews of Stryj, in the Stanisławow [Stanisławów] district, Shlomo and Emilia [Minka] Sztern [Stern] turned to Władysław [Władysław] and Stefania Zarzycki, friends and former neighbors of theirs, asking for help. Without any conditions, the Zarzyckis came to the aid of their Jewish acquaintances and, despite the danger, arranged a hiding place for them in their house. Their bravery was all the more outstanding in view of the fact that some neighboring Poles, who had harbored Jews, had been shot to death. The Zarzyckis, with the help of Jan, their 15-year-old son, dug a shelter under the floor of one of their rooms, where the Szterns hid until the summer of 1944, when the area was liberated. Despite their straitened circumstances, the Zarzyckis, their son, Jan, and their daughter, Stanisława [Stanisława], looked after their charges devotedly, at great personal risk, without

<sup>1820</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 890.

<sup>1821</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 917.

expecting anything in return. Guided by humanitarian principles, they shared their food with them, concerned themselves with their hygiene, and did all they could to raise their morale when they fell into despair.<sup>1822</sup>

The Zarzyckis were committed members of the Polish Home Army. The Sterns had arranged with a Polish woman for their daughter, Antonia (later Toni Rabin, b. 1940), to be left near the home of a village priest with a note saying that she was Catholic, and that her father was in a labour camp and her mother was unable to care for her. Despite this fairly transparent guise, the priest placed the child with two families, consecutively. A rumour spread that this was the priest's illegitimate child. After the arrival of the Soviet army, the child's protectors did not want to return Antonia, so her father had to kidnap her.<sup>1823</sup>

[44] Olga Zawadzka, originally from Lwow [Lwów], moved to the village of Czusow [Czuszów], Kielce district, after her marriage. Between the years 1925 and 1930, she had been a student in Jan Kazimierz University in Lwow, where she had befriended a Jewish woman named Frida Kohn, who was a mathematics student. After Olga left Lwow, the two friends lost contact. When the Germans took over Lwow, a mutual friend turned to Olga and asked her if she would hide Fela in her home. Olga, bearing in mind the fact that Fela was a Jew, told her warmly that Fela would be most welcome. Fela arrived in Czusow and Olga, with the help of friends and a priest,<sup>1824</sup> obtained a false birth certificate and *Kennkarte* for her made out in the name of Maria Zajaczkowska [Zajaczkowska]. Fela asked Olga to help a friend of hers, Klara Nachtgaist, who was spending entire days in churches, too frightened to leave. Olga welcomed her into her home as well. Klara already had Aryan papers made out in the name of Julia Nahorayska. In the summer of 1942, Olga went to Lwow again, where she agreed to bring back Nina Drucker (later Noe Levine), the seven-year-old daughter of the director of the Lwow ghetto hospital, Dr. Herman Drucker, to Czusow. Olga took Nina, who had a birth certificate in the name of Janina Witeszczak, into her home. Whenever the need arose, the child was either put up in the Sisters of St. Urszula [Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union] boarding school in Cracow [Kraków] or the Sisters of the Holy Ghost [Sisters Canonesses of the Holy Spirit de Saxia] boarding school in Busko [Busko-Zdrój]. Olga represented the fugitive child as a daughter of relatives who had died during the war.<sup>1825</sup>

[45] Henryk Zielonka was a tailor and ran an underwear factory in Czestochowa [Częstochowa]. When he married Gertruda he was already a widower and had two sons from his previous marriage. In the summer of 1943, Henryk's son brought home a five-year-old Jewish girl named Chana (later Chana Batista). Chana was born on the outskirts of Czestochowa, in

<sup>1822</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 925–26.

<sup>1823</sup> Toni R. [Rabin] and Emilia S. [Stern] Holocaust Testimony (HVT-447), FVA; Testimony of Antonia Rabin, SFV, Interview code 6567; Testimony of Emilia Stern, SFV, Interview code 6568.

<sup>1824</sup> In her account, Olga Zawadzka refers to the help of Michalina Razdro and unidentified priests in obtaining false documents for Fela Kohn. See Knap, "Jak ci się uda uratować, pamiętaj", 73.

<sup>1825</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 928–29.

Rakow [Raków]. On June 16, 1943, Chana's mother had taken her to Czestochowa<sup>1826</sup> and gave her a scrap of paper with an address written on it. Chana was told that at the said address she would find a woman who would help her. Since then she never saw her mother again. A passerby directed Chana, who was not able to read at the time, to the address, where she waited a few hours for the woman whom her mother had told her about. The woman wrote her a new note and took the girl to a church. She told her to wait for the priest and quickly disappeared herself. After mass, Chana turned to the priest and showed him the note. The priest said that he could not help her. He called in a boy and a girl and asked them to take Chana to an old age home run by nuns. In front of the home there was a big courtyard; on the bench sat a few people. They started asking Chana questions to see if she knew how to pray. Suddenly she noticed the boy coming down the stairs; it was Henryk Zielonka's son. "Aren't you ashamed to tire this girl out with questions?" he asked. He took Chana by the arm and escorted her to his parents' house. After a time, Henryk managed to get documents for Chana "proving" that she was his niece. ... "Shortly afterwards they told me to call them 'Mother' and 'Father' ... I was a difficult child, I almost didn't speak, I didn't smile, and in addition I didn't want to eat. My poor mother did what she could to make sure that I would eat something. ..." After the war, Chana started school, finished her studies, and began working. When her adoptive parents died, she ... discovered that her mother was murdered by the Germans.<sup>1827</sup>

[46] Halina Zwanska [Zwańska] and her mother, Aleksandra Gurska [Górska?], lived in Vilna [Wilno]. During the war, they rescued a five-year-old girl, Miriam Griner (later Miriam Goldin), [born in Wilno in 1939]. After the town was occupied by the German army, the Griner family—the father, Faibish, his wife, and their daughter Miriam—found themselves, like all remaining Vilna Jews, in the ghetto, and later in a camp in Vilna. Towards the end of March 1944, the Germans seized all of the children that were in the camp. Faibish managed, however, to hide his then five-year-old daughter. Aleksandra Gurska, who agreed to take the child under her care, carried her out of the camp in a big cooking pot and then later to her apartment where she lived with her already married daughter, Halina Zwanska. The two women looked after the child for four months, until the Red Army liberated the town on July 10, 1944. In his testimony to Yad Vashem, Faibish emphasized that the child spoke only Yiddish at the time, making the situation even more complicated. Miriam Goldin also added in her testimony that during her stay with Gurska and Zwanska another Jewish woman called Werszes was staying there too.<sup>1828</sup> [Her rescuers passed Miriam off

<sup>1826</sup> According to other sources, Chana or Hanna Batista (then Sara Rozen) was about five when she and her mother were compelled to leave the Albertine convent in Czestochowa, where they had found refuge under the identity of Racińska, after someone denounced them. In despair, her mother determined to drown herself by jumping from a bridge but only broke a leg. She was later captured by the Germans and killed. The story of their stay at the Albertine convent is described later. The child was later known as Eugenia Koziarska. See Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, 150–51; Bogner, *At the Mercy of Strangers*, 50, based on the testimony of Chana Batista, YVA, file O.3/5732 (Item 3555262); Chana Batista Papers, USHMM, Accession no. 2001.197.1.

<sup>1827</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 938.

<sup>1828</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 947.

as a Catholic and took her to church services. Her identity was known to the priest, who was supportive of the rescuers. After the war, Miriam was reunited with her parents.<sup>1829]</sup>

[47] Witold and Zofia Bohdziewicz and Grzegorz and Beata Schneider of Wilno (now Vilnius, Lithuania) knew each other even before the war, but until the Nazi occupation there was no special connection between them. The relations between these two young families, as yet without children, became closer only in the summer of 1941, after the German occupation of the city and the confinement of the Jews in the ghetto. Bohdziewicz was then working as an engineer in the Haus und Wohnung Rustungsbetrieb factory in the service of the war effort, under German supervision. [It is general knowledge that hundreds of thousands of Jews also worked in German factories and workshops, mainly in the service of the war effort, under German supervision.—Ed.] Grzegorz Schneider was a metalworker by profession and Bohdziewicz gained him employment in the factory. Thanks to his employment there, Schneider had a permit to circulate outside the ghetto. In addition, the Bohdziewicz family helped the Schneider family with food. In 1943, when rumors spread that the Germans were about to liquidate the ghetto, the Schneider family sought a way to escape outside the walls. The problem was to find a suitable hiding place for their one-year-old son, Alexander, born in 1942 in the ghetto. Schneider decided to confide in his benefactor, Bohdziewicz. The latter discussed the matter with his wife, Zofia, then pregnant with their daughter. Zofia understood the distress of the Schneider couple, and, after some hesitation, agreed to save the infant by taking him in. She was helped in her decision by the fact that the child was blond and uncircumcised. The child was smuggled out of the ghetto, and presented as abandoned on her doorstep. She told her curious neighbors that she intended to adopt him. So that there would be no suspicion that the child was Jewish she had him baptized, with the prior consent of his parents, and gave him their surname of Bohdziewicz. [The age of the child would have rendered the request for baptism suspect.—Ed.] They cared for him devotedly and lovingly as if he were their own son in every sense of the word. The infant Alexander Schneider remained with the Bohdziewicz couple until after the liberation when he was returned to his parents who had also survived. The Bohdziewiczzes did not ask for any payment.<sup>1830</sup>

[48] Józef and Jadwiga Dąbrowski lived with their seven children on an isolated farmstead near the village of Kamenka [Kamionka] (Oszmiana County, Wilno District). The family's house and farm bordered on the forest and their closest neighbors lived far away. After mass killings perpetrated by Germans in the village of Woronów [Werenowo] (Lida County), Dziewieniszki [Dziewieniszki] (Oszmiana County), and Rodamina [Rudomino], near Wilno, during 1942, several young Jews who escaped the murder operations were sheltered by the Dąbrowskis. In 1943, two Jewish boys, Elchik Kushel and Haim Kozin, also came to the Dąbrowski's [sic] home seeking a place to stay for the winter months. With Józef's consent, and with his help, they dug a hideout near his farm. At some point they were joined by Charna, Elchik's sister, and her six-year-old daughter, Judith. The Dąbrowski family was a large one with many children, and it was hard for them to feed four additional people, so the Jews were forced occasionally to leave their hiding place to try to obtain food from area farms. On one such outing searching for food, they met some other Jews hiding in the forest. One of them, Sonia Kutser, who had escaped from the Vilna [Wilno] ghetto during

<sup>1829</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 516; Testimony of Miriam (Griner) Goldin, YVA, file O.3 V.T/2689 (Item 3763952).

<sup>1830</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 536.

its liquidation in September 1943, went to seek out her relatives in Rudamina. There she was informed that there were Jews hiding out in the area where the Dąbrowskis were living and that the Jews were receiving help from the Dąbrowski family. She headed for that part of the countryside to try to get help from them as well. Shortly after her arrival to the area, the brothers, Henryk and Hona Soloduch from Rudamina, who until then had been helped by another Polish farmer, arrived. One day at the end of 1943, members of the Polish underground Home Army (AK) came to the farm and by chance saw Judith as she was opening the entry hole into the shelter. The AK men stormed the farm and ordered the Jews out of the shelter. Five people emerged (that day the Soloducha [sic] brothers were elsewhere). Józef was seized and beaten in front of his wife and children, and the AK men took his horse and wagon as punishment for hiding Jews. As they were taking the Jews into the nearby forest for execution, the priest [chaplain] who accompanied them arrived and persuaded them not to shed the blood of innocent people. Having no other choice, the survivors returned to the Dąbrowskis, who took them in again. Early in 1944, most of the Jews left the Dąbrowski's farm for alternative hiding places; only Sonia Kutser remained with them until the liberation in July 1944.<sup>1831</sup>

[49] During the German occupation, Maria Hanzowa, a poor widow and devout Catholic, lived with her adult daughter, Andzia, at 4 Łyczakowska Street in Lwów (today L'viv). She rescued Zofia Akselrod (later, Garfinkel), her brother Milek and their mother Ester Akselrod. Zofia Akselrod worked in a clothing factory in Lwów on the "Aryan" side. In March 1943, she began contacting Poles she knew hoping to find a place to hide with their assistance. Her first efforts were not successful since she was only sheltered for one night in exchange for money she had received by selling a coat and was forced back to the ghetto. Maria Hanzowa had had business dealings with Zofia's parents in Przemyślany (Tarnopol District), from whom she bought butter for sale at market. She had accumulated a debt of 400 zloty [złoty] that she had not been able to pay back. Following some dreams in which Zofia's father appeared, Maria decided to find the family and help them. She asked her priest for advice and began to search for the family. Maria and Zofia met accidentally on Źródłana Street outside the ghetto. She agreed to take Zofia's mother and promised to share with her family whatever she had. Zofia sent her mother, Ester, to Maria Hanzowa and joined her after her plan to hide with a young couple fell through. The two were then joined by Milek, Zofia's brother, who managed to escape from the Janowska Camp after Zofia had sent him the address hidden in a loaf of bread. Maria informed them about the situation at the front and cared for their needs. She cooked for them, providing dairy food. She was motivated by her financial debt to the family [which was hardly sufficient to offset the risk and expenses she incurred] and hoped that they would convert, although she did not pressure them. Maria sold some gold pieces she had to help her buy food for them. Maria's daughter, Andzia, knew about the arrangement and kept the secret. Maria Hanzowa hid and cared for Zofia, her brother Milek and their mother Ester from March 1943 until June 1944. After the war, they would meet Maria while still in Lwów, providing her with extra food, but later contact was lost after Maria Hanzowa moved west to the new borders of

<sup>1831</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 544. Since the Dąbrowski family was large and could not possibly feed all these additional people, the Jewish charges would likely have had to resort to stealing food and perhaps robbing farmers in the vicinity. Word of this would have likely reached the Polish underground. The entry obscures the dynamic of retaliation under circumstances where lives were at stake in the competition for scarce food.

Poland, while the Akselrods moved first to Kraków in March 1945, then to a DP camp, and finally immigrated to the United States.<sup>1832</sup>

[50] The Jankowski family, a devout Catholic family of three, lived in the village of Maliniak (Młyniec?) near Warsaw, the parents Bolesław and Stanisława and their three-year-old daughter Halina (today, Brulińska). In 1942, after suffering the torments of wanderings and persecutions, 12-year-old Ester Rotfing (later, Livny) arrived at their home. She had been smuggled out of the Warsaw ghetto with her older brother. They had tried to survive in the surrounding villages, working as shepherds for the farmers, and assuming the false identity of Polish orphans [a rather transparent guise]. After losing her brother as a result of denunciation, Ester began to work for the Jankowski family, where she was very industrious and treated in turn with warmth. One day, Bolesław asked her if she had already participated in her First Communion ceremony as required at her age and she innocently replied in the negative. Bolesław promised to include her in the Communion ceremony the next Sunday at the church. When she went as required before the ceremony to her first confession before the priest, she panicked and revealed to him that she was Jewish. As a result, the priest did not let her participate in the ceremony and he shared the secret with Bolesław. Once it was known that she was Jewish, Ester was seized by fear and sought to flee. Bolesław stopped her, calmed her down and promised that nothing would happen to her, that they would continue to treat her as a daughter in every way and take care of all her needs. He delivered on this promise and Ester stayed with the Jankowski family until the end of the war. They kept her even though many of the villagers knew that she was Jewish.<sup>1833</sup>

[51] During the war, Klara Lassoga lived in Ursus near Warsaw, where she worked in a factory for the Germans. In 1942, a good friend of hers brought Leontyna Erenbrod, a 14-year-old Jewish orphan girl from Warsaw, to Klara asking that she hide the young girl in her home. Leontyna was originally from Bukaczowce (Rohatyn County, Stanisławów District, today Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine) and her parents had been murdered a year earlier in Warsaw. Klara, who was living alone at the time, had Jewish friends in the Warsaw ghetto, such as Laiche Rozen, whom she was in touch with and tried to help as much as she could. Her willingness to help her friends in the ghetto gave the impression that she would be willing to hide a young Jewish girl in her home. Indeed, when the girl was brought to her, she agreed to take her under her wing. In 1943, Leontyna was converted to Christianity in order to get a Christian birth certificate and to appear as Klara's relative. Her new name was Ludwika Mileszczuk (later, Matias). She remained in Klara's home and under her protection until the end of the war, and their relationship was like that of real members of the family even after the war.<sup>1834</sup>

The following is based on the recognition by Yad Vashem in 2008 of the Mikszta family:

[52] Piotr and Anna Mikšta [Mikszta], born in 1902 and 1905 respectively, lived in the small town of Święciany (later Švenčionys), near Vilnius [Wilno]. Piotr worked at a medical plant

<sup>1832</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 561.

<sup>1833</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 563–64.

<sup>1834</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 586.

that continued to function during the German occupation. Anna was a housewife. In 1942, Piotr's acquaintance Saikowski [Sajkowski] brought him a five-year-old girl, Shelli Margolis, the daughter of a local Jewish family. Margolis' mother had perished by that time; her father, Samuil Margolis, had put her in Saikowski's care. However, she found it difficult to adjust, and cried and begged to be taken back to her family. The childless Mikštas had more patience for the young girl so traumatized by the war. After a while Margolis started to feel at ease in their home, and began to call her benefactors "mummy" and "daddy." The Mikštas were helped in their care by Anna's 14-year-old niece Bronisława [Bronisława Romasłowska], who would come every day to look after her, or take her to her family's farm. Devoted religious Catholics, the Mikštas baptized Margolis, changed her name to Alicia [Alicja], and paid great attention to her religious education. A while later, the Mikštas were denounced, and they and their young ward were summoned for interrogation. The policeman demanded that "Alicia" tell him who her real mother was, but the girl just cried and pointed to Anna. Thanks to a bribe gathered by the extended Mikšta family, they were finally released. After the liberation of Švenčionys by the Red Army, Margolis remained with her rescuers, because all of her known relatives had been killed.<sup>1835</sup>

The following is based on the recognition by Yad Vashem in 2010 of the Brykczyński family:

[53] Feliks Sandauer was born in Lwów, Poland, on September 9, 1928 to parents Józef Henryk, a lawyer, and Franciszka, a pediatrician. In 1942, the Germans began deporting Jews en masse from Lwów to the Belżec camp. Although the Sandauers lived outside the ghetto, theirs was no easier fate: the Germans had the addresses of Jews living on the "Aryan" side, and they took away Józef Henryk, Franciszka, and Franciszka's mother, Sara Czoban. Feliks was saved by two Italian soldiers who were quartered in the apartment and hid Feliks in their bed sheets. Somehow (possibly with the help of the Italian soldiers), Feliks found himself in the home of Aleksandra Dąbska [Rudecka], a former friend of his mother's. ... when Feliks arrived, Aleksandra accepted him without any hesitation. However, because she herself was quite involved in the work of the Polish resistance, she hurriedly arranged for him to be sheltered in the home of her sister Maria Dąbska-Brykczyńska and her husband Marcin Brykczyński. Maria and Marcin Brykczyński lived in Skołyżyn with their four children. The couple was also playing host to a family of five Poles expelled by the Germans from their home in Poznań. Nonetheless Feliks was warmly welcomed in, under the assumed name of Feliks Sawicki, son of Marian and Franciszka, Poles ostensibly murdered by Germans. Only Maria and Marcin knew the truth of Feliks' origins. They had him baptized in secret by a friendly priest, and nobody guessed his real identity. Everyone in the family perceived him as a brother or a cousin. Feliks, in turn, felt the same—a familial closeness to the Brykczyńskis as well as to Aleksandra Dąbska.<sup>1836</sup> [In fact, word of this rescue spread among the villagers but no one betrayed them.<sup>1837</sup>]

<sup>1835</sup> Piotr and Anna Mikšta, RD. See also Vilna Gaon Museum of Jewish History, Vilnius, Internet: <http://rescuedchild.lt/content.php?id=8192>.

<sup>1836</sup> Brykczyński Family, RD.

<sup>1837</sup> Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 153; Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part 2, 214–18.

The following is based on the recognition by Yad Vashem in 2011 of Kazimiera Demiańczuk:

[54] Eugenia Vilensky was born in 1940 in Wilno (now Vilnius) to parents Mausza (b. 1893) and Sara (b. 1905). Mausza was a construction engineer with a background in singing. Sara was a pianist and accordion player. She also helped her mother in the laundry she owned, and in 1938 opened a little shop of her own. In July 1941 the Germans came to Wilno and sent many Jewish men, including Mausza Vilensky, to forced labor in Kena, where they were all executed in September. Meanwhile, the women of the family (Eugenia, her mother, and her grandmother) were sent into the ghetto. The grandmother had a housekeeper named Maria Kalicka who came with them to the ghetto. When the *Aktionen* (mass executions) began in the ghetto, Sara started thinking of a way to save her infant daughter. Maria, who was Jewish, had somehow managed to acquire Polish identity papers and was acquainted with one of the German guards, who allowed her to go outside to buy food. In this way Maria managed to carry Eugenia out of the ghetto and give her to Kazimiera Demianczuk [Demiańczuk] (b. 1888), who lived nearby. Sara and her mother remained in the ghetto until their joint escape, but they both perished. Eugenia lived with Kazimiera until the end of the war. She called her "Auntie." Demianczuk was a very devout woman. She baptized Eugenia and took her to church often. When there were battles and explosions in the city, she would wake the girl and have her pray to God for salvation. They were near starving, and Eugenia was often ill. The only language the child knew was Polish, and she learned to read from an illustrated book in Polish. Eugenia was exposed to much suffering and peril as a very little girl, and some of the things she saw in wartime Wilno remained with her as nightmares for the rest of her life. However, due to Kazimiera's diligent care, she survived the war and remained with her "Auntie" for a while, attending kindergarten until some of her surviving Jewish relatives found her and took her to Moscow. Eugenia received a good education and became a musician and journalist. Kazimiera went to live in Poland after separating from the girl, and all contact with her was lost.<sup>1838</sup>

The following is based on the recognition by Yad Vashem in 2012 of Jadwiga Sztefec:

[55] Alexander Semyanovski was born in 1937 in Vetrino, Belarus. By the beginning of World War II, the family moved to Łuck (today Lutsk) [in Volhynia]. Alexander's father, Mikhail, was a military officer who fell in the first days of the war. His mother, Sofia Alkevitch-Semyanovska, and the two children, Alexander and Felix, were sent to the Łuck Ghetto in September 1941. They stayed there until August 1942, when a mass shooting in which 25,000 Jews were murdered took place. Right before the *Aktion* (mass execution) began, Alexander and Felix were taken away by Jadwiga Sztefec. She had been friends with Sofia before the war (Sofia worked at the post office and had many local friends and acquaintances). Jadwiga risked her life providing the Semyanovskis with food and clothing throughout their stay in the ghetto, but when an acquaintance of hers in the police told her that there was to be a mass killing, she decided to bribe a guard in the ghetto to extract the boys and save them. The spontaneous decision to save the children had dire consequences for Jadwiga.

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<sup>1838</sup> Kazimiera Demianczuk, RD.

Her Ukrainian husband left her because it was well known that the Nazis would kill their entire family if they were to find Jewish children in their home. Her acquaintances knew she had no children, so she had to keep the boys hidden in the attic. Given her circumstances, she soon realized that it was impossible to rescue two children, so she arranged for a different hideout for Felix, who survived the war tending to cattle on a farm. Jadwiga was able to get Alexander an identification card through her church, registering him as an adopted orphan. Still, when it was too dangerous to stay in the house, she had to hide him in the chimney or take him to the countryside, taking odd jobs to justify moving about. When someone reported that Jadwiga Sztefec was hiding a Jewish child, the two were saved by the same police acquaintance who had told her about the Aktion at the beginning of the war. They managed to escape again. After the war, Alexander stayed with Jadwiga until his enrollment in a military academy in 1955. He considered her his mother and treated her accordingly throughout her life. She died in 1977.<sup>1839</sup>

The following is based on the recognition by Yad Vashem in 2014 of Kazimiera Kowalska and Franciszek and Józefa Kosiński:

[56] Regina Ruskin was born in Siemiatycze, Poland, in 1931. She was 12 years old in November 1942 when the ghetto in her hometown was liquidated and she found herself on a train to Treblinka. She managed to jump off the train, joining a group of 13 people to do so, including two of her brothers. They went to the nearby villages looking for someone to help them, as the Nazis tried to hunt them down. When one of the brothers was caught and killed by a local militia, the group realized that the local farmers were too afraid to take in Jewish men. They decided at least to find shelter for the young girl who was with them, Regina. When they reached the village of Tołwin [a village near Siemiatycze], they reached out to the Kowalski family and asked them to help the girl. Kazimiera Kowalska was a devout Catholic and was prepared to help the child. She consulted with the priest [in Dziadkowice parish] and was strengthened in her resolve to rescue Regina. She placed her in the barn and kept her relatively well fed and clean. To occupy the girl, she had Regina knit, something she was good at. The conditions were not good—the girl was near starving—but Kowalska did do her best to help. The day came, however, when someone found out about the situation, and Kazimiera transferred Regina into the hands of another local family: Franciszek and Józefa Kosiński. The Kosińskis had five children and were somewhat better off than the Kowalskis, so Regina came to back herself with them. Once she was restored to health, Regina became part of the family, playing with the children and reading them books. Her older brother Meir was hiding in the forest nearby and was sometimes able to come visit her. One day, when the Kosiński parents were away, three gendarmes appeared with the intention of searching the house. Luckily, there was a small hideout in the house for just such an occasion, and Regina pushed herself into it and stayed there for the duration of the search. She was not discovered. When the Kosiński parents returned, she was overwhelmed with guilt for endangering the family and said she was leaving. Józefa vehemently opposed the idea and did not let her leave. The gendarmes had told the next-door neighbor, the village mayor, that a Jewish girl was rumored to be hiding at the Kosińskis' house and that that had been the reason for the search. When Kosińska heard that, she marched over and declared that the child was staying and that if the mayor wished to have her killed along with the entire Kosiński family, he was welcome to go right

<sup>1839</sup> Jadwiga Sztefec, RD.

to the Gestapo. The mayor, humbled by her words, promised to keep silent. In this way Regina survived with the Kosińskis until the liberation.<sup>1840</sup>

The entry in *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations* for Józef and Stefania Macugowski<sup>1841</sup> neglects to mention the earlier assistance of a priest:

[57] Stefania and Józef Macugowski lived in Nowy Korczyn together with their three children. Before the war, the population of that town was around 4 thousand people with circa 3/4 of them Jewish. The Macugowskis were friends with several Jewish families.

In November 1942, the Germans transported Jews away from Nowy Korczyn, taking them, via the station in Szczucin, to the death camp in Bełżec. Right before that deportation commenced, Szaindl Wainberg, a good friend of Józef, came to him asking for help. “She begged me to help her out in her difficult situation—she was hiding in the area with a priest but the people there suspected that she was Jewish and she had to flee from her hiding place,” he recalled after the war.

Macugowski agreed to take Szaindl in. After some time, she brought several other people, mostly members of her family, to him. Józef and Stefania decided that they were going to help those other people as well. They reckoned that they had nothing much to lose anyway—the punishment for helping one Jew was the same as the punishment for helping nine of them. Józef recalled: “There was a military police station around 200 metres from our house so we thought the Germans would not expect people to be hiding so close to them.”

The Macugowskis dug out a shelter in their basement. The number of people hiding there was seven and it grew to nine in 1944. They were: Sara Grynberg, Lejb and Gitla Radca and their daughters: Sara, Golda, and Miriam, Szaindl Wajnberg, Kupfer, and Mendel Grynbaum. The hiding place was small, strewn with straw, and there were plank beds inside and a bucket for waste. Its ceiling was reinforced with steel rails and covered with planks and earth to conceal it even better. The people hiding in the shelter never left it—this exerted an immense strain on their bodies and, even more so, their minds.

The shelter could be entered from the yard, via the room in which hay was stored. It was prepared in such manner as to prevent even the children of the Macugowskis from discovering the hideout. The children did not know that there were Jews in hiding at their farmstead.

The hiding Jews bore a portion of the costs of food because Stefania and Józef would not have been able to procure enough food to feed nine more people on their own. In the summer of 1944, a German family was quartered on the Macugowskis. However, their presence had no impact on the people in hiding.

The Jews saw the end of the occupation, surviving until January 1945. They emigrated to the USA and Israel after the war. It was only after a dozen or so years that they made contact with one another via phone and by mail. The Macugowski family were also invited to New York by the daughters of Lejb and Gitla Radca and they made a trip to the USA in 1986.<sup>1842</sup>

<sup>1840</sup> Kazimiera Kowalska, RD.

<sup>1841</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 475.

<sup>1842</sup> The Macugowski Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-macugowski-family>.

The foregoing fifty-seven examples of unidentified priests that appear in many rescue stories are not exhaustive. In the following case, described by sociologist Nechama Tec, the rescuer and her charge are given false names.

Ada Celka was deeply religious. During the war she sheltered the young Jewish girl, Danuta Brill. I interviewed Ada in Poland and Danuta in the United States. “I heard about baptism from the Jewish woman: My mother’s father was a highly respected rabbi. Both Ada and her sister knew it. They wanted me to go to church like all the other children. It was safer this way. But to go to communion without being a Catholic would have been a sin. They thought that I should be baptized. Knowing that my grandfather was a rabbi they did not want to do it on their own. Because my grandfather was still alive, they turned to him for permission. He knew that they could baptize me without his consent. He wrote them a beautiful letter in which he gave them permission and his blessings. They baptized me only after that letter. Their priest knew that I was Jewish and he performed the ritual. He also taught me the Catechism. The Church made a deep impression on me. I was overwhelmed by my new religion. It became a spiritual escape and gave me strength.”<sup>1843</sup>

Subsequently, Tec expanded on the story and highlighted the rescuer’s self-effacement, which is especially characteristic of members of the clergy.

I interviewed Ada Celka in Poland. A governess by profession, during the war, she had shared a one-room apartment with her unmarried sister and a handicapped father. In 1942, a Jewish woman, an acquaintance, asked Ada to save her child, a girl of eight. When the girl, Danuta, came to share the one-room apartment, the neighbors were told that she was an orphaned relative. To my suggestion that keeping the Jewish girl must have entailed economic hardships, Ada reacted with a flat denial. She also failed to tell me about a few facts that would have enhanced her image.

I heard only from Danuta, whom I interviewed in the United States, that Ada had planned and almost succeeded in smuggling Danuta’s parents out of a working camp and in placing them with a Polish family on a farm. This, according to the daughter, involved extraordinary efforts. Ada was not an influential person; she had few connections and no money. Her success in locating a peasant family could be ascribed to her willingness to try again and again and to her strong determination. Finally, all was ready, and detailed plans for smuggling the parents out of their working camp were set in motion. On the chosen day, Ada went to the appointed place next to the camp, but she waited in vain. Danuta’s parents had already been deported to a death camp.

Ada also never bothered to tell me that when food was scarce, which it often was, she fed her handicapped invalid father first, and then Danuta. She and her sister ate only after her father and the girl had enough.<sup>1844</sup>

<sup>1843</sup> Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness*, 142.

<sup>1844</sup> Nechama Tec, “Altruism and the Holocaust,” Internet: <http://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/publications/se/5906/590609.html>.

Priests were known to preside over bogus religious ceremonies for the benefit of Jewish fugitives. After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto, Henryk Nojmark, who went by the name of Papierski, and his wife Sławka, were directed by Barbara Siwczyńska to Busko-Zdrój, where her mother, Stefania Siwczyńska, lived. In order to enhance their cover as Catholic Poles, Henryk and Sławka were married by Rev. Antoni Otremski, the local pastor.<sup>1845</sup>

In some cases, Jews who were passing as Catholics simply turned to priests for solace. It is apparent, therefore, that they did not view the Catholic clergy as a hostile element, even if they did not personally know the priest in question. One such case was that of Laura Schwarzwald, a native of Lwów, who was residing in Busko-Zdrój with her young daughter, Selma (later Sophie Turner-Zaretsky, b. 1937), both of them under false identities. Laura had become Bronisława Tymejko, a widow, and her daughter was Zofia Tymejko. They were joined there by Laura's younger sister Adela, who was living under the name Ksenia Osoba.

It was toward the end of the war, when Laura couldn't have bought a good night's sleep with a million zlotys [zlotys], that an itinerant Catholic priest walked into Busko-Zdrój from who knows where and drew a crowd of faith-hungry Poles to a field outside of town. For reasons Laura herself barely understood, she stood in the chilly spring wind and listened to him.

She couldn't take her eyes off of him. With his black moth-eaten cassock and sunken dark eyes, he looked as if he had experienced his own share of suffering. He stood in the pasture with his Bible open in one palm and his other hand pointing to the sky. He told the crowd that they would overcome their suffering with hope and prayer, that Jesus had not forgotten them, and that God would punish the evildoers, and so on and so forth. So where's God been since 1939 she thought.

Laura almost never went to church on Sunday with Zofia and her class, and she couldn't even remember a single Jewish prayer, but the man's message struck some forgotten chord in her. When he finally closed the Bible and made some blessing motions and thanked everyone for coming, Laura was overcome with the desire to go right up to him and ask him to hear her confession.

"*Prosze pani* [proszę Pani], I will gladly hear your confession," the priest said, "but only in a church, if you would be so kind as to show me the way to your house of God."

She led him back across the field to St. Leonard's Church, which was empty. She sat in a pew and he took a seat in the row behind her.

"I haven't said a word to anyone for so long, and although I know I am putting my life in your hands by telling you, Father, I feel I must. I'm not even sure why, but please have mercy on me."

"Go ahead, my daughter," came the voice right behind her.

She swallowed and said, "I'm Jewish."

There was silence behind her, which she broke by explaining that she and her daughter had been living as Catholics since 1942. What am I doing? She thought. Am I sending the

<sup>1845</sup> Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 333.

two of us to our deaths after all this? After coming so far” A word from this tattered priest to the Gestapo and that would be it.

Still, there was silence, and Laura’s stomach tightened terribly.

She finally heard the priest say in a low voice, “You should not fear anyone or anything except for God. Fear God only and you will be helped and he will have mercy on you. Bless you, my daughter.”

The priest mumbles something in Latin and fell silent.

She waited, but the priest said no more. When she finally turned to look at him, he was no longer in the pew. She caught a glimpse of his long coat as he exited the church and turned. She stood up, amazed at what she had done and overcome with the unfamiliar feeling that there was a supernatural being looking out for her and Zofia. Before the war, she had been a nonbeliever, bound only by ethical principles. What sense did it make that only now, after God had abandoned the Jews, she should feel imbued with some fresh hope and renewed strength to survive? And yet she felt a presence.

She really didn’t know what to think. She had been the beneficiary of more than her share of sheer luck, but she didn’t believe she had been chosen. She didn’t believe she had earned it. She and Zofia had escaped deportation several times. Why? Because she was pretty? Because she spoke perfect German? Because her daughter was blond?

She had lived undetected among the Nazis. Why? Because she did the Polish officer and his family a favour? Because the landlady had given her a Christian prayer book and a good piece of advice?<sup>1846</sup>

Throughout German-occupied Poland nuns took up the call to shelter Jews, especially children, in their convents, orphanages, and boarding schools. Many of these benefactors remain anonymous, as the following testimonies illustrate, gathered from *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*. The encyclopedia entries set out below have been supplemented by other sources by way of annotations in parentheses.

[1] One day in the autumn of 1942, two men approached Janina Choromanska [Choromańska] in Warsaw, representing themselves as Poles who were interested in renting a room. Although they had Aryan papers, Choromanska realized that they were Jewish refugees and, stirred by their plight, invited them to stay with her. Shamaï Zylberman and Jakub Gurfein took up her offer and stayed with her for several months, during which time Choromanska looked after them and helped them with their preparations for crossing the border into Hungary. Before they left, the fugitives passed on her address to Meir Gliksman and Tuvya Firer, whom Choromanska also sheltered in her home. Gliksman later also crossed the border into Hungary. When Firer informed Choromanska that his niece, who was hiding in a convent near Cracow [Kraków], was in danger, Choromanska, in a heroic operation, traveled to the convent and brought her back with her. Uncle and niece stayed

<sup>1846</sup> R. D. Rosen, *Such Good Girls: The Journey of the Holocaust’s Hidden Child Survivors* (New York: HarperCollins, 2014), 42–43.

in her apartment in Warsaw for several months. After the war, Zylberman, Gurfein, and Gliksman immigrated to Israel. Tuvia and his niece perished in unknown circumstances.<sup>1847</sup>

[2] Early on in the occupation, Romualda and Feliks Ciesielski, who lived in Bydgoszcz with their nine-year-old son, were deported to Cracow [Kraków], where they were assigned a shop and apartment that had been confiscated from their Jewish owners. Although they had no say in the matter, the Ciesielskis felt sorry for the Jews and decided they would do all they could to help them. In addition to distributing food and clothing among needy Jews, the Ciesielskis let their shop be used as a temporary shelter for Jews until they found a more permanent hiding place. Among the Jews helped by the Ciesielskis were Dr. Edmund Fiszler and his wife, Leonora, who stayed with them for several weeks. The four members of the Horowicz family also found temporary shelter with the Ciesielskis. At Romualda's suggestion, the Horowicz's daughter, Zofia, was hidden in a convent. In 1942, the Gestapo, alerted by informers, arrested the Ciesielskis. Romualda was interrogated, tortured, and sent to Auschwitz, where she continued helping Jewish prisoners. Her husband was interned in the Mauthausen concentration camp, where he perished.<sup>1848</sup>

[3] One day in 1942, Wladyslaw [Władysław] Dobrodziej, a member of the Polish underground, entered the Warsaw ghetto dressed as a Polish policeman to get his friends Maria and Henryk Angielczyk out of the ghetto. After he succeeded in his mission, a shelter was arranged for the Angielczyks in the town of Piastow [Piastów], near Warsaw. During the rescue operation, Dobrodziej gave his address to Barbara Groszlik, who lived in the same apartment as the Angielczyks, together with her young daughter, Elzbieta [Elżbieta]. That same year, Groszlik escaped with her daughter and moved into a rented apartment on the Aryan side of the city. When the German police got wind of their whereabouts, Groszlik turned to Dobrodziej, who helped her out, as he had promised. After placing Elzbieta in an institution for abandoned children run by nuns, Krystyna, his wife, took Groszlik to her mother, Helena-Maria Bunin, who lived in Miedzylesie [Międzylesie], near Warsaw. The Dobrodziejs continued with their efforts to rescue Jews, helping Wladyslaw Gorzynski [Władysław Gorzyński] escape from the ghetto. Thanks to the Aryan papers in his possession, Gorzynski was sent to work in Germany, where he remained until the liberation. The Dobrodziejs were also instrumental in smuggling Zygmunt Rudnianski [Rudniański], an engineer; his wife; his brother, Adam Neuman; and a woman named Roza [Róża] Bukiet out of the ghetto and hiding them in a house they rented in Piastow. The Dobrodziejs considered saving Jews part of the struggle against a common enemy and never expected anything in return. Wladyslaw Dobrodziej was killed while carrying out an underground assignment.<sup>1849</sup>

[4] In early 1943, Lea Russak and her relative, Aron Moszkowicz, left their hiding place in the Carpathian Mountains and moved to Otwock near Warsaw. Equipped with forged papers, the two turned up on the Fiejkas' doorstep, asking to rent a room in their house. Helena and Boleslaw [Bolesław] Fiejka, realizing they were Jewish, agreed to hide them in their home against payment, which was willingly provided. The Fiejkas prepared a well-camouflaged shelter for the Jewish refugees under the floor of Fiejka's carpentry shop. In time, the Grynshpans and their ten-year-old daughter joined them. Despite the danger, Helena Fiejka looked after the five Jewish refugees, cooked for them, washed their clothes, and

<sup>1847</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 144.

<sup>1848</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 148.

<sup>1849</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 177.

removed their bodily wastes, even after they were no longer able to pay. One day, however, Boleslaw Fiejka ordered the refugees out. After days and nights of wandering through villages and fields without finding shelter, Russak and Moszkowicz, in desperation, returned to the Fiejkas. This time, Helena managed to persuade her husband, Boleslaw, to let the Jewish refugees stay. The three Grynshpans also returned to the Fiejkas' home and stayed there until they were liberated. While at the Fiejkas, Russak fell ill and required medical attention. She was persuaded by Sister Teresa, a nun, to leave her hiding place and move in with relatives of Sister Teresa who lived in the town of Piastow [Piastów], near Warsaw. Russak stayed in Piastow until the area was liberated in January 1945 and after the war emigrated to Israel, while the Grynshpans moved to Canada. After the liberation, Moszkowicz joined the Red Army and fell fighting for Poland.<sup>1850</sup>

[5a] During the occupation, Franciszek and Maria Kielan lived in Warsaw with their daughters, Krystyna and Zofia. One day in 1942, Krystyna got to know Janina Prot, a new girl in her class. In due course, as the two became friends, Janina told Krystyna that she was Jewish and that she had left her parents, who were hiding in a nearby town, and had come to Warsaw on her own, believing that she had a greater chance of surviving there. Stirred by her friend's plight, Krystyna and her sister, Zofia, decided to ask their parents to shelter Janina. Despite the danger, the parents agreed and took Janina into their home without expecting anything in return. Later, the Kielans arranged for Janina to stay with acquaintances in a village, where she helped with the housework, but she was soon sent back to the Kielans after the village authorities became suspicious of her true identity. One day in 1942, Prot was joined by Romana Laks, who also turned up on the Kielans' doorstep after her hiding on the Aryan side of the city became too dangerous. For several months, the Kielans and their two daughters sheltered both Janina and Romana until Romana found a place in a convent near Warsaw, where she remained until the area was liberated by the Red Army. After suffering terrible hardships during the Warsaw Uprising in the summer of 1942, Prot stayed with the Kielans until the area was liberated. After the war, the two survivors emigrated to the United States ...<sup>1851</sup>

[5b] Bronislaw [Bronisław] and Katarzyna Miskiewicz [Miśkiewicz] lived in Warsaw with their daughter, Barbara, who was four years old when the occupation began. Bronislaw worked in the Adamczewski & Co. soap factory where Hilary Laks, a Jewish chemical engineer, worked for the first few years of the occupation. Hilary, his wife, Janina (Tola), and their daughter, Romana, who was born in 1934, lived in the ghetto. In 1942, Bronislaw took Romana out of the ghetto to a convent, where she stayed until the end of the war. At the same time, he and his wife offered Hilary shelter in their apartment and he stayed there for 20 months while his wife hid elsewhere, also outside the ghetto. Hilary stayed in a small room at the back of the apartment, where he arranged a hiding place in a closet into which he disappeared in times of danger. No one knew about Hilary except Katarzyna and a couple of their close friends. "During the whole time I was hiding here, they never asked for any money or reward," Hilary wrote in his testimony. Bronislaw died in Warsaw in 1960. His daughter emigrated to the United States and was joined by her mother in 1982. Hilary Laks, his wife, and daughter all survived and emigrated to the United States.<sup>1852</sup>

<sup>1850</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 214.

<sup>1851</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 345–46.

<sup>1852</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 522.

[6] Giga Kochanowska, a spinster who lived in Warsaw, was indebted to her Jewish friends who, before the war, had helped her through periods of economic hardship. During the occupation, when several of these friends were interned in the local ghetto, Kochanowska repaid their kindness by risking her life to save them. In early 1942, Kochanowska helped her friend Estera Marber escape from the ghetto and put her up in her small apartment, where she looked after her devotedly, without expecting anything in return. She also entered the ghetto, at great personal risk, to bring food to her friends Moshe and Estera Borten and their baby daughter, Julia, who was born in the ghetto. In December 1942, when the Bortens asked Kochanowska to help them escape, she devised a daring plan which entailed crawling through a sewer to the Aryan side of the city. As soon as they arrived, Kochanowska provided them with Aryan papers and rented accommodations for them. When, some two months later, the landlord refused to extend the lease, Kochanowska, with considerable ingenuity, found the Bortens two separate apartments on the eastern side of the city and arranged for the baby to be sent to an institution outside Warsaw run by nuns. In late summer 1944, after the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising, Kochanowska and Marber were driven out of Warsaw and, after suffering much privation, were liberated in January 1945. The Bortens were liberated in September 1944 and after the war immigrated to Israel [with their daughter, Julia]. Marber later emigrated to France.<sup>1853</sup>

[7] After returning to Warsaw from the front in 1939, Antoni-Stefan Koper, knowing that he would not find work in his chosen profession (journalism), took an office job with the municipal tax authorities, which allowed him to enter the ghetto. On his visits to the ghetto, Koper brought with him documents forged in an underground printing press with the help of a friend and distributed them among Jews, enabling them to escape to the Aryan side of the city. In the summer of 1942, after the large-scale *Aktion* in the ghetto, Koper offered to shelter his friend, Fanny Margulies, whose entire family had been deported to Treblinka, in his apartment in central Warsaw. After helping her escape, Koper brought Margulies to his apartment where, to her amazement, she discovered that Koper was already sheltering Bronisława [Bronisława] and Henryk Finkelstein and Dr. Maksymilian Ciesielski, also fugitives from the ghetto. Between 1942 and 1944, a number of Jews passed through Koper's apartment for various periods, including children who were later placed in Catholic orphanages. Despite the danger, threats, and attempted extortion, Koper continued with his humanitarian activities. With the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944, all the Jewish refugees fled with the rest of Warsaw's population and survived until the liberation.<sup>1854</sup>

[8] As underground activists, Wanda and Ludwik Krepy [Krepa] came to the aid of their Jewish acquaintances who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto to the Aryan side of the city, offered them shelter and food, and provided them with Aryan papers. Even after the refugees moved on, the Krepys continued to take an interest in them, found them new hiding places when necessary, protected them from blackmailers, and helped them find sources of income. In risking their lives to help Jews, the Krepys were guided by humanitarian principles only and never expected anything in return. Their apartment, which was already a center for underground activity, also served as a temporary shelter for refugees until they found a permanent place or obtained Aryan papers enabling them to leave Warsaw and find work. Among those helped by the Krepys were Estera Freiberger and her four-year-

<sup>1853</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 358.

<sup>1854</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 370.

-old son, Henryk. After putting them up for a short while in their apartment, the Krepys arranged for them to stay with a farmer in the village of Choszczowka [Choszczówka], near Warsaw. When Freiburger and her son had to leave the village, the Krepys arranged for them to move in with Krepy's mother in Czestochowa until alternative accommodation was found in the village of Olesnik, where they stayed until the liberation. Adam and Maria Gasior [Gašior] also owed their lives to the Krepys, who obtained Aryan papers for them and found them a place of work and a permanent shelter. [Maria Gašior worked as an orderly at a hospital in Warsaw run by the Sisters of St. Elizabeth.<sup>1855</sup>] During the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944, the Krepys moved to a monastery in Zalesie together with the Gasiors until the liberation in January 1945.<sup>1856</sup>

[9] In November 1942, during the liquidation of the Jews in Chelm [Chełm] in the Lublin district, Perla Horn managed to escape from the *Aktion* with her three-year-old daughter, Estera [later Maria Ochlewska]. For a whole year, mother and daughter wandered through local villages, spending the night in farm-buildings, living off scraps of food that kindly villagers offered them, and spending the summer in the forest together with other Jewish refugees. One day in November 1943, Horn left her daughter with a peasant family, [the Struś family in the village of Plawanice near Chełm], promising to return for her later that day. When Horn, however, was shot dead [by the Germans], the [impoverished Struś] family, [who lived in a one room hut with only a dirt floor], ... [several months later] handed her over to their acquaintance, Leokadia Wojtkiewicz, who agreed to take responsibility for the girl. After sheltering her for a few days in her home in Chelm, Wojtkiewicz took Estera [then called Marysia] to Warsaw to stay with her sister and brother-in-law, Joanna and Karol Kulesza, who, despite the danger, agreed to take her in, without expecting anything in return. The Kuleszas provided Estera, who was passed off as Wojtkiewicz's illegitimate daughter, with a birth certificate under an assumed identity. Despite their strained circumstances, the Kuleszas looked after Estera devotedly and kept her identity hidden even from their own two children. Even after the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944, when the Kuleszas were driven out of Warsaw, they took Estera with them. When Estera fell ill, they arranged for her to be looked after by nuns in [Laski near Warsaw, from where she was later transferred to an orphanage<sup>1857</sup>] in Kraków.<sup>1858</sup>

[10] In the 1930s, Stanisław [Stanisław] Mazur, who had been born and bred on a farm, met Jews for the first time as a student at the University of Warsaw. ... Stanisław Mazur and his wife, Krystyna, helped Jews imprisoned in the Warsaw ghetto. The Mazurs' address was known to Jews fleeing from the ghetto, and, disregarding the risk to their lives, the Mazurs took them into their home, provided them with false papers, and helped them find other places to hide, mostly outside of Warsaw. Of the 30 Jewish fugitives helped by the Mazurs, only 20 survived the war ...<sup>1859</sup> [Stanisław Mazur took several children out of the

<sup>1855</sup> The Krępa Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-krępa-family>.

<sup>1856</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 402.

<sup>1857</sup> Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 1, 285–87. This is the source of all of the supplementary information.

<sup>1858</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 421.

<sup>1859</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 502.

ghetto, among them the six-year-old daughter of a lawyer named Goldman and another girl of a similar age. Both girls were taken in by nuns.<sup>1860</sup>]

[11] One day in 1942, Maria Niemiec showed up in her tiny apartment in Przemysl [Przemysł] with six-year-old Teresa [actually, Irena Licht, who assumed the identity of Teresa Krystyna Urban]. She then told her four children that Teresa was now their sister. Teresa was the only child of Shimon and Dziunia Licht, who knew Niemiec as the daughter of a woman who had worked in their household before the war. After they gave her their daughter, the Lichts used false papers to reach Warsaw. Teresa was received warmly by the Niemiec family, who, despite their impoverished circumstances and overcrowded home, cared for her with warmth and kindness, telling neighbors that she was a relative. A friend of Niemiec, who lived nearby, was at the same time hiding a seven-year-old cousin of Teresa's. The little boy [Olek Licht] carelessly revealed he was Jewish and the Germans took him away. Following the boy's arrest, the Germans discovered his parents' hiding place in Przemysl and murdered them all. Fearing that Teresa's identity would also be discovered, Maria Niemiec took her to Warsaw and, using connections her parents had, placed her in a convent, where she remained until the liberation.<sup>1861</sup> Niemiec remained in Warsaw throughout the entire period and without asking for or receiving anything in return served as a go-between for Teresa and her parents. Only after the war ended did Niemiec return home to her husband and children.<sup>1862</sup>

[12] Before the war, Witold Rothenburg-Rosciszewski [Rościszewski], an attorney from Warsaw, was known for his anti-Jewish views, but after the German occupation his attitude toward Jews underwent a radical change. He severed his ties with the antisemitic circles he had been involved with before the war, devoted himself to underground activity, and became an AK officer. Together with his wife, Anna, he helped Jewish refugees hide on the Aryan side of the city and provided them with forged documents. The Rothenburg-Rosciszewskis supported needy Jews materially, found them hiding places, and saved them from the hands of various extortionists. Among the Jews who were helped by the Rothenburg-Rosciszewskis were Waclaw [Wacław] Tajtbaum, an attorney, and Helena Kuligowska. Thanks to Witold's underground activity and his familiarity with entrances and exits to and from, the ghetto via the law court in Leszno Street, Irena Sendler, a *Zegota* [Żegota] activist, was able to smuggle out Jewish children to the Aryan side of the city. In her subsequent testimony, Sendler testified that Witold arranged for Jewish children to be sent to the Chotomow [Chotomów] convent near Warsaw [run by the Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived (of Stara Wieś)] as well as to acquaintances of his, and paid for their upkeep. In April 1943, the Germans arrested Rothenburg-Rosciszewski and he was executed for his underground activities.<sup>1863</sup>

<sup>1860</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 340.

<sup>1861</sup> Irena Licht (b. 1936 in Lwów) describes, in her memoir, her stay at a convent and orphanage on Belwederska Street, possibly run by the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary. The mother superior, at least, was aware of her Jewish origin. She remained there some two-and-a-half years until the Warsaw uprising in August 1944, when she was reunited with her parents. See Cahn-Tober, *Hide and Seek*, 57–85, 196–97. With her parents' consent, a priest baptized her in a Warsaw church so that she could make her First Holy Communion at the convent with the other girls. *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>1862</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 545–46.

<sup>1863</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 677–78.

[13] During the occupation, Władysław [Władysław] Sala ran an institution for teenagers that was sponsored by the social department of the Municipality of Warsaw. The institution had a farm, and before the large-scale *Aktion* against the Jews of Warsaw in the summer of 1942, Władysław Sala obtained a permit from the German authorities to employ some 20 Jewish laborers there. The laborers, listed by name, were brought from the ghetto each working day and Sala was in charge of bringing them back at the end of the day. As time passed, Sala, actively aided by his wife, Janina, transformed this procedure into a means of escape from the ghetto. On most days, more workers set out from the ghetto to the farm than were needed, and at the end of the day only the twenty who appeared on the list were sent back. The Salas helped the others obtain Aryan papers and in some cases found them hideouts on the Aryan side of the city. The Jews who were saved in this fashion included the famous pediatrician Zofia Rozenblum [Szymańska], Janina Kaniewska, and Anna Wyszyoska-Seidens [Wyszyńska-Seidens], whom the Salas concealed in their own apartment and, until they were moved to hiding places in convents, provided with clothing and Aryan papers.<sup>1864</sup>

[14] Before the occupation, Michał [Michał] and Jadwiga Skalski, who lived with their little daughter in an isolated house in Białystok [Białystok], were on good terms with their Jewish neighbors. Even after the closure of the ghetto, Skalski and his wife kept up contact with their Jewish acquaintances, whom they met at their places of work outside the ghetto, and helped them to the best of their ability. Skalski used his job as a clerk at the municipality in charge of distributing ration cards to help his Jewish friends. In early 1943, when a number of Jews turned to the Skalskis asking for shelter, the Skalskis prepared a well-hidden shelter for them under their house. Among those who hid in the shelter in the course of 1943 were Leon Grunberg [Grynberg] and his daughter, Halina [Hana] (who later moved to the nearby village [with the Leszczyński family]), Aleksander Brener and his daughter, Ida, Aniela [and Szlama] Kapinska [Kępiński], Jakub Weisfeld, Felicja Bagon, and Jakub and Fruma Rozen. The Skalskis helped support their charges, even selling their belongings to buy them food. They also helped other Jews who were hiding in the vicinity. The Skalskis, who were fearful of discovery, insisted on complete secrecy, refusing even to inform their relatives of what they were doing. When Bagon gave birth in hiding, Skalski, fearing that the baby's presence would endanger the refugees, took the baby to a nearby convent [an orphanage in Białystok run by nuns<sup>1865</sup>], claiming it was a foundling. The baby and the refugees under the Skalskis' care survived until the area was liberated. ... After the war, some of the survivors immigrated to Israel and Brazil while others stayed on in Poland.<sup>1866</sup>

[15] During the war, Genowefa Starczewska was living in Czestochowa [Częstochowa]. In 1943, Zygmund Berkowicz asked Genowefa to help save his four-year-old daughter, Celina. Frightened by the imminent liquidation of the so-called "small ghetto," Zygmund told Genowefa about his plans to escape. When he fled the ghetto, he placed his child in Genowefa's care. Genowefa's husband had been murdered earlier by the Nazis and she was a widow bringing up her ten- and 12-year-old daughters alone. Since she could not possibly support three children, Genowefa put them all into an orphanage in Czestochowa that was managed by nuns. She brought the children back into her home on weekends and on holidays; and her daughters, Wanda and Teresa, knew that Celina was Jewish but

<sup>1864</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 693–94.

<sup>1865</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 487.

<sup>1866</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 713.

nevertheless treated her like a blood sister. In early July 1944, Genowefa was compelled to go into hiding because her neighbors began to suspect that Celina was Jewish. For six months, until the liberation of Czestochowa in January 1945, Genowefa never spent more than one night in the same place. After the liberation, Zygmund's brother, Jack Berkowicz, and his wife, Sophie, who had spent the occupation interned in the Hasag camp in Czestochowa, found Genowefa (later Mrs. Korczak). Celina's parents, Guta and Zygmund und, had perished in 1943, and they wished to be the child's guardians. Initially, Celina did not want to part with Genowefa. "She loved her Polish protector and her daughters and did not want to leave them," wrote Jack and Sophie in their testimony to Yad Vashem. "In April 1945, we succeeded in taking her with us," We brought her up as our own daughter." Some time later, Jack, Sophie, and Celina emigrated to the United States, from where they maintained contact with Genowefa and her daughters.<sup>1867</sup>

[16] Waclaw [Waclaw] and Irena Szyszkowski lived in Warsaw during the war. They had three young children. Waclaw was a lawyer but hardly ever practiced law because he was active in the AK [Home Army]. In the summer of 1942, a prewar friend, Jozef [Józef] Zysman (also a lawyer, who was murdered a year later), approached Waclaw and asked for help in saving his son Piotr (born 1939). Soon afterwards, Jozef's sister-in-law fled the ghetto through the sewage system along with her daughter and Piotr. She met up with Irena in a prearranged spot and handed over Piotr. Because the Szyszkowskis had three children of their own, they were not able to keep Piotr for very long. Eventually they put him up in a monastery [an institution run by nuns near Warsaw<sup>1868</sup>] and later moved him to different hiding places. (After the war, Piotr's mother, Teodora Zysman, found him in a monastery.) ... Teodora stated in her testimony that the Szyszkowskis saved two other girls [Małgorzata and Irena], the daughters of a Warsaw lawyer named Roman Frydman Mirski [who were placed with the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary in Płudy, as described earlier].<sup>1869</sup>

[17] In the spring of 1942, Helena Rosenberg and her two-year-old daughter, Gita, had to leave the apartment on the Aryan side of Warsaw where they had taken shelter after escaping from the local ghetto. With the help of a Polish acquaintance, Rosenberg managed to find another apartment for herself, but the landlady adamantly refused to take in Gita, who looked Jewish. Nineteen-year-old Wanda Tazbir, a friend of the landlady, came to the rescue by asking her parents to take little Gita into their apartment. After they received a warning from a neighbor, Tazbir's parents had to look for another hiding place for Gita. Stanislaw [Stanisław] Tazbir, Wanda's father, an inspector of Polish orphanages in Warsaw, found a place for Gita in one of the orphanages without revealing Gita's true identity to the head of the orphanage. In due course, Gita was transferred to a children's institution in a convent far from Warsaw, where she remained until January 1945, when the area was liberated. After the war, Gita and her mother, who survived, emigrated to the United States, where, for many years, they kept up contact with Stanislaw Tazbir and his daughter.<sup>1870</sup>

[18] Marta and Feliks Widy-Wirski lived with their two children in Warsaw. At the end of 1941, Marta met a friend on the street who had told her that Janina Poswolska, a friend from the days of her pharmaceutical studies in Poznan [Poznań], was in the ghetto with

<sup>1867</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 748.

<sup>1868</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 555.

<sup>1869</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 808.

<sup>1870</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 814.

her husband, Henryk, and their son, Andrzej. Marta subsequently bribed an officer of the Blue Police with a large amount of money and he in turn brought Janina and the child back to her home. Janina and her son settled in with Marta and Feliks, Janina pretending to be their maid. ... In 1943, Janina's son was placed under the care of nuns outside Warsaw, since the landlady warned Marta that the other occupants of the building suspected her and her husband of hiding Jews. "For safety's sake, we all moved to Sulejówek [Sulejówec] and later, for similar reasons, to Podkowa Lesna [Leśna]," wrote Marta in her testimony. Shortly before the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, a man appeared at the Widy-Wirskis' home telling them that Henryk Poswolski was lying wounded in the cowshed. Marta and Feliks brought the wounded Henryk (who was wounded while escaping from Treblinka) to Podkowa, where they were able to get him medical attention. After the liberation, the Poswolski family emigrated to Brazil.<sup>1871</sup>

[19] Kazimiera Zулawska [Żулawska], a doctor of philosophy and the widow of the well-known Polish poet and author Jerzy Zулawski [Żулawski], lived prior to the war and during the German occupation with her son Wawrzyniec, in Warsaw. In their home on Marszałkowska [Marszałkowska] Street, they regularly hid eight to ten Jews, mainly cultural figures. Among those who found shelter in their apartment were Roza [Róża] Wittlin, Stefania Dabrowska [Dąbrowska, née Abzug], and Leonia Jablonkowska [Jablonkowska]. The outbreak of the war found Roza Wittlin in Lwow [Lwów]. In 1943, she left Lwow and traveled to Warsaw, where she did not know anyone. Furthermore, she could not speak any Polish since she had been brought up in Germany. After a few weeks of hiding in basements and abandoned stores, she met Kazimiera, who invited her to her apartment. Kazimiera did not know Roza but had heard about her difficult situation through mutual friends. Roza moved to Kazimiera's apartment in November 1943 and stayed there for three months without paying for her accommodation or upkeep. ... Stefania Dabrowska also arrived in Warsaw after leaving Lwow. In Warsaw, she met a schoolmate who directed her to Kazimiera. Kazimiera and her son, Wawrzyniec, helped not only Stefania but also her parents<sup>1872</sup> [Stanisław and Adela Abzug-Malewski] and her sister Margaret (Rita) Mayer [née Abzug, who was placed in convents<sup>1873</sup>].

[20] In December 1941, after one of the killing operations perpetrated against the Jews of Radom, Bracha Wakszlak (later, Bergman), 14, and her younger sister, Ester [later Shelvi], were rescued from the ghetto by their cousin, Teofila (Tośka) Wakszlak. She took them to Warsaw, where she was living under an assumed name with "Aryan" papers. For half a year she moved the two girls from one Polish family to another, supporting them financially but unable to find them a satisfactory haven. Finally, she placed the younger girl [Ester] in a convent [on the outskirts of Warsaw<sup>1874</sup>], while Bracha, the elder sister, aided by [Marszak] an acquaintance of her father, reached the Bart family. She did not know them, but they were willing to hide her in their home under an assumed name. The Bart household consisted of Jerzy and Zofia Bart, and their two children, aged five and six, and the grandparents. A patriotic Polish family, they had connections with the Polish underground

<sup>1871</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 863.

<sup>1872</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 946.

<sup>1873</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 210; Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 645.

<sup>1874</sup> Isakiewicz, *Harmonica*, 174, 176, 179; Isakiewicz, *Ustna harmonijka*, 159–60, 163; Testimony of Brakhah Bergman, SFV, Interview code 39033.

Home Army (AK). Jerzy, an electrical engineer by profession, worked for the Germans for his living, but he also worked with the underground, preserving the cultural treasures of the National Museum. The Barts made Bracha feel at home, like one of the family, and she lived with them in safety for a year, until Zofia and Jerzy were arrested by the Gestapo on April 7, 1944 [along with another Jewish family they were sheltering], and thrown into Pawiak, the central prison, located in the ghetto area. The underground was able to ransom Zofia, but Jerzy never returned. While both parents were incarcerated, Bracha looked after both the two children and the grandmother. Henryk, the grandfather, had been executed, probably due to his activities in the underground. Despite the suffering the family endured, Zofia agreed to go on sheltering Bracha. The most difficult trial came during and after the Warsaw Uprising in the summer and fall of 1944 when the Barts were forced to abandon their home and became fugitives, wandering from one village to another in search of a place to stay and means of subsistence. Yet even under those trying conditions they did not abandon Bracha but kept her with them and continued to treat her like a full-fledged member of the family. She stayed with them until liberation in January 1945.<sup>1875</sup>

[21] During the German occupation of Poland, Fryderyk and Maria Czerwień, and their two children, Ryszard and Stanisława, lived in Rawa Ruska (Lwów District). From 1941 until the summer of 1944, they hid 12 Jews in a shelter they built especially for this purpose under their home, and provided for their needs. The rescued Jews were: Herman and Róża Graf; Mosze and Helen Lewin and their four-year-old son, Dawid; and Abisz and Efraim Post—all families that had made their living as furriers—as well as the teachers, Abraham and Róża Klang; Łazarz and Helena Diller; and Mendel Hoch, a merchant. Years after the liberation, the survivors continued to correspond with the Czerwieńs, viewing them as members of the family: “I feel that I am writing to father and mother and to my brothers who understand me,” Abraham Klang wrote in 1952 from Melbourne. At a certain stage, the Czerwieńs arranged a place for Helen Lewin and her son in a Christian orphanage. Immediately after the liberation, the Czerwieńs left Rawa Ruska and settled in Wojcieszów (Lower Silesia).<sup>1876</sup>

The story of the Szostak family has only recently come to light:

[22] One day in August 1942, a woman appeared at the modest apartment of Ludwika and Zygmunt Szostak inquiring about a notice the couple had put in the paper regarding renting a room in their apartment. The Szostaks were an elderly couple that lived in the Żoliborz suburb of Warsaw and in order to ease their tough financial situation, decided to rent out the extra room in their house. It quickly became apparent that the woman who came to rent the room, Dora Agatstein, was Jewish. She and her 7-year-old daughter, Karolina, had escaped the Lvov [Lwów] ghetto just one month before the Great Deportation. Despite their initial concern over housing the mother and daughter, the Szostak couple welcomed them in their home and took care of them. Even as the rent money Dora paid to the couple began to run out, the good relationship between her and the Szostaks only grew stronger. Since the room where Dora and Karolina slept was not heated, the Szostak couple decided

<sup>1875</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 531–32.

<sup>1876</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 542–43. The Albertine Sisters had an orphanage in Rawa Ruska, as described later in the text. It is not clear whether Helen Lewin and her son were placed there.

to let them sleep in their bedroom which had a heater and together they passed the cold days of winter. After running out of money for food, Ludwika and Dora began to work from the apartment by wrapping homemade candies. Even little Karolina, who due to the situation was forbidden to leave the house and play with neighboring kids in the yard, helped out in this endeavor. Dora also began to give private lessons to some children in the neighborhood allowing her a little income. When the achievements by her students began to stick out in school, a nun who managed the institution came to visit Dora, offering her a teaching job. The visit by the nun and Dora's teaching position at the school helped to lower the suspicions and worries of the neighbors towards Dora and her young daughter. Karolina was enrolled in a kindergarden that was run under the patronage of the AK, the Polish resistance's Home Army in Nazi-occupied Poland, and was walked to and from school by Ludwika. With the breakout of the Polish Uprising in August 1944, the Żoliborz suburb was hit hard by the heavy fighting between the Soviets [sic, Poles] and Germans. Residents, including both the Szostaks and Agatsteins, were loaded on trains and taken to southern Poland where they lived as refugees. Zygmunt, Ludwika, Dora, and Karolina found themselves living with a poor farming family. The four joined in the hard agricultural work, including picking potatoes and Dora continued to earn a little by teaching lessons until the area was liberated by the Soviet army in April 1945.<sup>1877</sup>

**B**ronisława and Antoni Supłat took under their care a little Jewish girl with the assumed name of Basia, who had been abandoned in 1942 near an orphanage in Bronowice, a suburb of Kraków. The nuns took the child in. From the orphanage, she was taken by the Supłats, who treated her as their own daughter. They spread a false story that the child had been born to Antoni out of wedlock. Although the neighbours doubted this story, everyone kept the secret. The biological parents of Basia (Batia Rehes, later Batia Kfir) found her several years after the war and then left with her for Israel.<sup>1878</sup>

Basia Kfir was born circa 1939. At age 4 she was abandoned near a monastery kindergarden in Bronowicze [Bronowice], in the Kraków district. The nuns picked her up, but the arrival of a small child aroused the suspicion of the authorities.

Antoni Supłat, a Polish butcher, provided food to the kindergarden as a donation for the children. During one of his visits, he spotted Basia. He and his wife, Bronisława, had no children and decided to adopt Basia. The child was happy to believe that they were her real parents and that they had temporarily lost her during the war—the story they told her to spare her feelings.

In the neighborhood the rumor spread that Basia was Antoni's illegitimate child, which meant that her Jewish origins were not discovered. Basia, now Batya Kfir, wrote in her letter to Yad Vashem: "For two years I received from them warmth and kindness. They showered me with love and provided for all my needs."

<sup>1877</sup> "Polish Righteous Among the Nations Honored at Yad Vashem," May 13, 2013, YVA, Internet: <https://www.yadvashem.org/press-release/09-may-2013-14-46.html>.

<sup>1878</sup> "Righteous Honoured in Kraków," August 2, 2013, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/news/righteous-honoured-krakow-0>.

As Basia grew in this loving family, she sincerely believed herself to be their real daughter, a Catholic by birth. After the war, however, Basia's parents returned to find her, and the Suplats were forced to part with her. They later adopted another child, a Polish boy.

Basia's family went to live in Israel in 1949. They kept in touch initially, but later the connection waned.<sup>1879</sup>

Stays at convents were sometimes cut short as a result of unanticipated occurrences. After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto with her parents, Eugenia Szulc (later Rosen, b. 1936) was placed in a convent outside of Warsaw as Dzidzia Jankowska. Her stay there was interrupted soon after the Gestapo burst into the orphanage searching for Jewish children. Since they threatened to return, Eugenia had to leave the convent. She was taken in by a married couple, the Umerskis (Umirski), pretending to be their niece. After the war, she was reunited with her parents, Lucjan and Felicja Szulc (Schulz), who survived in hiding.

Eugenia Rosen was an only child born to a wealthy family in Warsaw. She was three years old in 1939 and her earliest memory was in the Warsaw Ghetto. She is scared to think and remember what happened to her. Her parents taught her Polish prayers and not to admit she was a Jew.

Along with her tall, blond Aryan looking mother, Mrs. Rosen left the Warsaw Ghetto with a group of people. She was frightened by the German soldier and his dog. They crossed to the Aryan side. Her mother taught Mrs. Rosen her that new name was now Giga Jankowska and to call her mother "Aunt Sofia" (widow of a high ranking German general).

Her mother took her to a convent with other little girls. One day while in the convent, she heard the Gestapo, clicking of heels and voices. Her fear was indescribable and she ran to hide in the toilet. The Gestapo found one Jewish girl and told the nun that they'd return again for all the other Jewish children.

The nun told her mother to take her daughter out of the convent because the Gestapo was returning. Her mother took her to see her father who was also in hiding. Her parents said, "when the war will end, meet at 59 Stolova [Stołowa] Street."

Eventually Mrs. Rosen's mother took her to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Umirski where she assumed the identity of their niece in Berlin. They had no children of their own and they were very nice to her. She was now close to eight years old.

As the war was ending the couple was returning to Germany. They couldn't locate Mrs. Rosen's mother and decided to leave her with their sister.<sup>1880</sup>

<sup>1879</sup> Suplat Family, RD.

<sup>1880</sup> Eugenia Rosen, Holocaust Memorial Center, Farmington Hills, Michigan, Internet: <https://www.holocaustcenter.org/visit/library-archive/oral-history-department/rosen-eugenia/>. See also Eugenia Schulz Rosen, "A Vignette," Tarjan, *Children Who Survived the Final Solution*, 219–21.

The Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth (Nazarene Sisters) (*Zgromadzenie Sióstr Najświętszej Rodziny z Nazaretu*, commonly known as *nazaretanki*) provided shelter and other forms of assistance to Jews in a number of convents throughout Poland: Częstochowa, Gulbiny (near Wilno), Komańcza (near Sanok), Kraków, Olsztyn (near Częstochowa), Nowogródek, and Warsaw. Nine Jewish children and youths were sheltered at the convent and high school on Czerniakowska Street in Warsaw. The high school, like all such institutions of learning, had been officially shut down.

Though they were explicitly authorized to operate a sewing school, the nuns taught the academic curriculum clandestinely. The Jewish charges included Ewa Herman (later Grzybowska, b. 1925), passing as Ewa Czermak, and Irma Windisch, passing as Irena Wiśniewska.<sup>1881</sup> Halina Szumacher (later Steinberg, b. 1931) arrived at the convent school, having moved about from one family to another after leaving the Warsaw ghetto. At one point, she had stayed briefly at a shelter near the ghetto, where she was comforted by a priest.<sup>1882</sup>

Danuta Perelman (later Wocial, b. 1934), the daughter of a Jewish father and Polish Catholic mother, was taken under the wing of Sister Emanuela Rypsztajn, a nun of Jewish origin. Danuta's mother visited her from time to time, but her father, who had a marked Semitic appearance, had to go into hiding. Danuta was reunited with her parents after the war.<sup>1883</sup> Another charge was brought to the convent by Teresa Preker (Prekerowa), who was recognized by Yad Vashem for her rescue efforts.

Alina Wolman knew Teresa Dobrska, later Prekerowa, a young woman who lived with her parents in Warsaw. The two girls became very close friends and Dobrska helped Wolman's family as best she could. After the Wolman family was imprisoned in the Warsaw ghetto, Dobrska would smuggle food into the ghetto for them. At a fairly early stage, Dobrska convinced Alina to escape to the Aryan side of the city and arranged a job and a place to live for her. At the beginning of the large-scale deportation from the ghetto, Dobrska and other friends smuggled Alina's brother and parents out of the ghetto and until the war ended kept in touch with Alina and came to her assistance when she needed help. In September 1941, Dobrska found a little abandoned Jewish child crying on her doorstep. She took the child in and cared for her in her parents' home, and after dressing her and teaching her how to act like a Polish child brought her to a convent [of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth on Czerniakowska Street in Warsaw, where the girl survived the

<sup>1881</sup> Testimony of Ewa Grybowska, SFV, Interview code 26199.

<sup>1882</sup> Testimony of Halina Steinberg, SFV, Interview code 55562. Halina Steinberg was wounded when the convent came under fire during the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. Afterwards, she was deported to Germany.

<sup>1883</sup> Testimony of Danusia Wocial, SFV, Interview code 22245. When the convent was displaced because of the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944, Danuta Wocial joined a group of children under the care of a priest near Karowa Street in Warsaw.

occupation<sup>1884</sup>]. During the war, Dobrska married Mieczyslaw [Mieczysław] Preker and moved to the Skolimow [Skolimów] estate near Warsaw, where she hid a Jewish man named Jan Zielinski [Zieliński] from January until August 1944. Everything Prekerowa did to save Jews was motivated purely by altruism, for which she neither asked for nor received anything in return.<sup>1885</sup>

Several Jewish children were taken in by Sister Alojza Konieczna, the superior of the convent of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth in Częstochowa.<sup>1886</sup> One of them was Aliza Asch (Elżbieta Asz), the granddaughter of Nachum Asch (Asz), the former chief rabbi of Częstochowa.

In 1942, Dr. Tadeusz Ferens, with his wife's [Wanda's] consent, helped his friend Ruth (Justa) Asz and her baby daughter escape from the Częstochowa [Częstochowa] ghetto. Dr. Ferens exploited his position as a doctor in the municipal hospital to place Asz's daughter in an orphanage [run by the Sisters of the Family of Nazareth], where the baby was baptized and christened Elzbieta [Elżbieta] (later Elizabeth). In order to save the mother, Dr. Ferens admitted her to the hospital where he worked. In due course he obtained forged documents for her and found her work in Austria. Asz later moved from Austria to Switzerland and her daughter, who was adopted by a Polish couple [the Urbańczyks], was returned to her after the war.<sup>1887</sup>

In the autumn of 1942, Ruth (Justa) and Shimon Asz tried to escape from the Częstochowa [Częstochowa] ghetto with their two-year-old daughter, Elzbieta [Elżbieta] (Elizabeth). After Shimon was shot and killed, his wife and daughter made their way to Dr. Tadeusz Ferens, a Polish doctor. Ferens provided the mother with Aryan papers, which enabled her to volunteer for work in Austria, and arranged for little Elizabeth to stay in a Catholic orphanage run by nuns [Sisters of the Family of Nazareth] in Częstochowa. Shortly thereafter, Marian and Wiktoria Urbanczyk [Urbańczyk] adopted Elizabeth, without knowing she was Jewish. Her true identity came to light, however, when after being washed, her blonde hair suddenly turned black. Although shocked by the discovery, the Urbanczyks, overcome by compassion, decided to keep Elizabeth and passed her off as a Polish orphan who had been driven out of the Zamosc [Zamość] area in the Lublin district. Even after they had to pay hush money to suspicious neighbors who threatened to report them to the Gestapo, the Urbanczyks did not change their minds. Elizabeth stayed on with the Urbanczyks after the war, since Elizabeth's mother, who survived, was unable to trace her

<sup>1884</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 431.

<sup>1885</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 639. Irma Windisch was three or four years old and spoke only Yiddish. Teresa Prekerowa taught her how to make the sign of the cross and the first words of the prayer "Our Father," as well as some everyday Polish words. The fact that this was a Jewish child would have been readily apparent to the nuns who accepted her. See Marta Kalabinska, "Teresa Prekerowa: Going Against the Grain," *Eastern European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, vol. 34, no. 2 (May 2020): 400–22, at pp. 410–11. According to another source, at the time of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, Irma and her nine-year-old cousin were transferred to the order's convent in Kielce. See Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 692.

<sup>1886</sup> Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach*, 177–79.

<sup>1887</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 213.

daughter. In 1947, Dr. Ferens succeeded in tracing her and, with a heavy heart, Marian and Wiktoria handed Elizabeth over to her mother, who emigrated with her to Venezuela.<sup>1888</sup>

The blackmailers who extorted money from the Urbańczyks were in fact bandits who terrorized others who were hiding Jews as well. Marian Urbańczyk reported them to his superiors in the Home Army, and they were shot dead not far from the Urbańczyks home.<sup>1889</sup> Their young charge, Aliza (Elżbieta), was just two when she was smuggled out of the ghetto in a sack. Her story—Elizabeth Zielinski de Mundlak, “Black Roots in the Hair of a Blond Cherub”—is recorded in more detail in her own words.

My maiden name that I have used for as long as I can remember is Elzbieta Zielinska [Elżbieta Zielińska]. But when I was born my name was Aliza Ash [Asch]. All my life I thought that my mother’s was Justa, but at the time of her birth she was named Ruth. What has not changed since the day I was born? Only the date and place of my birth: Cze-stochowa [Częstochowa], the town where my ancestors had lived. But this is a lot to start with! Recently, it allowed me to find documents about my true identity. The procedure was long.—How can you prove that a certain can you prove that a certain sixty-year old woman exists, if there is no birth certificate in her name, Elzbieta Zielinska? The nuns, who sheltered me after I was taken in a garbage sack from the Ghetto in Cze-stochowa, gave me my first name. That was before almost the entire Jewish population of that ghetto was taken to Treblinka, the infamous death camp.

Tadeusz Ferens was a gentile doctor who arranged my escape from certain death. My mother was also able [to] escape. With her newly acquired identity as Jozefa Zielinska [Józefa Zielińska], she was able to reach Austria, where she was a slave labourer, a cleaning woman at the Hotel Post in Bludenz, in Vorarlberg province. All the rest of my immediate family, including my father, Shimon Asz, perished in the Holocaust.

The doctor brought me to the orphanage of the Sisters of Nazareth in Cze-stochowa, as a child whom he found at the train station. There were many, many displaced and orphaned gentile children as a result of the steady bombing of certain parts of Poland. It was easy for the good doctor to convince the nuns that I was one of those children. No one wanted to hear the truth! Poland was the only country during the war, where the penalty for helping Jews was nothing less than death.

It was my good fortune that a Polish family came to the orphanage to adopt a little girl. They already had a 10-year old son, but his mother, Victoria [Wiktoria], could not have any more children. She had lost her first child as an infant, but her heart was full of love that she wanted to give to a little orphan girl. I was lucky: my new parents were very loving. My big brother used to carry me up the stairs on his shoulders after I had been running around the yard with my little friends. We were a weird couple. He was tall, strong and blond, and I was a tiny little girl with dark curls ...

<sup>1888</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 837.

<sup>1889</sup> Magdalena Rigamonti, “Moja wojenna siostra: Rozmowa z Andrzejem Urbańczykiem,” *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, March 9–11, 2018.

Dark hair... I had curly blond hair when my adopted parents took me from the orphanage. With my blue eyes I must have looked like a cherub. They fell in love with that little beauty. However, a big surprise was awaiting them after a few days.

One day, my new mother was washing my hair when she discovered some "dirt" on my skull that would not go away. She was surprised, but ignored it for the moment. A couple of days later the answer became obvious. Black hair began to grow fast on my little head. It was a big shock when my parents understood that they were sheltering a Jewish child. They became terribly scared. Their only child, their precious son was as much in danger as themselves in case the Germans would find out about me.

Victoria and Marian [Urbańczyk] summoned their son, Andrew [Andrzej], for a family meeting. Jointly they decided that no matter what, they would not return me to the orphanage. The years ahead were not easy for the family. ...

We lived through many instances of high drama during those long years of German occupation in Czestochowa.<sup>1890</sup>

**T**ragedy struck the convent of the Sisters of Holy Family of Nazareth in Olsztyn, near Czestochowa. The parents of Janeczka Kapral, a young Jewish girl who was sheltered there, were caught by the Germans and revealed the whereabouts of their daughter and the Polish woman, a school teacher by the name of Kita, who had brought her to the convent. The young girl was seized by the Gestapo and the teacher was also arrested and killed. The nuns dispersed to avoid arrest.<sup>1891</sup>

**T**he Sisters of Holy Family of Nazareth ran a sanatorium in Komańcza, near Sanok, where they sheltered several Jews, including some children.<sup>1892</sup> A Jewish girl by the name of Wanda was transferred there from the convent in Czestochowa for safety reasons.<sup>1893</sup> Another Jewish girl, Chana Grabina, was transferred out for safety reasons.

In the summer of 1942, Zofia Landowska obtained a forged pass enabling her to enter the Warsaw ghetto and smuggle six-year-old Chana Grabina out to the Aryan side of the city. For some weeks, Zofia hid the little girl in the apartment she shared with her husband, Jozef [Józef]. The Landowskis, who were underground activists, obtained Aryan papers for Chana and looked after her. When Chana's presence was discovered by neighbors, the Landowskis quickly transferred her to a home for abandoned children run by Nazarene nuns (Siostry Nazaretanki) in Komancza [Komańcza] in the county of Sanok (Rzeszów) [Rzeszów] district. Since the home was not too safe either [because of Ukrainian partisan attacks], Landowski, at the nuns' advice, took Chana to stay with his sister, Agnieszka

<sup>1890</sup> Tarjan, *Children Who Survived the Final Solution*, 205–6.

<sup>1891</sup> Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach*, 84, 178–79.

<sup>1892</sup> Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, 128; Zych, *Diecezja przemyska obrzadku tacińskiego w warunkach okupacji niemieckiej i sowieckiej 1939–1944/1945*, 472.

<sup>1893</sup> Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach*, 177–78, 245.

Gorecka [Górecka], who lived with her husband, Piotr, and their daughter, Jadwiga, in the town of Chojnice in Pomerania. The Goreckis gave Chana a warm reception and passed her off as a relative. ... Chana Grabina (alias Anna Mackowicz) stayed with the Goreckis until 1951 and went on to become a doctor of Polish philology in Poland.<sup>1894</sup>

Mordechai (Mietek) Koplewicz (later Michel Capelle), stayed at the sanatorium for about two years, passing as Jan Wojnar. He claims that the nuns were not aware of his Jewish origin.<sup>1895</sup>

The Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Mary sheltered a number of Jewish children as well as some adults in their convents in Zamość and in nearby Łabunie. The latter convent was later evacuated to the Franciscan monastery in Radecznicza. The Sisters also provided food to Jews.<sup>1896</sup> The Rotter family was sheltered by the nuns in Zamość; Lea Reisner (later Bialowitz), an escapee from the Sobibór extermination camp, was sheltered in Radecznicza.<sup>1897</sup> Zygmunt Friedrych's daughter, Elsa, who used the name Elżunia, was sheltered at the orphanage in Zamość,<sup>1898</sup> as were Judyta Joseph (later Judith Kachel, b. 1934), under the name of Franciszka Koniak,<sup>1899</sup> and Margalit Blass (later Tamara or Tami Lavee, b. 1939). Margalit recalled the nuns at the convent as being very good to her.<sup>1900</sup> After the war, she was adopted by a Polish family, from which she was taken by the Jewish Coordination Committee.

Blas [Chaja or Hanka Blass, then going by the name of Wanda Czarniecka<sup>1901</sup>], a Jewish woman, managed to escape from the Zamosc [Zamość] ghetto in the Lublin district, carrying her two-year-old daughter in her arms. She came to the home of a Polish acquaintance, Maria Pawelec, who agreed to take the Jewish child [who passed as her niece]. After someone informed the authorities, German policemen visited Pawelec's home and, fearing the child's

<sup>1894</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 248.

<sup>1895</sup> Testimony of Michel Koplewicz, SFV, Interview code 11791.

<sup>1896</sup> Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, 127; Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach*, 175–77, 244. The rescue activities are also described in Kopciowski, *Zagłada Żydów w Zamościu*, 193–94.

<sup>1897</sup> Miriam Novitch, ed., *Sobibor: Martyrdom and Revolt: Documents and Testimonies* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1980), 102. Symcha Bialowitz, another escapee from Sobibór, may also have been sheltered in Radecznicza with Lea Reisner (whom he later married). See Kopciowski, *Zagłada Żydów w Zamościu*, 194.

<sup>1898</sup> Kopciowski, *Zagłada Żydów w Zamościu*, 194.

<sup>1899</sup> School certificates and nun's letter pertaining to Judyta Joseph, YVA, file O.6/1160 (Item 9301720).

<sup>1900</sup> Oral history interview with Tami Lavee, USHMM, Accession no. 2007.187.35, RG-50.582.0035.

<sup>1901</sup> "A note written by a Christian woman (Maria Dawelec [sic]) who saved Tammy Lavee by placing her, at age two and a half, along with this note and a cross, in the backyard of a monastery," Photograph no. 04971, USHMM, Internet: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa31229>.

identity might be discovered, she placed her in a basket, tied a small bag with a cross on it around her neck, and added a note bearing the name Wanda and stating that she had been baptized. Pawelec left the basket at the gate of the local convent, where there was also a home for orphans and foundlings. The nuns took in the baby. The nun, Zofia-Bogumiła [Bogumiła] Makowska, who knew the child was Jewish, never revealed her true identity to anyone, and looked after her until the end of the war. When the staff of the Coordination Committee learned the whereabouts of the child, they moved her to a Jewish institution and she later immigrated to Israel.<sup>1902</sup>

Sister Bogumiła (Zofia Makowska), the director of the orphanage in Łabunie, was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile in 1993.<sup>1903</sup> She provided the following testimony:

During the war there was a swarm of children at our home. Anyone—policemen, neighbors—who met a child on the street or on the road brought the child to us. We had a house on Zdanowski [Żdanowska] St. in Zamosc [Zamość]. There came a time when even our hallways were overflowing with children. We had a rather large chapel in the old building we used, so finally we converted it to sleeping quarters for the children. We made the chapel so small that we had to hear Mass in the hallway. All this was not enough, and finally we occupied a school on Lukasinski [Łukasieńskiego] St. Not being enough to house all the children even there, we began to give them, if possible, to Polish families.

I worked at this school on Lukasinski St. Those were very hard times. I was in charge of the infants and the infirmary. There were three groups of children. I worked day and night. No one was paid. The women who peeled the potatoes got a bowl of soup. We did not get any subsidies for the children.

We collected contributions. Our entire treasure was the children.

Our mother superior was an Irish woman, Katherine Crowley. She trembled in fear for the children. We accepted everyone. We never thought about whether a child was German or Jewish or anything else. Our only consideration was that it was a child and we took in children.<sup>1904</sup>

The homes in Zamość, Łabunie and Radecznica were all overcrowded with children displaced during the mass deportation of Poles from the Zamość area. The biggest challenge for the nuns was securing food for their charges. The nuns would go into the villages begging for food from farmers, who were themselves destitute. Since the convents' horses had been seized by the Germans, the nuns used dogs to pull the carts carrying the food they had collected.<sup>1905</sup>

<sup>1902</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 480.

<sup>1903</sup> A fuller version of Sister Zofia Makowska's testimony can be found in Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach*, 175–77.

<sup>1904</sup> Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, 161.

<sup>1905</sup> Czesław Galek, "Klasztor był im ocaleniem," *Niedziela [Zamość-Lubaczów]*, no. 19–20 (2001).

The Felician Sisters sheltered some 40 Jewish children in their convent and orphanage in Lwów. Among them were Rebecca (Marysia) Litowicz from Sandomierz and Fela or Felka Meisel (later Felicja Mikołajczyk) from Lwów, who were placed there by the Lwów branch of the Council of Aid for Jews (Żegota). Fela, who was sheltered in eighteen different places during the German occupation (later, with the Magdalene Sisters in Lwów, as recounted earlier), was reunited with her parents, Dr. Henryk and Paula Meisel, after the war.<sup>1906</sup> The dramatic story of these rescues—in the words of two of their benefactors, the sisters Barbara and Halina Szymańska, and Rebecca Litowicz’s mother, who is reluctant to express gratitude—is related below.

Barbara Szymańska Makuch: Our apartment in Tarnobrzeg was very small—only one room and a kitchen. Since this was my first teaching job, the pay was quite low, and from that my mother [Janina Szymańska] and I had to squeeze the rent money. But we managed. It was enough.

It was late in the afternoon, one day in 1942, when a woman named Rachel Litowicz and her child [Rebecca] came to our door, saying she came because somebody had told her I was a good person. I had never seen her before. She had nowhere else to go—she was desperate. She wanted me to take her child. I knew that in Sandomierz that day the Germans were “cleaning” the town. A very bad raid had been going on all day. I had seen them shoot Jews right in the streets.

We all felt very scared. By law, the penalty was death if you offered so much as one glass of water to a Jewish person. The Germans killed us exactly the same as they killed the Jews. My mother and I knew that, but how could we refuse this woman’s plea? We didn’t even talk it over, we just invited her inside.

We talked with her for a few hours, and then she left the child with us and returned to her husband in Sandomierz, where he was working in a camp the Germans had set up for people who could still do useful work. I didn’t set eyes on Rachel again until after the war. I learned that she went to Auschwitz, but I knew she was very strong. Twice she escaped from the gas chambers.

So seven-year-old Rebecca stayed with us: we called her Marysia. I slept in the kitchen, and my mother slept with her in the other room. In the beginning everything was okay because she was blond, with a pale complexion and freckles, and slightly curly hair, which I would straighten by making her little braids. We told people she was my niece. At home her family spoke Yiddish, although fortunately Marysia had linguistic talent and could speak Polish quite well. But like all children in this situation, she was shy and frightened. Her mother had said to her, “I’m leaving you now. After today, Basha [Basia, a diminutive for Barbara] will be your mother.” How can a little child understand this? She grew close to my mother because my mother was staying at home while I was away every day at work. Right from the beginning my mother became her “aunt.” ...

The news that we were helping a Jew traveled fast among the many people needing help. ... It wasn’t long before the neighbors started to talk. Marysia came to us at the end

<sup>1906</sup> Testimony of Felicja Mikołajczyk, SFV, Interview code 45624.

of July 1942, and Olga [Dr. Olga Lilien from Lwów] and Stefan [a Jewish boy] soon after. At first everything was okay. But when Stefan or Olga needed something, they would come to our house, and people began to notice.

Marysia was my “niece,” but I thought to myself, how will I explain what kind of a niece she is when the Germans start searching for Jews in hiding? What would I do? They would ask, who is she? Why is she staying with you? Where are her other relatives? Where is she from? In fact, after she had been with us for a few months the neighbors were already asking each other these questions. I became frightened about what might happen to us if we remained in Tarnobrzeg.

My mother and I decided it would be best for me to take Marysia to a bigger city where nobody would know us. I would give up my job and we would go to Lvov [Lwów] to live with my sister Halina. My mother, who was not so adventurous, would go back to Sandomierz to live with my youngest sister and my aunt. So, late in September Marysia and I left. ...

Our journey was extremely dangerous. The train was in poor condition, short of coal, and it was always stopping, making long delays for supplies or because of damaged bridges. Lvov is not so far from Tarnobrzeg; normally the train took only eight hours, but this time it was two days. All through the trip I was very, very frightened, even though I thought I was probably not the only one with a Jewish child. I prayed. What else could I do? In the night Germans marched through the train with their dogs, looking at the children and the other people. Once, while we waited for another train to pass, I saw them take people—families with children—off the train, taking them behind a building, and then I heard shots. It was very frightening. At any moment it could happen to me, or Marysia—at any moment. ...

We arrived in Lvov and made our way to my sister’s apartment only to discover that this too was a dangerous place. Unknown to me, Halina [Szymańska] and my future brother-in-law, Slawek [Slawek, i.e., Sławomir Ogrodziński], belonged to an underground resistance group. It was a committee that organized the Lvov branch of Zegota [Żegota], a Warsaw group that was bringing money to Polish Jews in hiding. I soon joined them, so from that point on I was helping not just one or two, but a great many others.

This was not a good place for Marysia, so a few days later we found a safer place for her nearby in the Felician convent, where there were already thirty-five Jewish children in hiding. The Germans allowed convents to look after orphans—not Jews, but orphans. The nuns took in every orphan that needed help, which happened, of course, to be mostly Jewish children, and so Marysia survived the war in their care. When the war ended she found her mother, who survived Auschwitz. Her father died in Bergen-Belsen.

I became a Zegota courier, traveling often to Warsaw to bring back money from the Polish government-in-exile in London. The Warsaw group had an underground press for printing counterfeit documents and false identity papers for Jews, and I brought these back to Lvov, too. Another job we had was contact with Janowicka [Janowska], the big work camp for Jews in Lvov. On one visit we would deliver false papers to certain people, and then on the next, help them prepare to escape from the camp. If we learned that someone needed special medicine, we delivered it right to that person, not to the Germans. Sometimes we delivered money either to someone in the camp or perhaps to someone in hiding. Many people were hiding and they had to have money to give the person buying food for them. I did all these things. ...

Every few days I went to visit Marysia, but one day I did not arrive. I had been making frequent trips to Warsaw for Zegota, because I knew the city so well. This time on the return trip, approximately half way back to Lvov, Germans came into the compartment and made a search, looking at baggage, papers, everything. They found all the Zegota papers in my bag on the overhead rack. There was no way to hide them. Not knowing whose bag it was, they arrested all twelve people in the compartment, and took us to the Lublin jail. [Barbara Szymańska was eventually sent to the concentration camp in Ravensbrück. She survived two years of imprisonment and torture without betraying anyone.]

Halina Szymańska Ogrodzińska: During the months I was working [as a technician] in Dr. [Henryk] Meisel's laboratory [in Lwów] I was going very often to their home to give Polish literature lessons to their daughter, Felka. Each time, Dr. Meisel's mother, the old lady, would make scrambled eggs or an omelet, always urging me to "eat, eat, eat," which I did because I was still a teenager and always hungry. At this time Dr. Meisel was beginning to realize that the situation for the Jews had become quite intolerable, and he had to do something about his large family. He saw it would be impossible to save everyone. With the help of some friends he arranged to send Mrs. Meisel's sister, Nina, to Warsaw, and she survived. Felka went to the orphanage run by the nuns of the Felician convent. Then Dr. Meisel had a long discussion with the old lady. They decided that because she was so old, the best solution would be for her to take poison. Being a doctor he could give her something good that would cause no pain. They never spoke about this with the rest of the family, and one day she was dead—like that. I was still very young, but Dr. Meisel liked to talk to me, and he badly needed to speak with someone. He told me he had a very heavy heart, but I already knew that.

One day the authorities asked Dr. Ayre to eliminate all the Jews working for him, no exceptions. Ayre explained to them that the work of these people was important for the German army, but it was of no use; Dr. Meisel and his wife had to go to Auschwitz. The Germans had some sort of laboratory arrangement in the concentration camp, a little bit similar to the Weigl Institute, with worse eating and living conditions certainly, but the Meisels could still work on their research there. In general, I think that family came through the war rather well. Today Felka is a doctor and her Polish husband is a doctor too. ...

Basha was in Tarnobrzeg with Mama where she didn't have the opportunity to work for the underground. She was very happy there. In Lvov, in this Poland of terrorists, it was an altogether different world; the atmosphere was very unpleasant. When the situation in Lvov became very difficult we told Olga [Dr. Olga Lilien] to go to Basha and Mama in Tarnobrzeg. Not long after, Basha came to Lvov with the little girl, Marysia.

When she arrived, Basha had never heard of Zegota, but we needed people, and Slawek immediately took her in. She wasn't especially political; she joined us for private reasons, for family reasons. Certainly I was more political than she was.

Slawek arranged for Marysia to go to the orphanage run by the Felician convent, where she would be safer, the same place where Dr. Meisel's daughter Felka was staying.

I visited Marysia in the convent several times. I couldn't tell her anything about her mother or father. She would ask me for news of Basha. She was a sad girl, never smiling, but she liked it very much when I came to visit. I don't have an especially clear memory of her now because I visited so many friends in the same situation at that time. There were a great many small things that needed to be done for these people and sometimes it was

very difficult. Those in the convent were in a good situation and didn't need our help, so we only saw her occasionally, but we knew her life was safe.

Rachel Litowicz: When I returned [after the liberation], the Szymanskas told me that [my daughter] Rebecca [now Marysia] was in a convent in Lvov [Lwów]. This was not so easy because Lvov was now part of Russia, but fortunately I found out that they had moved the convent back to Poland. When I went to get her she was wearing a cross, but she understood, poor girl. Rebecca said she used to get down from her bed to pray she would be with mama and father, that we would be alive. The priests and nuns *were not so bad* since they knowingly took in Jewish children. They were kind to me—well, most of them—and they treated my daughter very well. She studied, and was very good in school, very intelligent. They loved her.<sup>1907</sup>

Barbara Szymańska (later Makuch) also took Malka, the 10-year-old daughter of Sara Glass (later Pasht), a fugitive from the Sandomierz ghetto in October 1942, to the Felician Sisters' convent in Lwów.

In October, 1942, after the Germans had begun to liquidate the Sandomierz ghetto in the Kielce district, Sara Glass (later Pasht) succeeded in transferring her ten-year-old daughter, Malka, to Janina Szymanska [Szymańska] for safekeeping. Janina, a former acquaintance, lived with her daughter, Barbara, in the village of Mokrzyzow [Mokrzyzów] in Tarnobrzeg county, Rzeszów district. Szymanska and her daughter received the young fugitive warmly, representing her to those who inquired about her as a relative and caring for her with love and genuine devotion. Despite the fact that Malka did not look Jewish, rumors began circulating in the village that Szymanska and her daughter were hiding a Jew in their home. Because of threats and their fear for her fate, Barbara took Malka to a convent in Lwov [Lwów], where she remained until the liberation of the city by the Red Army in July 1944. ... Sara Glass also survived the camps and after the liberation found her daughter Malka and they both emigrated to Canada.<sup>1908</sup>

The case of Dr. Olga Lilien, mentioned by the Szymański sisters, raises the controversial matter of the reaction of “neighbours” to Jews hiding in their midst. Originally from Lwów, Dr. Lilien had a very marked Jewish appearance. She lived in Mokrzyzów, near Tarnobrzeg, openly, in the home of Dr. Marian Połowicz.<sup>1909</sup> When the Germans came to the village looking for a fugitive, they summoned the villagers to a meeting to question them, thereby testing their solidarity under duress. Dr. Lilien recalled the incident:

<sup>1907</sup> Ellen Land-Weber, *To Save a Life: Stories of Holocaust Rescue* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 197–252. See also the testimonies of Barabara Makuch, SFV, Interview codes 32881 and 53620; Testimony of Halina Ogrodzinska, SFV, Interview code 32882.

<sup>1908</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 802–803.

<sup>1909</sup> Land-Weber, *To Save a Life*, 204–6, 244; Marian Połowicz, RD.

Everyone was telling the German they didn't know where the man was, when suddenly he looked at me and said, "Oh, but this is a Jewess." The head of the village said, "Oh, no, she cooks at the school. She is a very good cook." Nobody said, "Oh, well, she is Jewish. Take her." He let me go.

The population of the village was about two thousand. They all knew there was something "wrong" with me. Any one of them could have sold me to the Germans for two hundred deutsche marks, but out of two thousand people nobody did it. Everybody in the village protected me. I had very good relations with them.<sup>1910</sup>

Dr. Lilien settled in Tarnobrzeg after the war where she continued to work as a pediatrician caring for the children of the villagers who had sheltered her. She died there in August 1996, at the age of 92. Many other examples of communal solidarity—which undermine the notion that all or most of the neighbours of a rescuer posed a real threat—are found in the penultimate appendix.

The Felician Sisters rescued Jews in a number of other localities as well. Their convents and institutions in Kraków sheltered both Jewish children and adults. Maria Kiepura (née Neuman), the mother of the famous tenor, Jan Kiepura, who had converted to Catholicism when she married, was housed in the Felician Sisters' convent on Smoleńsk Street, in Kraków. After a three years' stay at the convent, she went to live with her husband's cousin, Helena Kiepura-Kuc, in Końskie, where she died on November 28, 1943. The convent's chaplain, Rev. Władysław Bajer, was summoned three times by the Gestapo in connection with Jewish women suspected of hiding there.<sup>1911</sup>

Barbara Metzendorf (b. 1936) was sheltered in a nursery school in Kraków run by the Felician Sisters until it was shut down. She then stayed in a shelter run by the Dominican Sisters outside of Kraków. Later she was cared for by a family friend. Her older sister (by three years) was rescued by a Polish aristocratic woman. The two girls were reunited with their father after the war.<sup>1912</sup>

Lidka Taubenfeld (also known as Ilana Feldblum) and her cousin Lena Gross (Kaniewska) were taken in by the Felician Sisters at their hospice (Dom Opieki) on Kopernik Street, in Kraków, under assumed identities,<sup>1913</sup> as was the daughter of Pinkas Goldfluss, a pharmacist from Dębica.<sup>1914</sup>

<sup>1910</sup> Land-Weber, *To Save a Life*, 246.

<sup>1911</sup> Testimony of Rev. Władysław Bajer in Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 341.

<sup>1912</sup> Testimony of Barbara Metzendorf, February 6, 1949, JHI, record group 301, no. 4268.

<sup>1913</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 350; Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 1, 190. Lena Gross Kaniewska states that she stayed in three different convents.

<sup>1914</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 641.

During the occupation, Lidka Taubenfeld (born 1932) [later Ilana Feldblum] moved with her family from the town of Radom to Przemysl [Przemyśl], where her father passed away. Although Taubenfeld and her cousin, Lena Gross [later Kaniewska], had been provided with Aryan papers by their parents after Lena's parents perished, Lidka's mother realized the importance of finding them a safe shelter. In a chance encounter with Maria Klepacka, the latter agreed to hide the two girls in her apartment and teach them the basic tenets of Catholicism to prepare them for admission to a convent orphanage, where they would be safe. Klepacka took the two girls into her one-room apartment in Cracow [Kraków], where they were soon joined by other refugees. Klepacka often put up Jews on a temporary basis until they found more permanent accommodation on the Aryan side of the city. Half a year later, Taubenfeld and Gross were transferred to a convent belonging to the Felicjanki [Felician] Sisters under assumed identities. In late 1942, after Taubenfeld's mother perished, a relative undertook to pay the convent fees. After he too perished, the children were returned by the nuns to Klepacka, who continued to look after them like her own daughters. In due course, after Zegota [Żegota], at Klepacka's request, agreed to pay the convent fees, Taubenfeld and Gross were sent back to the convent, where they stayed until January 1945, when the area was liberated.<sup>1915</sup>

After being expelled from their home on Kopernik Street in Kraków, the Felician Sisters were taken in by the Benedictine Sisters in Staniątki and ran their boarding school there. Three Felician sisters were engaged in this operation: Sister Filipa (Irena) Świąch, the superior, Sister Klementyna, and Sister Marcelina. Six out of the eighteen girls in residence were Jewish, among them Irena Zalewska, Marta Wiśniewska, Janina Baran, Hania Żorska,<sup>1916</sup> and Janina Ecker.

Tadeusz Latawiec and his wife, Jozefa [Józefa], lived in a residential building in Cracow that belonged to the Eckers. In 1940, the Eckers—husband, wife, and five-year-old daughter, Janina—were expelled from Cracow to the ghetto in Wieliczka, where they remained until the ghetto was liquidated in August 1942. During the evacuation Aktion, Tadeusz Latawiec entered the ghetto and, risking his life, removed little Janina (with her parents' full consent) and brought her to his apartment. From then on, Latawiec, a postal clerk, and his wife, Jozefa, protected the Jewish girl, cared for her lovingly and devotedly as they would their own daughter, and met all her needs out of humanitarian principles and for no material reward. Mr. Ecker perished; his wife was sent to the concentration camp in Plaszow [Płaszów]. Latawiec made contact with her and occasionally brought greetings from her daughter until she was transferred to a different camp, never to return. In the spring of 1943, when the Latawieces' neighbors identified Janina as the Eckers' daughter her protectors moved her to an orphanage at a convent in Staniątki [Staniątki] (near Cracow), for which they made [modest] monthly payment punctiliously [for the child's upkeep]. After the liberation, the Latawieces took Janina into their home and cared for her until 1949, when Jewish institutions arranged her resettlement in Israel.<sup>1917</sup>

<sup>1915</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 350.

<sup>1916</sup> Krystyna Samsonowska, "Pomoc dla Żydów krakowskich w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej," in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 848; Klimek, *Kościół krakowski 1939–1945*, 20.

<sup>1917</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 445

In her testimony, Janina (Nina) Ecker clarifies that both her parents survived the war, and she describes the circumstances in which she found herself in the care of the Felician Sisters in Staniątki.

My adoptive mother [Józefa Latawiec], a practicing Catholic, frequently went to church and prayed. According to her, St. Anthony inspired her one day to place me in a convent. She went to the Social Welfare Department and said that she had a niece from the Poznan [Poznań] area who she wanted to place in a boarding school. They gave her the name of the Felician Sisters in Staniątki [Staniątki] and obtained a birth certificate for me, and we left for Staniątki. This was the beginning of 1944. My adoptive mother had had me baptized with water earlier. I was accepted as a Polish girl in the convent until the end of the war.

The nuns did not know [initially], therefore, that I was Jewish. My appearance was good, my Polish likewise. I behaved properly and was a practicing Catholic.

When I was ready to take my first Communion, though, I was afraid that I would commit some sacrilege. In truth, though my adoptive mother had me baptized, it was not a real baptism. One day I approached the mother superior and asked to have a talk with her. I told her that I was a [sic] Jewish and begged her to have me baptized before I took Holy Communion. She fixed her eyes on me and said:

“Daughter of the Chosen Race, good child, let’s try to figure this out.” The next day the mother superior made a trip to my adoptive mother and asked her by what right had she placed a Jewish child in the convent without telling her. She said she already had several Jewish children and needed more Polish children to hide the presence of the others. Meanwhile, each new child she was getting was Jewish! (There were not many children in the school, about eighteen. Taking that into consideration, six Jewish girls was a lot.) My adoptive mother swore that I was not a Jew, but rather her niece. The sister replied that that was nonsense, for I had admitted it myself. When she next saw me, my adoptive mother said: “Nina, what have you done!”

So I became baptized. In the meantime I befriended the other Jewish girls there, and thanks to me all six became baptized. Of course, everything happened in secret, though with much ceremony. ...

We then went to church and, hiding there, started to tell each other about ourselves. There were three of us. As for the rest of the Jewish girls, everyone knew that they were Jewish because of the way they looked. ... Of course, no one betrayed them, but they were terribly bullied.

When I organized this baptism, we were all very happy because we felt that if something happened we would go straight to heaven.

I was treated very well in the convent. My adoptive parents paid for me during the entire time I was there. My adoptive father supported me from his meagre post office pension. Aside from the mother superior, not one of the nuns knew that I was Jewish. I was there until the liberation of Cracow in [sic] January 18, 1945. My adoptive parents came for me the following day and took me home with them. I returned home, and they enrolled me in school. ...

It was good in the convent. The nuns protected us. They tried to dress the girls who had an “inappropriate look” in such a way as to cover up their “Jewishness.” The nuns

were very orderly and tried very hard. Particularly, the mother superior, Sister Filipa Swiech [Świech]. ...

There were only three Felician sisters. Mother Superior Filipa Swiech, Sister Klementyna and Sister Marcelina. The teachers were secular, and they did not know [officially] that we were Jewish. ...

There were different stages in the convent. Toward the end of the war we suffered from hunger, for there were no food supplies and nothing to eat—but love and warmth were not lacking. Sister Marcelina was an exceptional person in this regard. For me she was not only a mother, but a friend. She worried over us and cherished us. And then there were the [Latawieces], of course. Every Sunday they came to me with a toy, a blouse, sugar or something else. Through all the years of the war I did not lack love and warmth. I was fortunate.<sup>1918</sup>

A number of Jewish children—perhaps seven—were sheltered by the Felician Sisters at their orphanage in Sądowa Wisznia, near Jaworów, among them Stanisław Stammer-Cichocki from Lwów (b. 1937) and Renia Gutman, the daughter of a local Jewish doctor. Three Jewish children from the nearby town of Gródek Jagielloński—the siblings Mania (Marusia) and Zew (Władek) Rajcfeld and Basia Rothman—were placed in the orphanage by Jan Ponulak. Afterwards, Jan and his brother Michał managed to smuggle Rajzel Rajcfeld, the mother of Mania and Zew, out of the ghetto in Gródek Jagielloński and brought her to the convent. She remained there with her children dressed in a nun's habit.

Because the number of children grew during the war to more than thirty, it was necessary to move the orphanage to the monastery of the Reformed Franciscan Fathers, also in Sądowa Wisznia. As the Soviet front approached, the nuns were ordered to evacuate the monastery for use by the German military. In the spring of 1944, they transferred their charges to a children's home in Otwock near Warsaw, also run by the Felician Sisters.

One of the nuns who accompanied the children and the mother of one of the Jewish children to Otwock was Sister Maria Łukasz Makuch. Two other nuns, Sisters Zdzisława Zarzycka and Irena Chrycuk, are shown in a 1943 group photograph with the children.<sup>1919</sup> The head of the convent, Sister Kantalicja (Julia) Zagrodzka, was awarded by Yad Vashem in 2016. She alone.

<sup>1918</sup> Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, 179–85.

<sup>1919</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 265–66; Rączy and Witowicz, *Poles Rescuing Jews in the Rzeszów Region in the Years 1939–1945 / Polacy ratujący Żydów na Rzeszowszczyźnie w latach 1939–1945*, 183–85 (with photographs); Gary Wisby, “Sister Mary Luke Makuch; Aided Jewish Kids in WW II,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, December 22, 2003; Testimony of Stanisław Stammer-Cichocki, SFV, Interview code 21024; Maria Sowisto, “Ze wspomnień Żydówki Rajzel dowiedział się o ojcu bohaterze,” *Dziennik Bałtycki*, September 27, 2019, based on the Yad Vashem testimony of Rajzel Rajcfeld; Tadeusz Epsztein, Ewa Grzymała, and Dorota Zamojska, eds., *Inwentarz Archiwum Wydziału Oświaty Cen-*

The following testimonials concern institutions run by the Felician Sisters in Wawer, located on the outskirts of Warsaw. Sister Zygmunta (Joanna Reiter), the director of the orphanage in Wawer, was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. It is important to bear in mind that convents had to rely on charity and income from their own services or labour for subsistence, and that the nuns lived in poverty.

When their Warsaw apartment was confiscated during the occupation, Stefania Dlutowska [Dłutowska] and her daughter, Maria-Krystyna, were forced to move to the nearby village of Radosc [Radość]. From early 1943, six Jews—Jerzy Leinkram and his young daughter, Ruth; his grandmother, Blums Goldman; his nephew, Michal [Michał] Flohr; his uncle, Julian Leinkram; and his cousin, Marta Lencka—all found shelter in the cellar of the Dlutowskis' new home, where Stefania and her daughter took good care of them. When the Dlutowskis were no longer able to support such a large number of people, Dlutowska transferred Ruth under an assumed name to a children's institution run by the Felicjanki [Felician] nuns in the village of [Wawer-]Glinki, near Warsaw, and Flohr to a relative of Dlutowska's who agreed to take him in. ... Dlutowska and her daughter received no payment for their acts of courage ...<sup>1920</sup>

In 1943, Mirla Kajler managed to escape from the Warsaw ghetto with her four-year-old daughter, Felicia [later Sandzer, b. 1938]. When Kajler realized that she had no chance of surviving with her daughter, she went to a Catholic convent in Wawer, an eastern suburb of Warsaw, and approached the mother superior, Sister Zygmunta, the former Johanna Reiter, begging her to admit her daughter to the home for abandoned children run by the sisters of the convent. When Sister Zygmunta found out that the girl was Jewish, she looked after her devotedly, protected her, and watched out for her safety during the periodic interrogations conducted by the Germans in an attempt to discover Jewish children hiding there. ... After the war, Felicia was returned to her mother and the two moved to France ...<sup>1921</sup>

Before the war, Fraidla Skladkowska owned a leather-processing factory in Warsaw. After the occupation of Warsaw, Zenon Szenfeld helped the Skladkowskis by offering to hide their assets and valuables for them. When the Skladkowskis were interned in the ghetto, Zenon and his wife, Marianna, smuggled in food parcels to them. In July 1942, they helped the Skladkowskis and their daughter, Aliza, as well as Skladkowska's brother, Jakub Pin-czewski, escape to the Aryan side of the city, where they provided them with forged papers and financial aid. After putting them up for a short while, the Szenfelds arranged for the refugees to stay with Maria Szmids, Marianna's mother. After the authorities were alerted by an informer, however, the Skladkowskis moved in with Czeslaw [Czesław] and Maria Car, where they hid until May 1943, while the Szenfelds continued to look out for their safety. Again the danger of discovery forced them to move, this time to the home of Janina Szymanska [Szymańska]. Thanks to the Aryan papers in her possession, Fraidla found work in a factory, while her daughter, who fell ill, was transferred to the nearby Wawer convent.

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*tralnego Komitetu Żydów w Polsce 1945–1950: Sygn. 303/IX* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma, 1997 and 2011), 86, 271 (Basia Rothman).

<sup>1920</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 174.

<sup>1921</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 666. See also the testimony of Felicia Sandzer, SFV, Interview code 22228.

In due course, her husband and brother moved in with Anna Szwercowska and Irena Rudkowska, her sister, in Anin, near Warsaw, where they remained until September 1944, when the area was liberated. After the war, the survivors emigrated to the United States.<sup>1922</sup>

**H**alina Trachtenberg (later Robinson, b. 1928), was deported with her family from their hometown of Kalisz to Warsaw at the beginning of the war. She escaped from the Warsaw ghetto in September 1942, at the age of 14, by jumping over the ghetto wall with the help of Leokadia (Loda) Komarnicka. Komarnicka also helped Halina's stepmother, Jadwiga Trachtenberg, and Zofia and Sabina Zander, Jadwiga's mother and sister, escape from the ghetto.<sup>1923</sup>

For the next two years, Halina was in hiding. She stayed at thirteen different places and with four sets of false documents. As she recalls, "In the 23 months I spent in hiding, following my escape, I had to pass through 13 locations with four sets of false documents. That means that close to 100 other Righteous Gentiles risked their lives to save just one Jewish teenager."<sup>1924</sup> These courageous Poles arranged for her transport, accommodation, and false documents. Among them were Zygmunt and Maria Truchanowicz, with whom Halina lived for some time, and Maria Jiruska, who had worked as a headmistress before the war.

Passing as Halina Góraska, Halina was among eleven Jewish children sheltered by the Felician Sisters in their convent in the Warsaw suburb of Wawer, where she attended a boarding school from October 1942 to February 1943. The Jewish children were under the care of Sister Maria Kalasancja (Antonina Fuja), who was the director of the high school. Halina describes her rescue in her memoir.<sup>1925</sup>

A summary account by Yad Vashem regarding Wanda Jiruska and her daughters, Stefania Weronika and Maria Antonina,<sup>1926</sup> suggests that the children's homes run by the Catholic Church to which Jiruska referred Jewish children as orphans were not aware of their charges' Jewish origin. That was certainly not the case with regard to the Felician Sisters in Wawer.

<sup>1922</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 784.

<sup>1923</sup> According to one report, Leokadia Komarnicka, a staunch nationalist who helped dozens of Jews, was executed by the Germans for helping Jews. See Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 204–6, 489. However, Komarnicka is identified as Meta Kemblińska by Yad Vashem, Sabina Zander is said to have been sent to a convent near Warsaw, and Kemblińska is said to have died in 1958. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 342–43.

<sup>1924</sup> Halina Robinson, "Survivor," in Nicola Schafer, ed., *The Words to Remember It: Memoirs of Child Holocaust Survivors* (Melbourne: Scribe Publications, 2009), 291–304, at p. 298.

<sup>1925</sup> Halina Robinson, *A Cork on the Waves: Reflections of a Turbulent Life* (Sydney: Sydney Jewish Museum, 2005; Sydney: Park Street Press, 2006); Halina Czernuszyn-Robinson, *A Cork on the Waves: A Survivor's Story* (Silverwater, New South Wales: Vide Publishing, 2015).

<sup>1926</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 325.

Another Jewish charge at this institution was Lidia Szkolnikow (later Stamler, b. 1935), who, after her escape from the Warsaw ghetto, stayed there under the name of Teresa Cieřlik.<sup>1927</sup>

Barbara Bregman (later Marlow, b. 1930) and her mother, Bronisława Bregman, escaped from the Warsaw ghetto in July 1942. While residing in the ghetto, the family (including Barbara's parents and brother) had converted to Catholicism and were parishioners at All Saints' Church, located inside the ghetto. They were helped by a number of prewar Polish friends, among them Stanisława Wedecka and Bonawentura Lenart, Barbara's nanny, as well as by new acquaintances.

Rev. Leon Pawlina, who was a member of Caritas, the archdiocesan charitable organization, provided false birth and baptismal certificates. Bronisława Bregman became Paulina Karczewska and was sheltered by Irena Nowodworska, the widow of Leon Nowodworski, a National Democrat activist and head of the Warsaw Council of Lawyers. (After the Council rejected German demands to remove its Jewish members in February 1940, Nowodworski was removed from the bar.<sup>1928</sup> He died the following year.)

Barbara Bregman became Marianna Anyszka and, with the assistance of Rev. Pawlina, was placed in the Felician Sisters' boarding school in Wawer in February 1943. She remained there for half a year, before rejoining her mother. Barbara was asked to leave after another Jewish girl, whose true identity had become widely known, identified her as a Jew, thereby exposing her cover.

In her Shoah Foundation testimony, Barbara suggests that the two Jewish girls' departure had to do with her impression that the nuns did not want to shelter Jewish children. But this is incorrect; the Felician Sisters accepted other Jewish children at this institution, as the rescue of Halina Trachtenberg (described above) suggests. The two girls in question had to leave because, once

<sup>1927</sup> Testimony of Lidiah Stamler, SFV, Interview code 41787.

<sup>1928</sup> After the Warsaw Council of Lawyers rejected the German demand to remove its Jewish members in February 1940, the authors who issued the rejection were promptly disbarred. The Germans subsequently forbade all members of the council from practicing law and ordered a general registration of all Warsaw lawyers. Every candidate for inclusion on the official list of bar members was first questioned by the chief of the Warsaw District Department of Justice on his position on the admission of Jewish lawyers. The 80–100 lawyers who openly favoured their admission (nine lawyers did not state any view, the majority gave equivocal answers) were arrested in July 1940 and taken to Pawiak prison in Warsaw. They were sent to Auschwitz in September 1940, and only a few of them survived. See Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 116–20.

their cover had been exposed, their continued stay put the rescue operation at risk and set the entire institution on a precarious footing.<sup>1929</sup>

The Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul sheltered at least three Jewish children at their orphanage in Przeworsk, among them Esther Singer (later Freilach, b. 1939) and Rina Szpigel (later Glahman, b. 1933). One of the children was given a birth and baptismal certificate by a priest. After leaving the ghetto in Przemyśl, Esther's father, Friedrich Singer, obtained false identity documents for himself and his daughter as Tadeusz Czajkowski and Antonina Czajkowska. He entrusted Esther to a Polish woman in Przeworsk, while he himself moved around working for Poles. When Esther fell ill, the Polish woman cared for the child and nursed her back to health.

Afterwards, in July 1943, Esther was placed in the orphanage run by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, under the care of Sister Zofia Szczygielska. All of the nuns were aware that she was Jewish. After the war, Esther rejoined her father and later settled in the United States. Sister Zofia Szczygielska was persecuted by the Stalinist regime. She was sentenced to three and a half years in prison on trumped up charges. She was released in 1951, after serving two years and nine months of her sentence in a work camp. She was recognized by Yad Vashem in 2018.<sup>1930</sup>

The Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul sheltered a number of Jewish children and adults at their convent in Nyrków, on the outskirts of Czerwonogród, near Zaleszczyki, in the Tarnopol province. After escaping from the ghetto in Drohobycz in 1942, Karolina Heuman (b. 1928) and her younger brother, Henryk (b. 1936), were placed there by their father. Karolina assumed the name of Marta Regusz; her brother, who did not survive a Ukrainian partisan attack, was known as Andrzej Tarnawski. The children had been provided with false documents by a priest before their arrival at the convent. He also made arrangements for their acceptance with Sister Klara Linowska, the superior.<sup>1931</sup> Karolina recalled those turbulent years.

After a few months of staying in the ghetto [in Drohobycz], we managed to escape. At that point, our entire family split up. Mother, under an assumed name, left for Lwów, and my

<sup>1929</sup> Testimony of Barbara Bregman, SFV, Interview code 25912; Jan Żaryn, "Zapomniani bohaterowie," *Rzeczpospolita* [Warsaw], November 26, 2009; Testimony of Barbara Marlow in Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 401–6.

<sup>1930</sup> Siostra Zofia Szczygielska, Yad Vashem, Internet: [https://www.24gliwice.pl/wiadomosci/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Szczygielska\\_Zofia\\_historia\\_Sprawiedliwej.pdf](https://www.24gliwice.pl/wiadomosci/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Szczygielska_Zofia_historia_Sprawiedliwej.pdf); Marian Wachowicz, "Sprawiedliwa wśród Narodów Świata," *Nasz Dziennik*, July 12, 2019.

<sup>1931</sup> Testimony of Sister Władysława Sobierajska, cited in "Pomoc Żydom w czasie wojny: Zgromadzenie Sióstr Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego à Paulo—szarytki," undated typescript.

brother and I were placed by Father in the cloister of the Sisters of Charity in Czerwonogród. I remember how we were driven by night in a horse-drawn wagon to the cloister and how Father bade us farewell. Pointing to the sky, he said, “We shall meet there.” He then paid for our stay<sup>1932</sup> with money he kept hidden in a bottle, and he left. From that moment I never saw him again.

In the cloister, I used the name Marta Regusz. I worked in the fields. Whenever Germans showed up in the cloister, I would die of fright (after all, my brother was circumcised!). After placing us in the cloister, Father went into hiding in Horodenka, where he was shot at the beginning of 1943. ... I don’t know where Mother perished. ... My brother perished during a raid on the cloister by the followers of Bandera [Ukrainian nationalist partisans who attacked Poles]. He was then nine years old. Here is how, at the time, I described the events of this horrible day:

“It was the second of February 1945, at eleven o’clock. ... There were three of us young girls and my beloved brother ... I woke up with a start during the night and heard terrible shooting around the cloister. There was often shooting going on at night, but it never made the same impression on me as then. I got up and walked up to the window. It seemed to me that it was strangely bright outside. I lay down again, but some inner voice would not let me lie. I started to get dressed, and I dressed my brother. All of us girls were already dressed when Sister Władysława [Sobierajska] walked in and said we were surrounded by Bandera’s followers. We were terrified.

Right away, we went over to the bedrooms of the Sisters, and there, by the window, we stood for three hours, watching the terrible tortures of people who were fleeing in panic from the flames. The inhuman barbarians ran around furiously with flares in their hands and set fires to one hut after another, and whenever they saw someone, if they could, they grabbed him alive, and if not, then they would shoot him on the spot. They captured one family in our village and all that was later found of the children were fragments of burned-up bones, and the father’s skin had been ripped off from his stomach all the way to his head. We, the girls, stood all the time by the window, waiting for what would happen next. We felt that our own lives, too, were hanging by a thread. ...

Soon, our suppositions came to pass. At three o’clock in the morning, we heard terrible knocking on the front gate, which seemed to foretell our approaching end. Sister Władysława called us into the chapel and began to pray and prepare us for death. We knelt in front of the altar for perhaps ten minutes. ...

I had no regrets about dying, because until then I had not experienced contentment on earth. I just felt sorry for my brother. ... In the last moment, when the glass of the windows in the lower corridor started falling onto the floor with a loud crash, Sister Superior [Klara Linowska] hid us under the altar.

Those who survived repatriated to Poland.”<sup>1933</sup>

<sup>1932</sup> It was not unusual for people who could afford to do so to make payments or gifts to religious institutions to offset the cost of caring for their children. During the war, convents and orphanages were overcrowded with charges and in dire financial straits. It is unlikely that the amount paid by their father was sufficient to maintain his children for their entire stay at the convent.

<sup>1933</sup> Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 1, 187–89.

During the attack by Ukrainian partisans on Czerwonogród and nearby Nyrków on February 3, 1945, some 60 Poles lost their lives, including Rev. Szczepan Jurasz, the local pastor, and two nuns, Sister Klara Linowska, the superior, and Sister Henryka Bronikowska. Sister Władysława Sobierajska survived the attack.<sup>1934</sup>

The Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul also sheltered Lusia (later Lucy Gertner, b. 1940), the daughter of Regina Fenster (née Nurnberg, later Gertner, b. 1921). Regina arranged with a priest (perhaps Greek Catholic) for her daughter to be hidden at the nuns' orphanage in Nyrków, near Czerwonogród. Lusia was left at the convent as a foundling by a Polish woman that Regina had turned to with that request. Regina survived the war hidden by a Polish family named Wołyński, and she reclaimed her daughter.<sup>1935</sup>

Miriam Fleisher (b. 1941) was accepted at the orphanage in Czerwonogród through the intervention of Rev. Szczepan Jurasz, the local pastor. Miriam's mother, Regina Fleisher (b. 1911), had been introduced to Rev. Jurasz before the war by a priest who was a client of her husband's mill in Ułaszkwocce. Regina approached Rev. Jurasz with a request to save her infant daughter after the Germans announced in the Tłuste ghetto that young children had to be surrendered. Having discussed the matter with the superior of the convent, Rev. Jurasz concocted a story that Miriam was the daughter of a count's maid, and he provided her with identity documents as Maria Styczyńska. Regina asked the priest to baptize Miriam and offered a monetary contribution for her upkeep. A Polish friend of Regina's delivered Miriam to the convent, where she remained until the entry of the Soviet army. While there, Miriam was visited by Rev. Jurasz, who took an interest in her welfare.

Sometime later, Regina and her husband, Samuel, were transferred to a labour camp in Różanówka. During an Aktion, Regina was left for dead in a mass grave, but she had only been shot in the finger. The following morning, she crawled out of the pit covered with blood and made her way to a Polish friend, wearing only a night shirt. Her friend cleaned her up and clothed her. Regina then made her way to the convent in Czerwonogród. The nuns were afraid to let her stay inside the convent building because German officers often came around. During the summer months, Regina stayed in the garden and took shelter in the mausoleum, to which she had been given the key. In the fall, she was hidden in a closet inside the convent together with another girl. When Regina's husband

<sup>1934</sup> Komański and Siekierka, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie tarnopolskim 1939–1946*, 432–33.

<sup>1935</sup> Etunia Bauer Katz, *Our Tomorrows Never Came* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 7; Bartov, *Anatomy of a Genocide*, 368 n.6; Gertner Family Papers, USHMM, Accession no. 2018.217.2.

escaped from the labour camp later that year, he too came to the convent and hid in a cowshed for six weeks until the arrival of the Soviet army.<sup>1936</sup>

Miriam recalls the names of several Jewish children at the convent (mentioned earlier), as well as a girl called “Krzysia,” who was taken by her uncle after the war. Although the Jewish youngsters seemed to be aware of other Jewish children in their midst, characteristically, Miriam claims that only the convent’s superior was aware that she was Jewish. (Such claims are disseminated at face value in Holocaust literature.) Allegedly, despite her own Semitic features and the fact that her parents also found shelter there, the other nuns were clueless about her origin. In her testimony, Sister Władysława Sobierajska recalls the arrival at the convent of several Jewish children and adults, including the entire Fleisher family. Their Jewish origin was never in doubt. Sister Klara Linowska, who spoke German, did her best to assuage the Germans who came around to inspect.<sup>1937</sup> Baruch Milch’s memoir, cited below, provides more information about the convent’s rescue activities. Among the nuns’ charges was a four-year-old boy—who spoke only Yiddish—left in the convent’s courtyard.

According to several sources, Rev. Stanisław Szkodziński, the pastor of Tłuste, near Zaleszczyki, and Rev. Antin Navolskyi, a Greek Catholic priest from that town, exhorted their parishioners to close their ears to the anti-Semitic propaganda spread by the Germans, not to take the possessions abandoned by Jews, and to do everything they could to help the Jews.<sup>1938</sup> During the Aktion in April 1943, several Jews took shelter in the church rectory.<sup>1939</sup>

After escaping from the ghetto in Tłuste, Dr. Baruch Milch and his brother-in-law, Dr. Jakub Weinles (Weinloes), were sheltered by Poles in the village of

<sup>1936</sup> Testimony of Regina Fleisher, SFV, Interview code 53687; Testimony of Miriam Fleisher, SFV, Interview code 53686; Oral history interview with Regina Fleisher and Miriam Fleisher, USHMM, Accession no. 1996.A.0519.10, RG-50.439.0010; Christian Cassidy, “Remembering the Holocaust: A Winnipeg Couple’s Story of Survival,” *West End Dumplings*, January 27, 2020. Regina Fleisher mistakenly refers to Rev. Szczepan Jurasz as a bishop and gives his first name as “Bazylian.”

<sup>1937</sup> Testimony of Sister Władysława Sobierajska, cited in “Pomoc Żydom w czasie wojny: Zgromadzenie Sióstr Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego à Paulo—szarytki,” undated typescript.

<sup>1938</sup> Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945*, 40; Preil, *Holocaust Testimonies*, 193, 196; Testimony of Berl Glik in Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 369–70; Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part A, 841; Oral history interview with Adela Sommer, USHMM, Accession no. 1993.A.0088.26, RG-50.002.0026; Julius S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT-215), FVA. Rev. Antin Navolskyi was recognized by Yad Vashem initially under the name of Izvolksi. He is credited with stopping a pogrom (by Ukrainians) in July 1941 and rescuing Ulla Sommer and others. See his entry in RD.

<sup>1939</sup> Testimony of Julia Bronisława Woytowicz, JHI, record group 301, no. 7111.

Czerwonogród. They—and other Jews—encountered helpful priests along the way, among them the aforementioned Rev. Szkodziński of Tłuste and Rev. Jurasz of Czerwonogród, as well as nuns, Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul from Nyrków. In his memoir, Dr. Milch describes the rescue of Lusia Geller and Manya Nirnberg, involving the help of Rev. Szkodziński.

Slowly, we started to sneak our way into the village we had been seeking, Czerwonogrod [Czerwonogród], a village that was inhabited largely by Poles. Former patients of mine from the old days lived in every other house. The Polish village priest [Rev. Szczepan Jurasz] had been very helpful to Jews in the past, and there was a convent where the nuns were hiding some Jewish children.<sup>1940</sup>

Alone, Lusia [Geller], escaping a Ukrainian gang of murderers, went on to the local priest [Rev. Stanisław Szkodziński], who lived on the other side of the town [of Tłuste]. At midnight, she knocked on the window. The priest's sister, a good-natured spinster, overcame her fear, opened the window and called the priest, who allowed Lusia to climb in.

After Lusia told them what had happened, the priest and his sister fed her and tucked her in a warm bed, where she fell deeply asleep. The next morning, she asked the priest's sister to visit the labor camp [in Różanówka] and speak with the German commandant, Patti. She met with Mr. Konigsberg, the camp foreman, and pleaded with him to save Manya [Nirnberg, Lusia's adopted sister]. Konigsberg's assistant was roped in, and the assistant, being on good terms with the Ukrainian police, managed to extricate the girl from the police and transfer her to the camp. Manya, barefoot, chalk-white, dressed in nothing but a nightgown and a thin blouse, related how the Ukrainian police had laughed at her when she said she wanted to die. They stood her up against a wall in the courtyard and several policemen lined up opposite her with pistols and fired, deliberately missing. A German came over and told them to leave her alone. "One doesn't shoot at those who want to die but only at those who want to live," he explained.

The priest's sister informed Lusia that Manya was alive and well. Lusia burst into tears and begged to be sent, along with Manya, to the Lisowce camp, where she would find her mother and sisters. There was typhus in the camp at the time, and Mrs. Geller, fearing that the two girls would succumb to the disease, bribed the camp manager, a Pole named Korczak, to quarter Lusia and Manya with a Polish family. She treated Manya like her fourth daughter. He complied willingly ... The Polish family was honest, devoutly Catholic, and hoped that the girls would convert after the war. Korczak watched over the girls and met their needs.<sup>1941</sup>

A second family, by the name of Zielinski [Zieliński], who had not known [Baruch] Milch or his brother-in-law before the war, took them in, and kept them in hiding for nine months. In spite of the danger to their own lives, the Zielinskis gave the two grieving men both 'moral support and love', in addition to taking care of all their daily needs. Later,

<sup>1940</sup> Baruch Milch, *Can Heaven Be Void?* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2003), 164. Józef Ojak and his wife, Helena Ojak-Sobkowiak, were recognized by Yad Vashem for rescuing the two physicians, Baruch Milch and Jakub Weinles. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 560–61. Earlier they had been sheltered by the Zieliński family.

<sup>1941</sup> Milch, *Can Heaven Be Void?*, 227.

they found a hiding place for the two men in a convent near Tłuste [Tłuste], run by three Sisters of Mercy [Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul] and their Mother Superior [Klara Linowska]. Baruch Milch later recalled: “These heroic women ran the religious services of the parish, conducted the choir, played the organ and managed the kindergarten. Later in the summer they opened a secret shelter for foundlings. Among these tiny outcasts were about six or eight Jewish children left by desperate parents roaming the fields and forests, or just found abandoned at the monastery’s threshold.” On one occasion the three nuns found in their backyard a four-year-old boy, speaking only Yiddish. “They gathered him into their midst. As long as the murderers were unaware of what was going on behind the walls the self-sacrificing women shared their scanty provisions, fed their charges, cared for them and took them to the church.”<sup>1942</sup>

[On March 26, 1944, after the entry of the Soviet army:] To be on the safe side, we [Baruch Milch and other Jews hidden by the Zieliński family] stopped on the way to Tłuste for a few days with the Polish priest [Rev. Szczepan Jurasz] who knew where we had been hiding. While there, we visited the convent [in Nyrków] and found a few Jewish children whom the nuns had concealed. ...

Surreptitiously, I [Baruch Milch] began planning to leave Zaleszczyki in the company of some Polish families. With help from the local Polish priest, I obtained papers in the name of Dr. Jan Zielinski [Zieliński], the real name of the Zielinkis’ son who disappeared in the Soviet Union during the war. My “adopted son,” Zalman Sperber, got papers in the name of Jozio Zielinski [Józio Zieliński]. ...

Even though the Soviets and the new Polish government had agreed in writing that Jews and Poles with Polish citizenship could return to Poland, I could not get permission to leave the USSR because of my profession and rank. Therefore, I scheduled the exodus of the expanded Zielinski family for a week in which I was to attend a symposium in Czortków, whence the transports to Poland set out. Some Poles in the transport knew what I had in mind, because I had done much for them and we got along very well. Even the Polish railwaymen knew.<sup>1943</sup>

Rev. Szkodziński, the pastor of Tłuste, and his young vicar, Rev. Bronisław Majka, are also identified by Krystyna Smolik (née Fey, b. 1930) as the protectors of her family. After the family converted to Catholicism in secret in Skąlat, she, her younger sister and, eventually, her mother, Bronisława Fey, relocated to Tłuste, where they lived under the care of the priests. Sister Teresa of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary, who ran a shelter in that town, provided them with food. They also received assistance from the two Frankl sisters, who were teachers, and Jan Świąder, a forester who also sheltered another Jewish woman.<sup>1944</sup>

<sup>1942</sup> Gilbert, *The Righteous*, 51–52.

<sup>1943</sup> Milch, *Can Heaven Be Void?*, 254–56.

<sup>1944</sup> Krystyna Smolik, “Nadzieja nadeszła wiosną,” in Kołacińska-Gałązka, *Dzieci Holocaustu mówią...*, vol. 5, 188–90. See also the testimony of Krystyna Smolik, SFV, Interview code 30803.

Rev. Szkodziński and his vicar, Rev. Majka, were killed by Ukrainian nationalists on September 15, 1943.<sup>1945</sup>

It was widely known among the Polish population that many Jews were passing as Poles. In Warsaw alone, it is estimated that there were more than 20,000 Jews living on the Aryan side after the liquidation of the ghetto in April 1943. Discretion was the order of the day, especially among rescuers, including Catholic institutions. Probing questions were avoided. The less said the better; the less one knew the better. The following account attests to the silent assistance extended to the family of Adam Starkopf by a number of Poles, including nuns and priests.

In January 1944, however, I was forced to part from both my wife [Pela] and child [Jasia] because Pela had to go to the hospital. Her abdominal pains had returned and it was clear to me that she needed more competent care than she could receive at the clinic in Lochow [Łochów]. One of the men in the lumberyard told me about Professor Czyzewicz [Adam Czyzewicz], who was chief of surgery at the Szpital Dzieciatka [Dzieciątka] Jezus—the Hospital of the Holy Infant Jesus—in Warsaw. I had heard of this doctor even before the war, and I knew that he was an outstanding surgeon. I did not know his human qualities, but I feared that if Pela continued to go without proper treatment, we might one day find ourselves faced with a life and death emergency. And so I decided to take the chance and have Pela examined by Prof. Czyzewicz in Warsaw.

After examining Pela, the professor said that she should be operated on without further delay. ...

From the professor's words I realized that we could no longer put off the operation. But I also knew that the Hospital of the Holy Infant Jesus was not a charity clinic. Patients at this hospital were expected to pay for their beds and for their treatment. How was I to raise the money? I threw myself at Prof. Czyzewicz's mercy. I explained to him that I was at present without funds worth mentioning because I was a former officer of the Polish army in hiding from the Germans. The professor looked at me, and then at Pela. He seemed to understand. "Don't worry," he said. "I'll operate on your wife myself, and I'll collect the money from you whenever you'll have it." I think he suspected immediately that we were Jewish. Later, I learned that he had given a room in his apartment to Professor [Henryk] Beck, a well-known Jewish specialist who had been the hospital's chief of surgery before the Germans came. Thanks to Professor Czyzewicz, Professor Beck survived the war. [Professor Beck converted to Catholicism before the war. During the war, he was in hiding in Warsaw.]

A date was set for Pela's operation. Meanwhile, I was told to take her home. She was going to be admitted to the hospital only two days before the operation.

I took Pela back with me to Sadowne. Our security problem had been solved. Pela and I now had a legitimate reason for leaving Sadowne and staying away for some time. But what were we to do about Jasia?

<sup>1945</sup> Komański and Siekierka, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie tarnopolskim 1939–1946*, 443.

We decided to do now what we had so firmly refused to consider doing after Jasia's discharge from the children's hospital: We were going to put Jasia into the convalescent home in Swider [Świder, a Warsaw suburb] which Dr. [Remigiusz] Stankiewicz, the pediatrician, had recommended to us at the time. I told the nuns who managed the sanatorium that I was a former officer of the Polish army, that I was a devout Catholic working for the Polish underground and that I had no money to pay for Jasia's care. But now my wife would have to go to the hospital for a serious operation and I was desperately in need of a place where our little girl, who was not quite three years old, could be cared for until her mother was well again. If I could not find such a place for Jasia, I would not be able to continue my resistance activities, I said.

The nuns were wonderful. I do not know whether they suspected that Pela and I were Jewish, but they immediately agreed to accept Jasia free of charge. Once again Pela and I had to go through the ordeal of putting our little girl into the care of strangers. We left her in the ward crying bitterly but we knew there was nothing we could have done and we tried to persuade ourselves that Jasia would be in good hands. ...

Pela entered the hospital in the middle of January 1944. She was placed into a women's ward with five or six other patients. In order to bolster Pela's credibility as a good Catholic, our friend Edward Galewski gave her a little breviary to keep with her in the hospital, along with a religious tract entitled *The Life of Saint Theresa*. Pela placed both books on full view atop her little bedside table. Before the operation a priest came to her bedside to hear her confession. This was something for which Pela had not been prepared. She did not know the responses used in this sacrament of the Church and she was afraid that her ignorance would betray that she was not the devout Catholic she had made herself out to be. So, when the priest asked her whether she was ready to confess her sins she told him that she was in too much pain to be able to perform the act with the full concentration it required. The priest gave her a sad but understanding smile, made the sign of the cross over her and left. I only hoped that when Pela came out of her anaesthesia after the operation she would not say anything that would betray her as a Jewess.

The operation took almost four hours. ...

Almost as soon as Pela was awake again the priest made a return appearance. He inquired whether she was now ready to make her confession. Once again Pela protested; she said she was still too weak and tried to concentrate on repentance. Very well, the priest said, he would take her deadly sins upon his conscience, but he would suggest that she at least attempt to confess her lesser sins. When Pela still refused, he shook his head, smiled and walked away. Pela thought he suspected that she was Jewish, because he stopped pressing her about making her confession but gave her a friendly smile whenever he passed through her ward on his daily rounds. ...

Because her operation had been a difficult one, Pela had to remain in the hospital for seven weeks. ... Every Sunday I visited Jasia at the sanatorium in Swider. I was happy to see that she, at least, was getting good food, that she had good color and had not only grown but also gained some weight. ...

Pela and I worried whether we had been right to leave Jasia in the sanatorium. The Soviets had begun to bomb Warsaw and its railroad communications. What if we could no longer go to Warsaw to visit our daughter? What if the sanatorium itself got hit? Perhaps

Jasia was now in no less danger at the sanatorium than she would be in Sadowne? So, just before Easter, we went to Warsaw to pick her up and bring her home again.<sup>1946</sup>

After the liberation, Jasia continued to suffer poor health and needed to regain her strength. The Starkopfs again turned to nuns for assistance.

But what were we to do? The payment I was receiving for my work with the “Jewish Committee” consisted of nothing more than room and board at the shelter. But the doctor had an idea. She suggested that we place Jasia into a children’s convalescent home which was housed in a convent near Lublin. She explained to us that, unlike the sanatorium in Swider, this institution accepted every child free of charge. “Of course, the generosity of the sisters creates a problem,” the doctor added with a sigh. “Usually, every bed is taken. But I’ll try and see whether they can make room for one more little girl.”

We were lucky; Jasia was accepted by the sisters and remained there for the next four months.<sup>1947</sup>

Sandra (Roma) Brand, originally from Niemirów, near Lwów, passed as a Polish Catholic in Warsaw. Under the assumed identity of Cecylia Szarek, she had a love affair with Rolf Peschel, a German officer at the Criminal Police Headquarters in Warsaw who, remarkably, helped Jews and the Polish underground. Shortly before the August 1944 uprising, the Germans discovered Rolf’s double life and murdered him and made it look like a crime committed by the Polish underground.

During the uprising, Brand befriended Rev. Teodor Bensch, a Polish priest who taught canon law at the underground university in Warsaw. Her conversations with Rev. Bensch, who suspected her of being Jewish, proved to be a great comfort to her.<sup>1948</sup> Unknown to her at the time, Rev. Bensch was hiding several Jews, among them a woman and her teenage niece, in the chapel of an old-age home run by the Franciscans in suburban Konstancin. His kindness towards Sandra (Roma) continued after the liberation.

After the war, Rev. Bensch returned to his teaching position at the Catholic University of Lublin and was soon elevated to the rank of bishop of Warmia.

Father Teodor Bensch who became my friend while I was attending the prayer sessions for the Polish Freedom Fighters during the uprising in Warsaw, passed everyday at the same time by the gardener’s house, which now was my so-called home. Although sick, I waited eagerly near the fence of the garden to hear some news.

<sup>1946</sup> Adam Starkopf, *There Is Always Time To Die* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1981), 201–11; Adam Starkopf, *Will To Live: One Family’s Story of Surviving the Holocaust* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 201–11.

<sup>1947</sup> Starkopf, *There Is Always Time To Die*, 229; Starkopf, *Will To Live*, 229.

<sup>1948</sup> That relationship is described in Sandra Brand’s memoir *I Dared To Live* (New York: Shengold, 1978), 144–55.

He came to my rescue. He heard me coughing and said, “You are sick my child and you seem hungry too. You need help. Why don’t you move into the Home for Retired Actors in Skolimov [Skolimów]. The home receives food coupons. It isn’t much, but enough to feed the inmates, and enough to feed one more person. I will speak to the Reverend Mother. I think the best place for you will be right here.” ...

I moved into the old age home. ...

There was, in contrast to all other inmates, a young woman occupying the room next to mine. She shared it with a twelve-year-old girl. They also, like myself, preferred to take their meals in their room.

She had access to underground news sheets and she knew that all of those deported died in gas chambers. She spoke authoritatively, leaving no room for arguments. But I did not want to believe her because I wanted to find my child alive.

In my room I pressed my forehead against the cool glass of the window. I did not hear the knock at the door. Father Bensch came in.

I sensed at once that he had something important to say. I pulled another chair to the window and motioned my guest to sit down.

“I have been recalled to Lublin Catholic University to resume teaching Canon Law.” ...

“What are your plans?” Father Bensch asked. “You can stay here as long as you like but you’re too young a woman to remain in an old age home indefinitely.” ...

“What do you think of resuming your education?” Father Bensch asked.

“Am I not too old for that?”

“No one is ever too old to learn. Come to Lublin and register at Lublin University. If I remember correctly you wanted to become a journalist.”

...

I talk about my unforgettable friend Father Teodor Bensch who hid several Jews in his chapel and saved them from deportation to death camps.<sup>1949</sup>

Not all rescue efforts in convents and institutions run by nuns ended fortunately. Helena Szereszewska describes her experiences at St. Roch’s hospice for the incurably sick (formerly *Schronisko dla paralityków pod wezwaniem św. Rocha im. Hrabów Sobańskich*; currently *Zakład Specjalny dla Chronicznie Chorych*) in Warsaw, which was run by the Felician Sisters. There, she passed as a Christian named Alicja Majewska. After the Germans requisitioned the Sisters’ original building on Nowowiejska Street for a hospital, in February 1943, their institution moved to a former Jewish students’ hostel on the corner of Leszno and Żelazna Streets. It was staffed by 16 nuns under the direction of Sister Aniela Kasproicz.

The Felician Sisters took in many Jews and Jewish converts, among them Szereszewska, Zofia Łoziewicz, Maria Zawadzka, Mrs. Makowska, Mrs. Kosińska, Mrs. Mech, Mrs. Kowalska, Mr. and Mrs. Binder, and Mrs. Kozubowska. However, a conspiracy of silence prevailed about what was in fact an open secret.

<sup>1949</sup> Sandra Brand, *Good People, Bad People* (Rockville, Maryland: Schreiber, 2003), 69–73, 78.

Szereszewska eventually had to leave the institution after her daughter, Anna Maria (Marysia), and her grandson, Robert (Maciuś) Szereszewski, came to join her, because they did not fit the resident profile. They thus avoided the tragedy that befell its residents during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944.

On August 14, 1944, the Germans executed most of the 180 elderly and infirm residents of the institution. The nuns and lay staff were expelled to the transit camp in Pruszków. The nuns were then allowed to go to Kraków, whereas the lay staff was sent to Germany for slave labour.

I lived at Lwowska Street until the beginning of June 1943, until the day I received my identity card.

Mrs Grabowska had a confessor in the church [Church of the Holy Saviour] on Zbawiciela Square. She went there once a week and sought his advice in everything.

"There are two women living with me, a mother and daughter. They're Jewish. I want to get the mother taken in somewhere."

"Nuns are the best," advised the priest. "The Ursulines or the Felicians. The Felicians have got a place on Leszno Street now."

"Shall I tell the Reverend Mother the truth?"

"Don't say anything. I'll take the lie on my own conscience. Give the woman these books to contemplate from me." ...

The Reverend Mother was sitting at a desk.

"I've come on behalf of my tenant, Maria Majewska [Szereszewska's daughter's assumed name]," said Mrs Grabowska. "Her mother has a bad heart because of her terrible wartime experiences. She'd like the sisters to look after her."

"Tell her to come with her mother," said the nun. "We've always got room." ...

I went there with Marysia [her daughter].

"You're not Jewish or a convert, are you?" asked the Reverend Mother in her office.

"God forbid! I'm a good Catholic." ...

"In principle we only accept people over the age of sixty-five," said the nun looking at me inquiringly. "You're too young for us. But sometimes we make exceptions."

I was accepted and paid her the amount required, 500 złotych.<sup>1950</sup>

Szereszewska maintained the pretence that she was a Catholic throughout her stay at the institution. She gradually came to realize, however, that many Jews actually resided at the institution, and that there was an immense silent conspiracy concerning this matter among the nuns and the elderly chaplain. Szereszewska also encountered a Jewish woman who assumed the role of an anti-Semite during her stay. The residents were expected to attend chapel.

Szereszewska recalled other priests that she encountered. Among them was Rev. Zygmunt Kozubski, professor of Catholic theology at the University of

<sup>1950</sup> Helena Szereszewska, *Memoirs from Occupied Warsaw, 1940–1945* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 1997), 292–94.

Warsaw and rector of the academic church of St. Anne in Warsaw, who allowed her son to serve as an altar boy—something that would have been sacrilegious under normal circumstances.

In the middle sat an old woman in a black coat and a worn black felt hat on her head. She had a Jewish nose and looked like a town Jewess. She sat huddled up and slept all through the mass. She immediately attracted my attention. ...

Then an old priest in a golden chasuble celebrated the mass. There were two small altar boys, eight years old perhaps. ...

I watched the altar boys and thought about [my grandson] Maciuś. He had served at mass too [at St. Anne's church in Warsaw] thanks to Father [Zygmunt] Kozubski. The priest knew Maciuś was Jewish and wanted to protect him. So he gave him a white surplice and a bell. The young curate also knew about Maciuś but he found it worrying and one day he said, "He's a Jewish child so what's he doing serving at Holy Mass."

"What about it? All children are the same before God," replied Father Kozubski. ...

Every Sunday I listened to the priest's sermon. He often referred to the events which had so recently and so tragically taken place. He talked about the annihilation of the Jews. "Everything that has happened to the Jews is atonement for the terrible sins they committed. It was God's punishment. The Germans are only the instruments of God's punishment." ...

I walked to the church of St Charles Boromese [Borromeo] on Chłodna Street. I sat down on a pew and thought about my daughters ... I got up and approached the altar and knelt down. ... So I knelt in front of the altar with the huge cross all alone in the church, sensing the priest's questioning look on my back. He must have known who I was. ...

I knew the story of a relation of ours, an old woman who was hiding in the country with the family of a Polish friend of her son's. She became very ill so they called the priest. She was on the verge of dying. When she caught her breath she called out, "Shema, Israel." He gave her the holy oils. She died. He closed her eyes. 'I think,' he said as he was leaving, deeply moved, "that Catholic wasn't completely Catholic."

Being visited by people whose appearance was faultless could strengthen my position. It was very important. So [my daughter] Marysia asked Mrs Grabowska to visit me one day. ... So a few days later Marysia asked the very aristocratic-looking Mr. Sztark with the walrus moustache to visit me. ... He went to see the Reverend Mother in her office, kissed her hand, introduced himself and asked her to take special care of me as I was the wife of a colleague of his.

Anna Białkowska moved into our room ... In the second year of the war she was taken to Ravensbrück concentration camp and cleaned the latrines there. The cold and terrible damp affected her legs. Thanks to her distant relatives she got out after a while and spent a year in the Red Cross hospital unable to use her legs. ...

She was a Calvinist. In principle, the institution only took in Roman Catholics, but they made an exception for her. ... She supported the National Democrats and had ultra right-wing views. I realized that the very first evening when she mentioned politics while talking to Zofia Łoziewicz. That evening Zofia was playing the part of an anti-Semite who was nevertheless a supporter of Józef Piłsudski. ...

A few days after Anna Białkowska moved into our room a bombshell burst. Zofia Łoziewicz was summoned to the office. "Mrs Łoziewicz," said the Reverend Mother, "you

concealed the fact that you're Jewish. Your papers are in order and no-one knew, but your secret has come out and now we can't keep you here any longer." ...

"Mrs Majewska," said Mrs Kowalska ... "Someone rang from town and informed on her. They can't keep her any longer. But they're taking her to Otwock, to another place they've got. Sister Franciszka is going with her."

"Mrs Majewska," said Mrs Mech, the one who dozed during mass, "... Do you know who set her up like this? Her husband. She had a Polish husband who wanted to get his own back on her. Did you guess that Zofia is my daughter?" ...

That day, immediately after mass, as [Maria Zawadzka] was going round the rooms where the bedridden women lived, she came across someone who had just come to the institution. The woman looked at Maria Zawadzka and shouted, "I know her! She's Jewish! She comes from a Jewish house! I did their washing and I know her!"

Maria Zawadzka turned as white as a sheet, ran out of the room, looked for the Reverend Mother, Sister Bogumiła, and threw herself at her feet. Crying, choking and nearly unconscious, she told her what had happened. Then Sister Bogumiła rushed into the room like a fury, her habit flapping and her cross and rosary beads jingling. "Listen you, you hell-raiser." Perhaps she wanted to call her a bitch, but could she of all people say that? "You monster. If you open your mouth once more and say one more word about Mrs Zawadzka you'll die and perish and you'll be damned and swallowed up by hell. And you won't receive absolution in this world or in the next either. You're nearly dead already, you viper." That's how she spoke to her in her fury, completely ignoring the other invalids lying next to her and half dead with fright.

Later the nuns tried to cover up the whole business. "It's completely untrue," they told everyone. "That old Mrs Pikulska has gone mad. She doesn't know what she's saying. She was very ill when she came here and she'll go to Jesus soon." ...

One day when our old priest was celebrating mass a woman I'd never seen before entered the chapel. ... I could tell that she was terribly confused. She didn't know whether to kneel or sit. She could see that nearly all the women were wearing a hat while she was bareheaded. She didn't have a missal. ...

Her name was Mrs Makowska and she'd just arrived that day. ... I could immediately tell that she was Jewish. It wasn't because of her face ... but her manner and behaviour. ...

There was one thing I often thought about. I knew I wasn't the only Jew in the place. How did Mrs Makowska, old Mrs Kosińska, Mrs Mech and Mrs Kowalska get into the institution? Mrs Makowska could have got in the same way as I did. We both had neutral faces and our identity cards were in order. ... But Mrs Kosińska's and Mrs Mech's Jewish faces were absolutely obvious and so how could Reverend Mother possibly ask them that ritual question about whether they were Jews or converts? ...

By now I was sure that the nuns knew they had Jews in hiding in the institution. [Others included Mr and Mrs Binder and Mrs Kozubowska. Mr Binder's accent gave him away, as did his looks, so he hardly spoke.] I became fully aware of it when a tall, thin woman with a typically Jewish face entered the chapel for morning mass one day. She sat down on a pew and was so terrified that she didn't make the sign of the cross when she came in or during mass. ... I was sure that the nuns had accepted the woman knowing very well who she was.

But what about Zofia Łoziewicz? Why had she been expelled? Because someone had rung from outside. No-one outside should ever know that the nuns were hiding Jews.<sup>1951</sup>

When the Warsaw Uprising broke out on August 1, 1944, the residents of the institution took shelter in nearby cellars.

At midnight one of the nuns came and brought some soup in a watering can. ... Suddenly a strong blast of air from a nearby explosion hit the window. A column of dust and lime poured over the cellar. Maciuś jumped off the table and shook the dust and pieces of lime off. The priest stretched out his hand. “Did it frighten you, Maciuś?” he asked. He drew him close. “Are you scared?” ... The priest took the child’s head in his hands and brought it towards himself, smiling kindly. The boy leaned against the priest’s knees ... I looked at the two of them and wondered whether the priest knew or didn’t. Didn’t he suspect anything? He lived in the institution, so could he really not know about the Jewish women in hiding there, and the Jewish men too? ...

The priest repeated the child’s name tenderly. He put one hand lightly on his head in a gesture of benediction. His hand hung for a moment in the air and then descended as lightly as a caress. He didn’t ask if he was obedient and loved Jesus, like priests often do. The two of them hugged each other and listened to the shots and the noises of exploding buildings, and at every louder explosion they shuddered simultaneously.

Just then we heard a loud stamping of feet somewhere deep underground and suddenly a unit of insurgents appeared out of the darkness of the tunnel. ... There were a few dozen of them. Some had rifles, some had revolvers and some had Molotov cocktails. They also carried machine-guns and grenades tied to their belts. They were very young. There was one Jew among them. ...

At eight o’clock we attended mass in the cellar on the other side of the courtyard. The altar, pews and confessional had been moved there. About a dozen soldiers went to confession before the battle. The shelter was down there. The chapel was in the shelter and next to it, in the wide, dark space which used to be a store-room, about a hundred sick people lying in bed. The midget came out of the open door of this huge shelter and knelt on the concrete floor by the altar. She was followed by the girl with the paralysed hand and the girl with the ecstatic face. They both knelt by the altar. Then the monstrous woman dragged herself in and crouched down beside them. Finally one of the nuns came in holding the girl with chorea. The girl was nodding her head and walking strangely. Every muscle on her face twitched when, rolling her eyes and waving her hands, she sat down at last and made the sign of the cross with a disobedient hand.

The soldiers in the pews watched this human debris. They saw the terror on their faces and the way their bodies shook at every shot, they saw their terrified eyes looking through the small window at the sky with its billows of dark smoke. It was a pathetic sight, this fear of death on the part of creatures so very disabled by fate. They didn’t leave the shelter for a single second and hid under the thickest walls when they heard the buzzing of a plane. ...

There was a group of about fifty people. They were surrounded by gendarmes and ordered to march through the gate to Leszno Street, which was on fire. That was the first

<sup>1951</sup> Szereszewska, *Memoirs from Occupied Warsaw, 1940–1945*, 297–357.

selection. A moment later the whistle could be heard again. Now they summoned the nuns, the priest, the organist, the lay servants and everyone not connected with the institution who had found themselves in the place on the first day of the Rising. ...

The courtyard was paved with small, yellow bricks. In the middle was a walled circle and in the circle grey earth where grass or even flowers should have grown. Now it contained graves, six crosses on six mounds. Five old women from our institution, and the sixth grave belonged to the insurgent. In the courtyard 16 nuns, the priest, the organist and the lay servants, all in a row. ...

I started saying goodbye to the priest and the nuns. I thanked them warmly for looking after me and everything good they had done for me while I was in the institution. Maciúś stood lost next to the priest and nuns. He turned pale and shivered when the priest placed both his hands on his head and blessed him for the journey into the unknown. ...

“Schnell! Schnell!” shouted one of the Germans ... I wanted to prolong the moment. Marysia took the child by the hand and they both went quickly towards the gate. One of the Germans hit me on the back with a whip and pushed me in their direction with his fist. ... Then we went out onto Leszno Street and it was one sea of flames. It was 14 August 1944 at eleven in the morning.

At the beginning of May 1945, when we returned from the camp and were staying in Kraków, I met a nun on the street wearing the habit of the Felician Sisters. I went up to her and asked, “Sister, what happened to the Felician Sisters in Warsaw? They had an institution on Leszno Street. I lived there for a while.”

“The nuns and the priest were allowed to go to Kraków. The lay servants were taken to Germany.”

“What about the rest? The 180 old and sick people.”

“They shot them all and set fire to the house. The house burnt down with all of them in it.” ...

“When did it happen, Sister?”

“It happened on 14 August, at twelve o’clock, at noon exactly.”<sup>1952</sup>

**R**aymond M. Berger’s mother was 28 years old when, in March 1941, the Germans forced her into the Kraków ghetto. She got hold of false identity documents and managed to escape from the ghetto in March 1943. With her false identity papers, she travelled to Lwów, where her sister and sister’s family lived, assuming the identity of Catholic Poles. They hid her in their small apartment.

After a German raid on the premises, she decided to go to Warsaw. Her sister had learned from her boss about a nun who was willing to hide Jews from the Germans. Sister Edith, the director of a convalescent home for ill and elderly

<sup>1952</sup> Szerezewska, *Memoirs from Occupied Warsaw, 1940–1945*, 365–77. According to the institution’s website, the Germans expelled the institution from its own premises to an abandoned building on Leszno Street in February 1943. When the Warsaw Uprising broke out in August 1944, the Germans shot the patients; the nuns and lay staff were sent to the transit camp in Pruszków. See Zakład Specjalny dla Chronicznie Chorych: Historia, Internet: <http://feliciankinowowiejska.pl/historia>.

patients, agreed to take her in, knowing that she was Jewish. Sister Edith told the staff and patients that she was a Polish woman. When she despaired at ever seeing her sister again, Sister Edith comforted her.<sup>1953</sup>

Berger's mother survived the war at this institution, as did another Jewish woman whose name has not been established.

Another such shelter for Jews was the home for infirm nuns known as Nazareth (Nazaret in Polish) in Międzyzlesie, a suburb of Warsaw, belonging to the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary. It was housed in a five-room building. Despite their own poor state of health, the nuns, who were mostly elderly, took in several Jewish women and, for a short period of time, two Jewish girls, ages four and ten, who were later transferred to orphanages. One of the Jewish women was 53-year-old Janina, who had sung in the Warsaw opera chorus and had striking Semitic features. Miraculously, she escaped the notice of two German raids on the premises.<sup>1954</sup>

The Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union (Unia Rzymska Zakonu św. Urszuli—*urszulanki Unii Rzymskiej*), who operated schools and boarding schools, engaged in clandestine teaching during the German occupation. With the approval of Mother Emmanuela (Oktawia) Mrozowska, the provincial superior, they sheltered many Jews, both children and adults, in their convents throughout German-occupied Poland in locations that included Warsaw, Kołomyja, Kraków, Lublin, Lwów, Siercza near Wieliczka, and Tarnów.<sup>1955</sup> Based on her involvement in the rescue activities, Sister Stella (Maria) Trzeciecka, wrote the following account.

Faced by the whole magnitude of peril that threatened for various “crimes” during World War II, many nuns assumed personal responsibility for various deeds and kept their superiors and mates wholly uninformed. Mothers Superior behaved in a like manner. That fact today, after the lapse of many years, is a serious limitation on our ability to recreate the true scale of the aid which we gave, to the extent our capabilities allowed, to our Jewish brethren.

<sup>1953</sup> Raymond M. Berger, “Sister Edith Made a Choice,” *The Times of Israel* (blog), February 9, 2018, and additional information provided by the author.

<sup>1954</sup> Frącek, *Siostry Rodziny Maryi z pomocą dzieciom polskim i żydowskim w Międzyzlesiu i Aninie*, 80–83.

<sup>1955</sup> On the rescue activities of the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union, see also Klemensa Misiurewicz, “Postawa Sióstr Urszulanek Unii Rzymskiej w czasie II wojny światowej wobec osób potrzebujących pomocy,” *Życie Konsekrowane*, nos. 3–4 (131–32) (2018): 131–39; Agata Mirek, “Udział sióstr zakonnych w ratowaniu ludności żydowskiej w Polsce w latach 1939–1945 na przykładzie wybranych zgromadzeń,” in Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 135–60, at pp. 141–42.

Accordingly, what follows is just a handful of reminiscences based on authentic reports of Sisters who were, for one reason or another, involved in those matters. This was not an organized action (our principal tasks were clandestine instruction and running of canteens, especially for the working intelligentsia). But daily situations created a need for assisting people, and that we did.

In Warsaw we ran a boarding house for 60 female students on behalf of the Central Relief Council (RGO). The house was at 5, Przejazd St. There were several Jewish girls among our charges and not one of them perished despite the Warsaw Uprising and the summary deportation of the entire boarding house, together with the Sisters, to the camp at Bietigheim and later to Heilbronn. They all had 'Aryan' identity documents. The out-buildings of our compound at Przejazd St. formed part of the Warsaw Ghetto, so both the Sisters and their young charges lived through the infernal experience of the Ghetto Uprising and the ensuing massacre of the Jews. They were eye-witnesses of the most tragic scenes imaginable. Among others, they saw how Jews, intent on saving their children, hurled them from ghetto windows down to their acquaintances or relatives who were standing outside. Many a time, the children were smashed against the pavement.

We stored our modest supplies of food in the basement of the boarding house. Many a time the provisions would vanish and Sisters would hear a patter of feet in the basement. Soon they discovered that there was an aperture in the cellar wall through which Jews pushed forward to the basement. Thenceforth, Sisters left food in front of that passage and the food disappeared. In connection with that hole and the venturing of Jews beyond the ghetto precincts, the Sisters lived through a harsh experience when an armed Nazi ordered Sister Izabela S. [Spinek] to lead him into the basement. She was to be shot if Jews were found there. Luckily, they were not, nor was the aperture discovered. The Sister survived but she was immediately moved to another house. Nor was that the end of the affair. One day, a Jew pierced through the ghetto wall right into our dormitory. He begged us to fetch him somebody with whom he had an agreement about the escape. It was a dramatic moment—he standing in the breach and guards nearby. The house on Przejazd St. was encircled by guards who kept watching that Jews did not run away from the ghetto. The Jews escaping through the hole dug in our basement were helped courageously by Sister Teodozja Hoffman who directed them in disguise to a home for the aged in the same outbuilding. There was another incident. A certain young Jewess insisted by all means to get into the ghetto in order to join her family there. Sister Lia P. [Przybylska], though she realized the extent of the danger, led her through the chain of guards and saw that the Jewess found her way, by covert tracks of course, to her family.

Also in Warsaw, at 7, Oczki St., we ran a canteen in which we cooked an average of 2,000 meals every day on behalf of the Central Relief Council (RGO). Lots of people milled about the street until 4 p.m. After that hour, when everything calmed down, Jewish children turned up as if they had sprung from the earth. They penetrated to that district all the way from the ghetto. In the main, they were small boys and were excellently organized. One of them would stand guard at the point where Oczki St. runs into Starynkiewicz Square and another at the intersection of Oczki St. and Chałubiński St. In case of danger the little tot would whistle and the children vanished like air. Usually, there were several sometimes over a dozen children, each carrying a can. The food was always there for the Sisters would already have made an allowance for the arrival of the children. Quietly and efficiently, the

cans were filled. This became part of the daily routine at Oczki St. throughout the existence of the ghetto. Not once was there a bad break and, although the ghetto was at a distance of from 7 to 8 minutes brisk walk from the canteen, the children always managed to keep the appointment.

After the demolition of the house on Łowicka St., we lived in a villa of Mrs [Zofia] Potocka at 107a Puławska St., also in Warsaw. In the years 1942–1943, Sisters Konstantyna [Aniela Baranowska] and Imelda [Bogumiła Adamska] took a charming Jewish girl into safekeeping. Her assumed name was Marta Krzywicka. The Sisters rented a room with Mrs Horwat for her. Shortly afterward, a policeman took an interest in her and she had to change her domicile. Marta remained in hiding in Warsaw until her father sent her a passport from Uruguay. She went with the whole transport full of misgivings: will the Germans keep an agreement? Alas, the entire transport was exterminated in Frankfurt.

At about the same time, a certain Jewish female physician [Maria Haller<sup>1956</sup>] was hiding at Puławska St. under Mrs Potocka's and our care. She was from Stanisławów. She later died of cancer. We also took into safekeeping the mother-in-law of Professor [Szymon] Askenazy and placed her at Królikarnia as a purported cancer patient. This we could do thanks to the assistance of Mrs Potocka and Father [Edward] Wojtczak. She died a natural peaceful death there, and was baptized before passing away. We likewise helped Professor Askenazy's daughter Janina, whom a traitor later gave up to the Gestapo. She was tortured and murdered at the Gestapo headquarters in Warsaw at Szucha Avenue.

Our Cracow [Kraków] convent on Starowiślna Street and the subordinated convent in Siercza also assisted the Jews, though the task was difficult in view of German presence in the Siercza house. For example, we hid Janeczka, one of the third-form pupils from the primary school away for a few months. We gave financial assistance to rescue our seventh-form pupil, Hala Friedman, from the hands of the Gestapo. Unfortunately, that worthy girl did not survive despite frantic efforts of her faithful nanny. The money, as it later turned out, was pocketed by blackmailers and we never again heard of Hala. Also, we concealed in our house a woman whose first name was Felicja (we do not know her surname [see the account of Felicja Kohn below]). A very painful experience was the kidnapping by the Gestapo of two little girls—Ludka and Hanka Boroniec [also given as Borometz], whom we were hiding away among Polish and several other Jewish girls in Siercza. An automobile pulled up at night, a band of Gestapo officers rushed into the dormitory, lighting electric torches into the faces of the sleeping children and pulled the two semiconscious girls out of their beds.<sup>1957</sup> Also in Siercza, a Mr Hilman was our cart driver for a long time.

<sup>1956</sup> Agata Mirek, "Udział siostr zakonnych w ratowaniu ludności żydowskiej w Polsce w latach 1939–1945 na przykładzie wybranych zgromadzeń," in Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 135–60, at p. 142.

<sup>1957</sup> The Boroniec (Borometz) sisters were seized on August 16, 1943, after their uncle fell into the hands of the Germans and disclosed their whereabouts under torture. The pleas of their guardian, Sister Aniela Pietrzyk, proved fruitless. The girls were taken to the Płaszów concentration camp. Hanka perished, whereas Ludka survived incarceration. See Martyna Grądzka, "Kościoł katolicki w okupowanym Krakowie w pomocy Żydom: Zarys problematyki badawczej," in Klimek, *Kościół krakowski 1939–1945*, 143.

On behalf of the RGO [Rada Główna Opiekuńcza, a social welfare agency] we ran a home for resettlers in Cracow on Krupnicza St. For a while the director of that home was the Mother Superior of our Lvov [Lwów] convent, a fine human being with a perspicacious mind and the best of hearts. There were Jewish children among the resettlers. Among others, Sister Celestyna T. [Mieczysława Talarczyk, incorrectly given as Tatarczyk] escorted a Jewish child from Kołomyja in the east there. There were also Eryka M., Genia K., and others.

After the abolition of that home, thirty children, one-half of them Jewish, were moved to Rękawki [Rękawka] St. One day, another four-years-old tenant was added. He was brought by a tram conductor who told us the boy had been left on his tram all day, nibbling at a piece of bread. We called the boy “Antoś.” He later went to Kochanów where the RGO moved the children’s home from Rękawki St. with the others. Our Ursuline Sisters tidied up an abandoned house there, preparing it for the same complement of children. Apart from the Sisters, the little Jews had other invisible caretakers; their next of kin of those families which escaped from the hands of the enemy. From time to time, one or another would turn up for a momentary visit to see their beloved children and then would disappear in a mysterious fashion. One night, for example, a Sister saw a father sitting at the bed of a sick child. All of those children survived.

Jagusia, a 15-years-old, fled to our house in Tarnów while Jews from the local ghetto were being driven to the railway station. She stayed with us in hiding for a fortnight, and then we put her somewhere else. The girl survived. [Józefa Gross was employed at the boarding school. Józefa Gross was employed as a teacher at the boarding school.<sup>1958</sup>]

Many resettlers passed through our Lublin convent during the war. There was a considerable number of Jews among them who hid away for shorter or longer periods. Among them was 18-years-old Marysia from Chełmno, who spent a month there. Mr Stanisław D. [Dąbrowski] worked and lived with us for a couple of years, and thanks to that he survived. We also gave material assistance to our former pupils of Jewish origin. Our Sister Wiktoria Bogacz helped the Lublin community in an especially selfless manner. People used to call her “Mother of the Poor.” Thanks to the unqualified endorsement to the action, given by the then Mother Superior of the convent, the splendidly righteous Mother Tekla Busz, Sister Wiktoria doled out up to a thousand bowls of soup every day. Nobody ever asked: who are you with a Semitic face? The nature of Sister Wiktoria Bogacz was best defined by her name (Bogacz stands for “rich” in Polish). This simple-hearted but magnanimous Sister never seemed to run short of bread, soup, or even ‘delicacies’ like a piece of sausage or lard, which she gave away to Poles, Jews, and inmates from the Majdanek camp alike.

Mother Teresa Dettlaff, the Mother Superior of our Kołomyja convent, aided Jews on a large scale, and the Sisters from her convent participated resolutely in her action. Most especially on grim days of terror—round-ups or executions—our Kołomyja house became an asylum for those that had managed to run away with their lives. With terrible despair, they would look through basement windows and see their relations and acquaintances being led away for execution. Sister Hiacynta S. [Hiacynta (Stanisława) Suchta, incorrectly given as Suchla] served most frequently as our courier, escorting Jews to their hideouts.

<sup>1958</sup> Klemensa Misiurewicz, “Postawa Sióstr Urszulanek Unii Rzymskiej w czasie II wojny światowej wobec osób potrzebujących pomocy,” *Życie Konsekwowane*, nos. 3–4 (131–32) (2018): 131–39, at p. 135.

Situations were sometimes fraught with drama but, luckily, our aid was most effective. It required, however, plenty of vigilance, acumen, courage and sacrifice. Among her many charges, Sister Hiacenta escorted Mrs Rozalia Wrońska (an assumed name), [the daughter of a local pharmacist], to our convent in Zakopane, and then on to Raciechowice to her family who had selflessly been giving a helping hand in that action. She brought Mr Ebstein [Eckstein? Ebenstein?], a dentist to that same place. He later went into hiding in Nowy Sącz [with the family of Sister Celestyna Talarczyk] where he spent a long time and managed to survive. At the beginning of 1943, Sister Hiacenta escorted 4-years-old Ewa Zawadzka (an assumed name) to her native regions of the country. The trip with the child was a dangerous ordeal for she panicked at the sight of troops and policemen and could easily betray both of them. Therefore, a few months later, she had to be moved to her mother who had been hiding away further eastward. The undersigned, being a member of the Lvov [Lwów] convent, escorted little Ewa from Tarnów to Stanisławów. The child behaved quietly, but just before reaching Stanisławów she addressed some woman with a telling Jewish accent: “I think I know you, Mrs” ... Naturally, I was greatly alarmed, but everything ended all right. A third nun took Ewa on her further journey east and the child survived the war.

Apart from the event related above, the Lvov convent helped Mother Teresa Dettlaff in rescuing Kołomyja Jews on several occasions. Accordingly, on 24 October, 1942, Sister Ewelina Z. [Janina Zasada] escorted 10-years-old Ewa Kassler [Kessler?] from Lvov to Warsaw where she accommodated the girl with the [Franciscan] Order of the Family of Mary. The girl survived the war. She was a step-daughter of the above-mentioned Mr Ebstein. His wife, Ewa’s mother, fared worse. She made her residence in Lvov but was not cautious enough and perished. Blackmailers cashed in on our contacts with her. They followed the tracks down to Kołomyja. The situation was dangerous. They threatened Sister Celestyna T. [Talarczyk] with arrest; eventually, a hard-gotten ransom of 10,000 złotys saved us and calmed the storm. Acting with foresight, however, the superiors of the Order transferred Mother Teresa Dettlaff to Cracow.

In 1941 or 1942, we took Professor Józef Feldman into safekeeping for the two weeks’ duration of an anti-Jewish campaign. We placed him at 12, Jacek [św. Jacka] St. During that time, illicit identity documents were made out in his name. He got them, left for Warsaw, and survived.<sup>1959</sup>

Mother Elżbieta [Cecylia] Łubieńska and Mother Władysława Lewicka assumed responsibility for our aid to Jews in Lvov. For both of them the Ebstein affair, related above, was a harsh experience. First one then the other headed the convent. During her term

<sup>1959</sup> Józef Feldman, professor of history at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, was assisted by a number of Poles in addition to the Ursuline Sisters in Lwów. He was also sheltered by the Conventual Franciscans in Kraków, Czystki (near Lwów) and Hanaczów (near Lwów—in Hanaczów, under the care of Fr. Wiktor Błaż), and by the Bernardines (Franciscans) in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska (near Kraków). Feldman converted to Catholicism and died in 1946. See Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 478, 534; Andrzej Śródka and Paweł Szczawiński, comp., *Biogramy uczonych polskich: Materiały o życiu i działalności członków AU w Krakowie, TNW, PAU, PAN*, Part 1: *Nauki społeczne*, book 1: A–J (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1983), 351–54.

as Mother Superior, Władysława Lewicka was truly fearless in aiding camp inmates and refugees. It was she who admitted a Mrs Roszko, an elderly Jewish convert, together with her adult daughter Maria to the convent for about a year. The elder Mrs Roszko later moved from the convent to the flat of Mrs Antoniewicz, the mother of one of our nuns, where she died a peaceful death. Her daughter took another hiding place, was eventually escorted by Sister Celestyna T. [Talarczyk] to a gamekeeper's house, and survived the war.

We also gave a helping hand to a Lvov kiln manager (Rosenberg?). Mother Władysława took his jewelry and trunks and other belongings into safekeeping. Every once in a while, his 15-years-old daughter, Marysia, would come and spend part of the day with us while he was taking out some of his things for ransom. He survived for a long time. We do not know what happened to him later.

The Gadziński family, our neighbours in Lvov, also took a young Jewish couple into hiding. They deposited their belongings with us and then would select some of the things, little by little, to pay for their upkeep.

One more fragment from our Lvov contacts. We were on friendly terms with Doctor K. and his family. That excellent man devoted plenty of attention and loving care to the poor, whom he not only examined but also supplied with medicines. Mrs K. was of Jewish origin. One day, when he was in town, the Gestapo came and searched the flat. That brave woman, his wife, succeeded in destroying all papers compromising her husband (he was a member of an organization), and did it practically in the presence of the Gestapo. In the meantime, a chimney-sweep entered. ... He then left the flat, but kept a watch in the street until he could warn the Doctor that the Gestapo had come to his home. Mrs K. and her son (a school boy) were arrested as hostages for the Doctor. The organization forbade him to report to the Gestapo and he despaired lest the Jewish origin of his wife be discovered. He spent a few days with us, later came every day to fetch some bread. Mrs K. was detained for six months, then set free together with the son.<sup>1960</sup>

## Rescue activities by the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union in Warsaw and Kraków are confirmed in *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations*.

In 1942, when the Germans deported the Jews from the village of Szreniawa to the nearby Cracow [Kraków] ghetto, the Sznajders tried to find a hiding place with Christian farmers in the village. However, the only member of the family who managed to find a hiding place was 16-year-old Genia Sznajder, who was taken in by Barbara Dobrolubow, an old school friend of hers who, together with her family, looked after Sznajder devotedly, without expecting anything in return. A few weeks later, the Dobrolubows decided to send her to relatives of theirs in Warsaw, where no one knew her, on the assumption that, with her Aryan looks, she had a better chance of surviving there. In Warsaw, Sznajder was taken in by Zygmunt and Jadwiga Koczorowski, Dobrolubow's uncle and aunt, who looked after her, obtained Aryan papers for her, and registered her at a convent high school belonging to the Urszulanki [Ursuline] Sisters. The Koczorowskis showed loving concern for Sznajder, who stayed in the home run by the sisters until the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising in late summer 1944. Sznajder was sent to Germany with the other children of the home

<sup>1960</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 352–59.

and Koczorowski was sent to a concentration camp. After the war, they met up again in Warsaw and Sznajder stayed with the Koczorowskis until she finished her studies. In 1954, Sznajder immigrated to Israel.<sup>1961</sup>

Olga Zawadzka, originally from Lwow [Lwów], moved to the village of Cuszow [Cuszów], Kielce district, after her marriage. Between the years 1925 and 1930, she had been a student in Jan Kazimierz University in Lwow, where she had befriended a Jewish woman named Frida Kohn, who was a mathematics student. After Olga left Lwow, the two friends lost contact. When the Germans took over Lwow, a mutual friend turned to Olga and asked her if she would hide Fela in her home. Olga, bearing in mind the fact that Fela was a Jew, told her warmly that Fela would be most welcome. Fela arrived in Cuszow and Olga, with the help of friends and a priest, obtained a false birth certificate and Kennkarte for her made out in the name of Maria Zajaczkowska [Zajaczkowska]. Fela asked Olga to help a friend of hers, Klara Nachtgaist, who was spending entire days in churches, too frightened to leave. Olga welcomed her into her home as well. Klara already had Aryan papers made out in the name of Julia Nahorayska. In the summer of 1942, Olga went to Lwow again, where she agreed to bring back Nina Drucker (later Noe Levine), the seven-year-old daughter of the director of the Lwow ghetto hospital, Dr. Herman Drucker, to Cuszow. Olga took Nina, who had a birth certificate in the name of Janina Witeszczak, into her home. Whenever the need arose, the child was either put up in the Sisters of St. Urszula [Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union] boarding school in Cracow [Kraków] or the Sisters of the Holy Ghost [Sisters Canonesses of the Holy Spirit de Saxia] boarding school in Busko [Busko-Zdrój]. Olga represented the fugitive child as a daughter of relatives who had died during the war.<sup>1962</sup>

**F**elicity Tendler (later Gnieslaw) was another Jewish girl enrolled at the Ursuline Sisters' boarding school in Kraków. The following account appears in the Yad Vashem entry recognizing Helena Kruszelnicka, and her mother, Malwina Kruszelnicka:

Before the war, Felicity Tendler lived with her parents, Anna (née Eck) and Edward, in Lwów. They were a happy family; Edward practiced medicine in Lwów and nearby Tumacz. Felicity was very small, and has very few memories of her prewar life. ... When the Nazis occupied Lwów, Edward Tendler contacted Helena Kruszelnicka, a friend who was also acquainted with Anna's physician brother, Leon Eck. Kruszelnicka lived with her 75-year-old mother Malwina, and worked as a secretary. Edward persuaded Kruszelnicka to take in little Felicity. There was no financial arrangement involved; the arrangement was made only through the bonds of friendship. Before departing, Edward gave Kruszelnicka the address of his niece in Melbourne, as well as that of Anna's sister in Denver, Colorado. He would never see his daughter again; he perished in the Janowska camp.

Felicity stayed hidden in Helena and Malwina's basement in Lwów from 1941 until 1943. She never allowed out, and there was little food. False papers were obtained for her under the name of Krystyna Torosiewicz and later, Krystyna Kruszelnicka. In 1943, Helena took Felicity to the Saint Ursula's Convent in Kraków, where she joined the boarding school.

<sup>1961</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 360.

<sup>1962</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 928–29.

For the remainder of the war she remained at the convent, without contact with anyone she knew. When the other children went home for the holidays, she was looked after by the nuns. She was frightened and felt imprisoned, but she was safe and survived the war, despite its interminable dangers. She remembers how one night, two German soldiers came to the convent looking for Jewish children and got very close to her, but fortunately did not discover her. After the war, Helena retrieved Felicity from the convent and they settled in Kraków.<sup>1963</sup>

**B**efore they were killed in a mass execution of Jews, the parents of Monika Goldwasser (b. 1941) placed her with a family in a village near Myślenice, not far from Kraków. After a short stay there, Monika was sent to the Ursuline convent in Kraków. Orphanages were overflowing so children were often placed in foster homes. Monika was taken in by Anna and Maksymilian Kamiński, a childless couple, who were aware from the beginning of the girl's origins as she had come from the convent with a note containing her real name, date of birth, and the names of her parents. Monika, who was called Łucja, did not learn about her past until she was 22 years old. Her adoptive mother disclosed this information to her shortly before she died. Eventually, Monika was able to establish contact with her mother's sister, who lived in Israel.<sup>1964</sup>

**J**anina Szapiro (later Kuśmierek, b. 1926) converted to Catholicism together with her mother, Aniela Szapiro, at the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Warsaw ghetto. After escaping from the ghetto before the Great Deportation of the summer of 1942, Janina joined her father, Leon Szapiro, who was passing as a Christian in Kraków. Janina was enrolled at the boarding school of the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union under the name of Janina Szczygielska. Her father would visit her posing as her uncle. He was arrested as a Pole in March 1943 and sent to Auschwitz. Janina remained at the school for several months after his arrest. Afterwards, she returned to Warsaw with her mother, who had been hiding in Kraków, and resided in the home of her paternal uncle's sister-in-law, who was Catholic. Neither of her parents survived the war.<sup>1965</sup>

**A**rmed with birth certificates of deceased girls provided by Rev. Waszczyszyn (?), a Greek Catholic priest who was a friend of their uncle, the twin sisters Rose

<sup>1963</sup> Helena and Malwina Kruszelnicka, RD.

<sup>1964</sup> Kołacińska-Gałązka, *Dzieci Holocaustu mówią...*, vol. 5, 319; Stępień, *Witnesses to Polish-Jewish History*, 32–33; Oral history interview with Monika Goldwasser, August 11, 2016, Virtual Shtetl, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Internet: <https://sztetl.org.pl/en/oral-history/182507-monika-goldwasser>.

<sup>1965</sup> Testimony of Janina Kusmierek, SFV, Interview code 19296.

Roth (later Rose Moskowitz, b. 1925) and Irena Roth left their native city of Lwów bound for Kraków. Passing as Józefa Melnyk, Rose was placed in an Ursuline convent in Kraków by her Polish friend, under the frequently used guise of being the daughter of a Polish officer who had been arrested.

Another Polish friend arranged employment for Irena, under a false name, in Zakopane. Unfortunately, Irena was denounced to the Gestapo by a Jewish woman from Lwów who recognized her in the street. (This woman cooperated with the Gestapo in exchange for her own life, a promise that was rarely kept. Irena's high school teacher from Lwów, also in Zakopane, was yet another of her victims.) Irena was sent to Auschwitz, where she perished.

When word of her sister's arrest reached Rose, by way of the friend who had secured the placement for Irena in Zakopane, Rose was alarmed. Fearing that her sister might disclose her whereabouts under torture, Irena managed to get herself picked up in one of the frequent street round-ups of Poles, who were then sent to work in Germany. Irena survived the war, but her parents and sister perished.<sup>1966</sup>

Activities of the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union in Kraków are also recorded in the accounts of Felicja Kohn from Lwów, who was employed as a teacher, and Wanda Załuska, a woman of Jewish origin from Kraków. The assistance of Rev. Edward Lubowiecki is also noted.

In Cracow [Kraków] I was put up for the night by the mother superior of a convent (Mother Superior Łubieńska of the Ursuline Sisters), despite continuous visitations by the Gestapo. Another sister from the same convent recommended me for suitable jobs, thus making it possible for me to survive. ... Also in Cracow I was very warmly received by Myszka P., who got hold of a *Kennkarte* for me, from the Reverend [Edward] Lubowiecki.<sup>1967</sup>

The nuns in the convent [in Kraków] were extraordinary. They helped us—my family, the PPS [Polish Socialist Party] organization, and later Żegota—tremendously during the war. I would have been unable to secure half of the birth certificates and identity documents without the help of that Ursuline convent. They behaved extraordinarily.<sup>1968</sup>

Another Jewish woman, Felicja Soluch, was employed in the communal kitchen located at the Ursuline convent in Kraków.<sup>1969</sup>

<sup>1966</sup> Testimony of Rose Moskowitz, SFV, Interview code 9851.

<sup>1967</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 259, 262.

<sup>1968</sup> Melchior, *Zagłada a tożsamość*, 152.

<sup>1969</sup> Martyna Grądzka, "Kościół katolicki w okupowanym Krakowie w pomocy Żydom: Zarys problematyki badawczej," in Klimek, *Kościół krakowski 1939–1945*, 125–54, 146; Agata Mirek, "Udział sióstr zakonnych w ratowaniu ludności żydowskiej w Polsce w latach 1939–1945 na przykładzie wybranych zgromadzeń," in Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 135–60, at p. 142.

The story of Wanda Załuska (née Nelken) is especially distinguished. Although baptized a Catholic at birth in 1913, Wanda's mother had converted to Catholicism as a teenager and had married Dr. Benedykt Nelken, a Jew. Wanda graduated from the high school run by the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union in Kraków, and she studied art history student at the Jagiellonian University. In 1938, she married Kazimierz Załuski, a Catholic, who spent the war years in England.

A member of the Polish Socialist Party, Wanda joined the Polish underground, the Home Army, and devoted her efforts to helping Jews, first in her native Kraków, then in Warsaw. Using her contacts with the Ursuline Sisters and Archbishop Adam Sapieha of Kraków, she obtained false birth and baptismal certificates for Jews. When conditions in Kraków became hazardous, she moved to Warsaw. She brought false documents to Jews inside the ghetto. At the orphanage run by Janusz Korczak, she taught Jewish children how to pass as Catholics, brought them out of the ghetto with the help of the Home Army, and placed them with the Ursuline Sisters, who also ran institutions in Warsaw.<sup>1970</sup>

A housekeeper named Marysia brought Hana Krajterkraft (b. 1935), who had a false identity document in the name of Regina Dziedzio, to Kazimierz Bogucki's home in Lublin. He and his wife took care of Hana, pretending she was their niece. She was enrolled at the Ursuline Sisters' grammar school, where she learned the basics of the Catholic religion.<sup>1971</sup> Towards the end of the war, Hana was transferred to a Catholic orphanage in Miechów. The Yad Vashem Archives document the assistance provided by the Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union in Lublin.

Hana Krajterkraft was born in Puławy, Poland, in 1935. In 1938 her family moved to Warsaw; it was there that the war caught up with them. The two parents and three children were all sent into the ghetto. The conditions there were severe: food was in such short supply that Hana and other children were forced to sneak out of the ghetto and steal potatoes to stave off starvation.

About a year and a half later, in 1941, Hana's aunt Blima took her out of the ghetto and back to Puławy, where an agreement had been reached with Rozalia Misztal (b. 1896), a former neighbor. Rozalia lived with her husband and daughter and took Hana in as a second child. Hana stayed with the Misztals for about a year. Rozalia managed to obtain Aryan identity papers for her in the name of Regina Dziedzio. Hana was free to walk about, and this eventually led to disaster. One day Hana was walking home and saw Germans by the house. She started running, and they shot in the air. When they caught up with the child,

<sup>1970</sup> Jerzy S. Majewski, "Niezwyczajne życie Wandy Nelken-Załuskiej: Została odznaczona," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, April 3, 2014.

<sup>1971</sup> Kazimierz Bogucki, RD.

they asked why she was running. Because of the shooting, she replied, and the soldiers did not recognize her as Jewish. This made it clear that staying in Puławy was no longer safe.

Rozalia began to look for another Polish family willing to take Hana (now known as Regina). The first family she found proved unsuitable for the girl. The housekeeper suggested someone she knew, and they agreed to take Hana. The Boguckis (recognized as Righteous Among the Nations in 1981) helped other Jews besides Hana-Regina. They also, however, belonged to the resistance movement and needed to move about. A small child could not be towed along.

Thus Hana-Regina found herself changing shelters again. This time she was taken to a Catholic orphanage in Miechów. She lived there and went to school until the liberation. After that, she continued studying. In 1960 the Boguckis went to live in Warsaw and brought Regina to live with them as she completed her education. She remained in close contact with them and called them Aunt and uncle for the rest of their lives. Unfortunately she lost touch with Rozalia.<sup>1972</sup>

Extensive assistance was provided by the Albertine Sisters (*albertynki*), formally the Congregation of the Sisters Serving the Poor (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Albertynek Posługujących Ubogim), in at least 29 of their convents and institutions throughout German-occupied Poland. Many of the nuns' own accounts, which were compiled in 1961 and summarized (below) by the order's historian, have been confirmed by Jewish testimonies.<sup>1973</sup>

When the Servant of God Brother Albert [Adam Chmielowski] founded his orphanages in 1888, he helped everyone regardless of their status, nationality or religious beliefs. The orphanage took in Catholics, Ruthenians, Jews, in other words everyone.

Religious organizations founded by Brother Albert worked in this same spirit. The Albertine Sisters never turned away anyone who needed help from their orphanages. In the years before the outbreak of the war in 1939, the nurseries run by this order contained many Jewish children who were cared for with the same love as the other children. When in 1942 the terror against the Jews increased sharply, many Jewish children found shelter in the order's orphanages. Jews were to be found in 29 institutions operated by this order. In all 95 Jews were taken in, of whom 50 survived in hiding. Twelve were apprehended and killed; the fate of 35 people is not known. These statistics are based on the testimony of 50 Sisters who are still alive. However, many Sisters who were involved in the running of the order's orphanages have died and thus many facts will never surface.

The following are summaries of statements obtained from the Albertine Sisters. Many of the names of persons who received assistance have been forgotten over time. In some cases people were never asked their names because it was safer not to know. Many of those helped never provided their real names; often they used false identification.

<sup>1972</sup> Rozalia Misztal, RD.

<sup>1973</sup> A summary of these accounts, with some omissions, are also found in Kurek, *Your Life Is Worth Mine*, 145–57.

## I. Kraków—Shelter at 47 Krakowska Street

1. An unknown person brought two Jewish children to the shelter. One child was ten, the other eleven years old. It turned out that one of these “girls” was actually a boy dressed as a girl. Because the children went to chapel regularly and prayed, they did not arouse any suspicion. Despite numerous searches conducted by the Germans, these two children survived and were later taken, probably to Sweden.<sup>1974</sup>

2. A girl named Marysia, the daughter of a Jewish doctor from Kraków, was occasionally paid a visit by her grandmother. This child did not want to go to chapel and stated openly that she was Jewish and did not need to pray. Some women working at the orphanage reported her to the Gestapo. Most likely she did not survive.

3. Mrs. Barska and her grown daughter—their names had been changed—were sheltered in the shelter for a period of time. During a search by the Germans they were warned by Sister Urbana and escaped through a fence. Their fate is not known.<sup>1975</sup>

<sup>1974</sup> The children in question were Hanna and Bernard Kempler. See Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 370–71; *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 542, 939. See also the memoir of Hanna Kempler (later Anita Lobel), Lobel, *No Pretty Pictures*, portions of which are reproduced earlier.

<sup>1975</sup> The women in question were Irma Prinz and her daughter, Janina Prinz (later Janina Kozma, b. 1920). The testimony of Janina Prinz differs somewhat from this account. After obtaining false documents under the name of Barska from the Polish underground, Janina and her mother moved to Lwów. They had to leave Lwów when their documents were checked and found to be bogus. Upon returning to Kraków, they stayed in the home of the family’s former maid before presenting themselves at the Albertine Sisters’ convent, posing as Catholic Poles who had escaped from a work camp. The nuns took them in without asking for identity documents. They remained at the convent for two and a half years, where they were known by the name of Barska, working at various tasks like cooking and laundry and looking after some of the charges, who included the homeless poor and mentally handicapped persons from institutions that had been closed by the Germans. The nuns were friendly and did not question them about their background. During the frequent Gestapo inspections, Janina and her mother would hide. Later on, posing as expellees from Eastern Poland, they were able to acquire legal documents under the name of Rozsadowski (Janina and Irena). While Janina was away from the convent (she had a day job as a housekeeper for a Polish family), the Gestapo raided the convent on December 22, 1944 and arrested Janina’s mother and some other residents. Janina believes they were denounced by a maid on the staff. Janina was warned and did not return to that convent. She went to the Albertine Sister’s convent on Koletek Street, where she remained for a few days. She was befriended by a woman who took Janina into her home. The city was liberated on January 18, 1945. Janina learned that her mother had been taken to the Montelupich prison and perished in unknown circumstances. After the war, Janina visited with an unidentified Jewish woman, a runaway from Bełżec, who had also stayed at the convent on Krakowska Street. Janina reunited with her father, who had divorced her mother before the war, and his new wife and two children, all of whom had survived in hiding. See the testimony of Janina Kozma, SFV, Interview code 27459; Testimony of Janina Kozma, William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum (Atlanta), Esther and Herbert Taylor Oral History Collection.

4. Elżbieta Sękowska was betrayed to the Germans. Sister Urbana therefore placed her in a room with the chronically ill, where no one walked around. She stayed there for two months not once leaving the room. She was cared for by the Sisters during this time. After the war she left for Palestine. She lives with her married daughters and is in good health. She was very grateful to the Sisters and to this day writes and sends food packages. Her last letter is dated December 14, 1960. In that letter she sends her holiday greetings, wishing “Blessings from the Child Jesus.” She writes that she lives comfortably under a beautiful sun with her daughters and grandchildren who love and respect her. Her oldest daughter’s only regret is that she cannot make her young once more. Her address is c/o Leonora Awiezer, Kirjat-Sefer 4, Tel Aviv, Israel.

5. Together with these people there was a young girl named Zosia Kerocka. No one knew whether she was Jewish or not because she never admitted it to anyone. Several times she was almost taken to the ghetto but each time she stated steadfastly that they should shoot her outside in the courtyard because she would not go with them. Sister Urbana protected her saying that she was sure that she was not Jewish. Zosia was very bright and hardworking. She went to school and received her high-school diploma. She is presently a teacher in Warsaw and has occasional contact with the Sisters to whom she has remained very grateful.

These statements were made by Sister Urbana and Sister Seweryna. Sister Urbana stated that there may have been other Jews but she does not remember the particulars.

## II. Kraków—Nursery at 10 Kołetek Street

The director of this institution was Sister Hermiana. During the height of the terror against the Jews more children were left at the nursery. The children were identified as Jewish because they had Semitic physical features and the boys were often circumcised.

1. One evening, at about nine o’clock, a man and a woman brought a one-year-old child in a white astrakhan coat to the nursery. They said that as they were crossing the Vistula River in a boat, they had heard a splash and noticed something white floating in the water. They moved alongside of it and pulled a child out of the water. The boy was completely soaked through, blue in colour and unconscious. Sister Fidelisa spent about four hours with him until he regained consciousness. The boy had pneumonia. He eventually recovered and was healthy. He was named Józio. When the German terror abated, Jews came and took Jewish children away to their own institutions. Józio was also taken. Sometime later a Jewish man from Warsaw came to the nursery looking for his son. From the description that he gave, it was evident that Józio was his son. The father said that he had given the child over to a woman to be sheltered but the woman had disappeared and he had lost track of the child. He probably located his son at the Jewish institution where he had been taken.

2. The [Blue] police brought a lost four-year-old boy to the nursery. The child was bright and knew the Hail Mary but would not tell his name. He answered all questions about his name by saying that his last name is Wróblewski and sometimes he added that he must be Wróblewski because otherwise the Germans would kill him. We called him Tomuś. No one was allowed to undress or bathe him except the Sisters. He was, of course, circumcised and had typical Semitic features. He was terrified of the Germans. When the Germans came to search, the Sisters would lock him up in a room and tell him to sit quietly.

He understood and would not move. When the nursery changed locations to Rymanów [near Krosno], he accompanied the other children. After the war he was taken with others by a Jewish organization.

3. In Rymanów, there was a three-year-old circumcised boy. At the time the nursery doctor was a woman who was afraid of the authorities. Once she asked whether there were any Jewish children in the nursery. She was told by Sister Hermana in a very firm manner that she didn't need to know and that she would not provide that information. Furthermore, all the children were legally admitted. That is why, when the Jewish children were ill, the Sister Superior did not let the doctor examine them, for fear she would turn them in to the Germans. She cared for them herself and, thank God, none of them died.

4. Krzyś was officially accepted into the nursery as a Jew, the illegitimate child of a Jewish woman named Eisenberg. He was brought up in the nursery from infancy and was well behaved. He said his prayers with the other children. When a directive came from the authorities to take all Jewish children to the ghetto, the Mother Superior asked the Director of Social Services for permission to hold on to the child. The child, however, had Jewish identification papers. After protracted and strenuous efforts by the Mother Superior, the director decided to destroy the child's documents and from that time the child was entered as Krzyś NN (last name unknown). When the boy was seven years old he went to the nursery run by the Sisters Servants of Mary in Prądnik Czerwony. It was impossible to baptize him at this time because it would have been dangerous. The Sisters Servants of Mary did not know he was Jewish. New identification was made for him with the last name of Zaleski and Krzyś became a student of the organ. When he was 18 years old he needed a birth certificate. He went to the Sisters Servants of Mary and they in turn sent him back to us. When he was informed that he was never baptized, he decided to be baptized by Father [Władysław] Miś. He is today the organist in Łętowice, near Tarnów.

5. A woman from Mostowa Street brought a year-old baby as a foundling. He was named Staś. The child was very sickly and needed care and attention. As a three-year old, Staś went to a foster family who became very attached to him and put in much effort to help him with regard to his health. After some time his older brother and other relatives showed up. The Mother Superior had to admit that this child was indeed their relative. A tragedy ensued. Staś's new family did not want to give him up. The Jewish family took this family to court. After much unpleasantness, the child was taken by his relatives even though he did not want to leave his new family.<sup>1976</sup>

6. A certain woman came to the nursery and asked how to save a child from the ghetto. She was told to bring him to the nursery. She did just that. The father of the child came out of an underground sewer and handed over a year-old boy. This woman brought the child to the nursery. As the guardian of this child, she sometimes came to visit him and brought money for his upkeep. The child became sick. Because the parents were worried about the child or did not believe the woman, they wanted to see the child in order to be convinced that he was still alive. The father wanted to come see the child disguised as a workman. The Mother Superior decided against this because it might arouse the suspicion of the lay personnel of the nursery. The father decided to take the child back the

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<sup>1976</sup> This may refer to Henryk Weinman (Wajnman) whose rescue is described earlier somewhat differently.

same way he had brought him out. The child was two years old. In the rush he was taken to the ghetto in nursery clothes with the name of the institution, St. Joseph's Orphanage for Children, and an image of St. Joseph. When the Jews were driven from the ghetto, this child accompanied his parents and two relatives to a station where the Germans told everyone to get out and leave their belongings to one side. Little Ignas ran out with his arms outstretched in the direction of the German commander. His parents were paralyzed with fear when a German asked to whom the child belonged. Shaking from fear the father stepped forward and said the child was his. "How many are there of you?" he was asked. "Four," was the reply. "To the side." All four Jews with the child went to stand on the side, filled with fright. They were sure they would be shot because of this child's actions. Instead, all the other Jews were sent to their deaths, but they were left alone at an empty station with their belongings. The Germans had let them go. Maybe they were moved by the act of this little boy, but the fact is that a miracle had happened. The entire family eventually reached Westphalia and survived the war. In 1947 they came back and visited the nursery in Kraków and spoke to the Mother Superior. They were very grateful and said that the shirt with the emblem of St. Joseph had saved their lives. They made a donation that was generous at that time—a bolt of linen.

7. Wojtek was a nice little boy who did not like to play with the other children. He later said that his father had told him not to pray to holy paintings and not to cross himself. He was transferred to a different location.

All together at the nursery there survived ten children who were handed over to a Jewish organization after the war. Of those children who were brought in during the war, not one was taken to the ghetto. However, the children who were brought in before the war with Jewish identification, could not be prevented from being taken there and cried when they were taken away. They probably did not survive. There were eight of these children.

### III. Częstochowa—Overnight Shelter at 14 Wesola Street

When Jews were being shipped out of the ghetto, a woman about 32 years old came to us. She was a bright, thin, blonde with blue eyes and of average height. She had two children: Ludwik, a seven-year old, and Adusia, a three-year old. The children were bright and looked pleasant. At first they were held out to be the cousins of Sister Hugona and they were given a separate room on the second floor. They attended chapel regularly with the other children. The boy was a good observer who learned quickly how to conduct himself in chapel. Their mother was said to have been the owner of a small factory in Częstochowa. After a period of time we were able to obtain for her a Polish identity card with the name Janina Światała. The two children were registered under her name. This woman later began catechism lessons with Father [Tadeusz] Wiśniewski from our parish—St. Sigismund. Together with her children, behind closed doors, she was baptized.

She spoke German fluently and did not have Semitic features. She moved around freely and sometimes even travelled to earn an income. She smoked cigarettes. One time a Sister asked little Adusia what her name was. The little girl answered: Horowitz. The little boy turned red and started instructing his sister in a whisper: "Adusia, that was before. Your name is Światała now."

One of the women on staff went to the Gestapo and betrayed the Jewish women who were sheltered in our institution. It was at that time Mrs. Światała moved out to a private

apartment with her brother, who was also hiding in Częstochowa. While there, a German agent called the boy over and after confirming that he was Jewish, had all three of them shot in the Jewish cemetery in Częstochowa. The brother survived.

An older woman, about 50 years old, with an identity card with the name Zofia Kowalczyk, came from Radomsko. She was a small, thin, serious woman with regular features. She had blue eyes and greying dark-blond hair. She said that she had hidden in an attic with her two grown sons. The Germans had taken her sons but she had escaped through the fence wearing only one shoe. Because she had money, she was able to bribe a policeman who had stopped her along the way. She spent some time with us after arriving in Częstochowa. After the betrayal, which will be described in detail, she left our house. We do not know her fate. She might have survived.

A mother, 38 years old, a small dark blonde with blue eyes, a Semitic nose and olive complexion. She had a five-year-old daughter named Lola. We were able to get an identity card for her with the name Karolina Wiśniewska. She worked for us for some time as a receptionist. After the betrayal she moved in with friends. At this new location there was a small girl who did not speak Polish well. This was the cause of their being denounced to the Germans.

Another tall, young mother with dark hair and complexion came with a five-year-old girl named Gienia. The last name she assumed was Racińska. She was a very hard worker. She worked for us in the laundry. She had two identity documents (Kennkarte).

After a woman, who was surely the mother of a seven-year-old boy named Jędrus (although she would not admit to this), brought him to us, we had four Jewish adults and four Jewish children staying with us. A girl who was employed in our kitchen threatened to turn in the Jews. We never thought that she would actually go through with this. We had told her that she was mistaken because there were no Jewish people staying with us. Everyone had Polish identity cards that had been obtained with the assistance of St. Sigismund parish, which had provided us with birth and baptismal certificates. This girl did indeed go to the Gestapo and gave them all the names of the Jews and which rooms they lived in. The Germans arrived and took everyone they found with them. They were astonished to see everyone kneel in the chapel and pray fervently before they were taken. At Gestapo headquarters, after a thorough interrogation, the last thing demanded of them was to say prayers. Having gone to chapel daily with the other women, they had learned to pray and consequently were let go and came back to us that same day, though in a very depressed state. They no longer felt safe in our home so they left soon after.

During the Gestapo interrogation, Mrs. Racińska was told that she was too young not to be working. She was dispatched to a sack factory. Not used to hard work, she broke down. She moved out of town with her young child. After a short while she brought the child, for whom she had packed a small bag, back to us. She tried to commit suicide by jumping into the Warta River. She was pulled out and taken to the hospital. She was taken by the Germans and her fate is not known. The child stayed with us for a while, then was adopted by someone.<sup>1977</sup>

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<sup>1977</sup> The subsequent rescue of Chana or Hanna Batista (then Sara Rozen) is described earlier. She was adopted by Henryk and Gertruda Zielonka and survived the occupation. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 938; Bogner, *At the Mercy of Strangers*, 50.

Two sisters, the daughters of a miller by the name of Borkowski [the assumed surname of Paula and Hannah Kornblum of Kałuszyn], worked in a Christmas ornament factory. They slept and ate in our house. Both of them survived and later left to join their uncle in America.<sup>1978</sup>

Irena Bochenek was a young, blond woman. She knew how to sew. The German police came for her one day and demanded to see the registration books. She was registered but Sister Izydora hid her in the washroom. The police were told that she was not at home. When the Germans left, Sister Izydora disguised her and sent her that day to Warsaw. The next day another German came who did not believe that she was not there. He was told to ask the woman at the gate, who was a retired lay person. When she stated that the woman had not returned home the day before, he left offering some chocolate to a little girl.

Jędrus, the bright five-year-old, was placed in an institution for boys. The Gestapo came for him there and took him away. His mother was said to have been living with our Sisters in Kielce, where she survived the war.<sup>1979</sup>

An 18-month-old child was brought to the nursery in Częstochowa. There were a number of other people, but I don't remember them all, states Sister Wita [Vita] Pawłowska, ending her testimony.

#### IV. Bochnia, near Kraków—Orphanage

1. Wojciech Pacula, who was a guard in the ghetto, brought a five-year-old girl named Halinka, who was born in 1938. She was a pretty blonde with blue eyes. She did not look Jewish. She was given the name Kubicka. (Her photograph is in the Sisters' archive.) She was the daughter of Elias Elszajn (Elstein or Elnstein), the proprietor of a leather factory in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, and Róża Weber. She was a very bright girl who went to school with the other children, never spoke about her family background, and studied religion very diligently. At her request she was baptized by Fr. [Stanisław] Pycior on June 6, 1943 and received her First Communion. After the liberation her aunt took her secretly from the school. It was said that her father also survived and took her to Palestine. They both live there and he is grateful to the Sisters for having helped to hide his child.

2. Little Róża, the daughter of a lawyer from Kraków, stayed in the orphanage in Bochnia for three years. She was very pretty and bright but her Semitic features betrayed her background. She also spoke about her parents to the other children. There was a fear that she would be turned in by the older boys. Her fate is not known.

3. For a short period of time Róża's brother, Władysław, stayed at the orphanage, but he was taken back because he was circumcised and brought attention to himself.

4. On May 29, 1943, a one-year-old child was brought to us. Judging by her features, she was Jewish. Marysia was registered as a foundling and was brought up in safety. During a period when the Sisters were away, according to the other children, a woman had come around asking for Marysia.

5. Ten-month-old Eliza from Bochnia, whose last name was not known, stayed at the orphanage. In 1945 this four-year old was taken by a foster family. When her relatives were

<sup>1978</sup> This refers to Paula and Hannah Kornblum, whose rescue is described earlier.

<sup>1979</sup> This appears to refer to Maria Widawska (an assumed name) and her son, whose rescue is described earlier.

later found, they took her with them. Her fate as well as that of the other Jewish children is known by Dr. Jan Krupa from the Health Centre in Bochnia.

6. Jaś Moskowski stayed at the orphanage. After the Germans left, he was sent back to Kraków.

#### V. Tarnów—Children's Infirmary and Nursery at 6 Nowodąbrowska Street

1. A member of the Polish Blue police accompanied by a brother from the Missionary Order brought a young boy to the nursery. He was four years old and had been found in the Church of the Missionary Fathers. The boy was good looking, well fed and very bright. He wore a medal around his neck depicting the Sacred Heart of Jesus and could cross himself very nicely. He kissed his medal often and said his prayers. He said that he had been left in the church by his uncle, who told him to sit quietly and wait for him to return while he bought a violin. The uncle did not return and the priests from the church sent him to the nursery. The boy said his name was Jurek Górski. Later, he told a Sister in secret that his name was not really Jurek but Norek. He was above average in ability and learned quickly. He went to the nursery chapel with the other children. He adapted very quickly. After the liberation, four Jews came with a letter from the reeve and demanded that Jurek be handed over to them. When Jurek was told about this, he took his missal and hid behind the altar in the chapel. No one could find him. He did not want to leave for anything but was eventually taken by force.

2. A girl named Zosia was brought in by a woman who by her behaviour was obviously the mother. For a certain time this woman came to visit the little girl every day, bringing with her anything she could. One day she said good-bye to her daughter and never returned. The child was pretty and bright. A certain German officer took an interest in her and after some efforts brought his wife to the orphanage. They took the child with them to Germany.

#### VI. Tarnów—Shelter for the Poor at 65 Szpitalna Street

The director of a factory in Borysław hid in an attic for two years. The Sisters gave him food. With tears in his eyes he told the Sisters that the Germans had taken his wife. He wore a medal with the Virgin Mary. It was said that after the war he was baptized and found work in a cooperative.

#### VII. Sulejów, near Piotrków Trybunalski

During the German occupation the authorities assigned to the Sisters ten Jews to help in the fields. Every day they came under German guard and under punishment of death were not allowed to be fed. One Sister gave them food in the basement, where one by one they came down to be fed. They were weak from starvation. The German guards checked to see that no one escaped and that they worked well. Although the Jews were not much help, the Sisters always reported that they were very hard working.

#### VIII. Kielce—Shelter of the Holy Trinity at 31 Bandurskiego Street

During the war Józef Freund, a Jew, stayed at the shelter. At the beginning he stayed indoors only. He felt safe and was grateful for his shelter. After a certain time, he began going into town, even though he was warned that this was dangerous and he should stay home. Because nothing happened to him he began going every day and returned happily, having seen something or bought something. One day he did not return. The Sisters started to look for him. When they did not find him at the Polish police station, they went to the

German one and found out that he had been arrested. They begged for his release but were only given permission to send him food. For a number of days they sent hot dinners to him. The Gestapo found out about this and forbade any visitors. Late at night, Freund himself returned to the shelter asking for help. He had apparently escaped. The Sisters gave him money and sent him to their neighbours. During the night the Gestapo came looking for him at the shelter. They turned over the entire house and shined light into everybody's eyes, but left without ever finding him. His fate is not known.

#### IX. Lwów-Zamarstynów [Sklepiński Street]—Institution for Boys

During the German occupation, three Jewish boys were hidden in the institution. After the war, two of them were taken by relatives. The remaining one left for the West [i.e., central Poland] because he had no family left.<sup>1980</sup>

#### X. Lwów-Persenkówka

For five months, three Jews hid in the basement. The Sisters would bring food to them. They left during the first day of bombing.

#### XI. Baworów, near Tarnopol

1. Pastor [Karol] Procyk sent a ten-year-old girl to the Sisters. She admitted to the Sisters that she was Jewish. She was baptized.

2. A two-year-old girl was found by people near the forest. She was handed over to the Ukrainian police, who brought her to the Sisters to keep for a few days. She was to be sent to the ghetto in Tarnopol. Because of the efforts of the Sisters she remained in the shelter. She was baptized on June 13, 1943, and given the name Antonina. After the occupation her mother came for her and took her away.

#### XII. Tarnopol

1. Icek Weiss came secretly at night to our kitchen and everyday, in the attic, so that no one would see him, he got something to eat. He also received clothes on occasion. This lasted for two months, after which he disappeared.

2. In 1940, after the Soviets invaded, they took away our Polish charges and brought in sick Jewish people. We took care of them in the same way we treated our Polish patients. At the end of two years the Germans came and they took them to the ghetto.

3. During the time of the most intense anti-Jewish campaign, one afternoon a policeman brought in a basket with a foundling in it that weighed no more than 4 kg. The policeman stated that the little boy was found in an empty house. The child was taken in, given a bath, fed and cared for. Because there was no crib for the baby, we put him into a laundry basket,

<sup>1980</sup> At least three Jewish boys stayed at the shelter, which was funded by the Main Welfare Council. Jan Kulbinger (b. 1930) states that he and his cousin, Jezek Rabach, who were passing as Jan and Józef Bandrowski respectively, convinced the German police in Lwów that they were not Jews after an inspection by a Jewish doctor, and were then sent to a shelter run by nuns where they successfully kept up their guise, even though they knew nothing about Catholic rituals. After a stay of several weeks, they were taken by farmers as cattle herders. See the testimony of Jan Kulbinger, JHI, record group 301, no. 344. Another Jewish boy sheltered at this institution was Ryszard Macharowski, whose rescue is described earlier.

and the children surrounded the little one like angels around the manger in Bethlehem, happy to be with the new arrival. After a few days, a childless Catholic couple came with a desire to adopt a baby of their own. We will not reveal their last name because the Sister gave her word that she would never tell. When they were shown the little one and were told how he had been found, they were eager to take it. They baptized him, giving him the name of Tadeusz. They showered him with the love of real parents. The child was not attractive. He had a low forehead, a big nose and eyes as black as coal. He was healthy and the parents he had were ideal. No one suspected that the child was not their own.

#### XIII. Stanisławów

In 1942 or 1943 a woman was brought to the shelter who had supposedly lost her voice as a result of almost drowning. We suspected that she was Jewish, but told no one. She also told no one and remained mute. After the Germans left, Mother Superior took her aside and told her that she could now speak because she was no longer in danger. Then, speaking nicely in Polish, she admitted that she was a baptized Jew and that her surname was Jarocka. A few days later she left, borrowing some clothes which she said she would bring back. But she never did bring them back. After a while one of the Sisters saw her in Przemyśl in the company of other Jews.

#### XIV. Śniatyń, near Stanisławów—Old Age Home on Kolejowa Street

1. A mute Jewish man died at the home. He was baptized before he died.
2. Along with Mojsie Grosshaus, we cared for our Jewish charges in a special way, and watched out that they did not go out into the streets. By doing that they would have put themselves in danger of being taken to the ghetto and killed, as others had been. When the Sisters left for Western Poland [as a result of postwar border changes], Grosshaus remained in Śniatyń.

#### XV. Sambor, near Lwów

A small two-month-old Jewish child was brought to us. One of the Sisters took care of it for an entire year with great dedication. When it began to walk it was given to an orphanage in the same city run by the Basilian Sisters because our institution was an old age home.

#### XVI. Brzeżany, near Tarnopol

1. Józef and Maria Gelber, a married couple, were Catholics but had a Jewish background. They were in the old age home from 1941 to 1944. They were on in years when Józef died in the home.
2. Helena Uchman was the daughter of a Jewish neighbour. She hid in our home for a month. One Saturday she did not return. At that time there was an anti-Jewish campaign and she died along with her parents.
3. Zosia, a little Jewish girl, was given over to the Rada Główna Opiekuńcza (Social Welfare Agency) by a peasant woman, a widow who was leaving Eastern Poland [i.e., fleeing Ukrainian nationalists] with her two children in 1943 and could not take her. The RGO directed Zosia to the Sisters. The child was taken in and brought up by them.
4. A Jewish dentist gave us two rolls of woollen cloth to hold. His wife, who retrieved pieces of the cloth at a time, was able to get money from selling it.
5. During one winter we kept a cow owned by a Jewish neighbour. The Ukrainians had destroyed all his property.

6. During an intensive search for Jews we hid a woman with an eight-year-old boy. Later, when she saw the nuns on the street, she knelt down in front of them, thanking them for saving her life.

XVII. Rawa Ruska, near Lwów

A boy who was found on the street was brought to us. He could only tell us that he had had a letter and money, which a woman had taken from him. His name was Zygmunt (Zygmunt). He was later transferred to our shelter in Kraków at 6 Podbrzezie Street. His fate after leaving that institution is not known.<sup>1981</sup>

XVIII. Kołomyja, near Stanisławów

1. Lodka (Leokadia) Rajbach, along with her two brothers, stayed with us for some time. After our home was taken over and included in the ghetto area, for three weeks we tried to help them any way we could by supplying food every evening. Lodka probably did not survive.

2. Tola Litner from Bielsko hid in our house for a certain period. We dressed her as a postulant and sent her to Kraków in the company of one of our Sisters. She spent the night in Kraków with the Sisters and then went on to her friends in Kalwaria.

3. We lived across from the ghetto where our old building was. The Sisters, hungry themselves, shared their bread with the poor Jews who stood near the wire fences and begged for something to eat or drink. Sometimes the Sisters would get a pass from the German command to go into the ghetto under the pretext of having to repair their shoes, umbrella, etc. You could not bring food into the ghetto. The Sisters would hide butter and other food in their sleeves and when they were out of sight of the German guards, they would give these things to the poor families inside the ghetto. They tried in this way to rescue a disabled Jew who was starving to death. He was given a coat, the only one in the home, by one of the Sisters. Once a soldier hit one of the Sisters on the head because he saw her give milk to a Jewish woman.

XIX. Drohobycz, near Lwów—Shelter for the Poor on Cerkiewna Street

1. In 1942 a woman from the Polish Committee brought a two-and-a-half-year-old child to us who had been found. He was circumcised. We learned that his name was Tadzio. Because he couldn't say his last name he was given the name of Galewicz. When the advancing Soviet front moved closer and things became very dangerous, Tadzio was baptized because we feared for his soul should he be killed in the bombing. In July of 1944, after the Germans retreated, Tadzio's aunt came to us with a photograph of the child and was able to identify him. The father waited outside. This was Major Mieczysław Hański, who served in the Polish Army and had arrived with the advancing Russian Army. The aunt assured the Sisters that the father would reward the Sisters for having saved his son. And, indeed, he did. When we were evacuated to Wrocław the Sisters along with their poor charges were homeless. They went into the town looking for a place to live. Walking along they met a Jewish man who asked them what they were looking for. They told him of their fate and he answered them by saying that they had a highly placed person who

<sup>1981</sup> It is not clear whether Helen Lewin and her son from Rawa Ruska were placed there. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 542–43.

would offer them protection in the person of the Major. This was the Major whose son the Sisters had saved. The man gave the Sisters his address at the army headquarters. When the Sisters met with the Major, he assigned to them the one-story house he had been living in at 8 Serbska Street. He, himself, moved to another house on Karłowicka Street. After a while he came to the Sisters and asked them for his son's baptismal certificate. In 1950, when the house on Serbska Street was being taken away from the Sisters, the Major was living in Legnica. The Sisters contacted him there and asked him for his help.

2. At the institution in Drohobycz, there hid for a time a Jewish woman who said she was a Catholic. She had false identification papers with the surname Kalińska. She went to church, had a rosary and even received the sacraments. Advised not to do this by the Sisters, she still would not admit that she was Jewish. When she became deathly ill she still kept pretending until finally she asked to be baptized by our priest. He was surprised at her sudden change of heart. When the Sisters were leaving for the western part of Poland, they took all the sick with them, including her. She died en route in the arms of a Sister who had been taking care of her the entire way. She was buried in Wrocław at Psie Pole.

#### XX. Przemyśl-Bakończyce

1. Once during the occupation, an elderly Jewish couple came to our institution. They were very hungry. Because we were surrounded by German military objects and lookout posts, the Sisters directed the couple to some thick raspberry patches and brought them Kosher food to eat. When they had eaten, they went on their way. The Sisters do not remember their last name but they remember well the names of their friends from Przemyśl, who lived on Nadworska Street: Wincz, Gepsman, Szwebel, and Rajchilbert.

2. Dr. Majzles from Przemyśl (address: 12 Plac Na Bramie) often came to the institution when it was difficult to obtain food. He always received some provisions.

3. Director Szwebel's position was threatened in Przemyśl. At the time, Sister Bernadetta intervened and spoke up at a meeting, stressing his work and sense of duty. He was saved and remained in his position.

4. In 1944 a one-year-old boy with a curved spine was sent to us from the hospital. His name was Henio. He was surrounded by loving care. He was fed goat's milk and egg yolks and returned to health. After the Germans left his relatives came for him and took him.

#### XXI. Busko-Zdrój, near Kielce

The magistrate sent us a Jewish woman with two children whom we were to shelter for the night. They stayed for half a year, during which time we supported them. After the liberation we gave her warm clothing and she left, with her children, for Częstochowa.

#### XXII. Opoczno, near Piotrków Trybunalski

There was a married couple from Przasnysz whose last name has been forgotten. Because they attracted attention to themselves by their appearance, the mayor told them to leave the institution. Consequently, Mother General asked the mother superior in Skarżysko to accept them. They were accepted there.

#### XXIII. Skarżysko-Kamienna, near Kielce

1. This same couple is remembered by another Sister. The man was sick, had a stroke and died in the institution. His wife survived the war and returned to Przasnysz.

2. After the Warsaw Uprising, a Jewish family which was evacuated to Skarżysko under an assumed Polish name left an elderly man at the institution. He died there.

3. A little Jewish girl was sheltered at the orphanage. Her mother had been imprisoned. After she was freed, she came and took the child.

4. A foundling was brought to the institution. There was a brief note with the child stating that it was nine months old and not baptized. A childless couple took the child from the institution and baptized her giving her the name of Barbara. After the war some Jews came to take the child.

#### XXIV. Wołomin, near Warsaw—Orphanage

1. The institution housed two little Jewish girls. One was adopted by a family and the older child, who was sickly, was baptized. Her brother came for her [after the war]. She did not want to go. She hid herself. She was afraid of the Jews. A letter was brought from the voivodship authorities, however, and she was taken. I think her name was Bronia.

2. During the Warsaw Uprising, a five-year-old boy was found near the institution. He was poor, in torn clothes, hungry and had lice. The boys from the institution chased him, and even threw stones at him. When a Sister became aware of him, she called him over, washed him, fed him, gave him some clothes and he stayed. He couldn't tell us anything about himself. Because he had a dark complexion, the children called him a Gypsy. At first he was frightened and shy. After a few days he changed and the boys began to like him very much. He remained at the institution until September 1946. At the time the Sister who took care of him was transferred to Siedlce. There a certain Jewish woman who was looking for her child in the local orphanage showed a photograph of him. This Sister recognized the little "Gypsy" from Wołomin. The grateful mother took back her child and as a gift to the Sisters, offered them leather to make shoes.

#### XXV. Siedlce—Nursery

1. In 1943 a farmer brought a six-month-old Jewish child, along with her mother, to us from the countryside. The mother, out of fear, pretended to be incoherent. The father remained outside. The child was raised by us until the Germans retreated. The father came back and took the child. He said that his wife had been killed in Warsaw and that he, himself, had been sheltered by the Albertine Brothers in Warsaw.<sup>1982</sup> He was very grateful to the Sisters that at least this child was saved out of the whole family.

2. When the ghetto was being liquidated, a Jewish infant was left with us. After being taken care of by Sister P., who hid him from the lay personnel, he was taken by the Jewish social agency.

<sup>1982</sup> Other accounts also mention that the Albertine Brothers provided food and temporary shelter to Jewish fugitives at their shelter on Jagiellońska Street in the Praga district of Warsaw. They also provided proof of registration for Jews with false identity documents. However, because of German raids and inspections, the shelter was a precarious place to stay for an extended period of time. See the testimony of Zofia Myczko-Grzybowska, JHI, record group 301, no. 5768, reproduced in Roszkowski, *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945*, vol. 4, 363–64; Testimony of Felicja Bolak, JHI, record group 301, no. 5119; See Tzvi Shedletzki, "A Saga of Pain and Heroism," in Shimon Kanc, ed., *Sefer zikaron kehilat Wolomin* (Tel Aviv: Wolomin Society, 1971), 485–549.

3. In the spring of 1943 a Jewish woman kept coming to our convent in Siedlce at 10 Cmentarna Street. She received food and worked at small jobs in the kitchen in order to stay with us. This lasted several weeks. She never told us her last name and no one ever asked. All that was necessary was to help this person in need.

4. Sometimes Jews would come to the orphanage from the ghetto and ask for bread. If there were no Germans nearby we gave them food.

5. About 1943 two women came to the nursery asking that a child be taken in. Because the Sisters could not do this without formal papers, they told the women to leave the child at night. The women did this. The little girl, who was only a few months old, stayed in the orphanage for some time. Later a friend of the mother's, a Polish woman, came to take the child.<sup>1983</sup>

6. A father came looking for his daughter Róża Zoik, a foundling, after the Germans retreated. He had been hidden by a Catholic woman in Warsaw, and after his wife died in the ghetto, he married this woman.

7. A farmer from the countryside brought in a little three-year-old girl with Jewish features because he was afraid to hide her any longer. This child was mortally afraid of Germans. She did not even look out the window for fear of being seen by the Germans. After a while someone told the authorities that the institution was harbouring a Jewish child. When the Germans came, a Sister covered this little girl up in a bed and showed them another child indicating that this was the one in question. That child had typical Aryan features so they patted her on the head and said that they must have received false information.

8. In 1945 the wounded were brought in from the front. These were Jews and Russians. The hospital's lay personnel left before the front reached us. Two Albertine Sisters went to the hospital to help the other nuns—Sisters of Charity—who were working there. Together with Dr. Krakówka, they carried the wounded to beds, dressed wounds and treated everyone with equal loving care.

#### XXVI. Mników, near Kraków

During the German occupation evacuees from Warsaw came to us. Along with others, a Jewish woman and her child and two elderly Jewish sisters from Warsaw stayed with us. They told us that, in Warsaw, they had stood behind the chimney of a burned-out building, on the third floor, for two days. They had prayed to the Blessed Virgin of Częstochowa for help. After two days they were rescued by the fire department. These people stayed with us for two weeks, until the local reeve, who was afraid of the Germans, told them to leave the village.

#### XXVII. Kraków: 6 Podbrzezie Street

Two Jewish boys were accepted into the institution. They were seven and ten. One of them was named Jurek. Their last name had been changed to a Polish one, Nowak. Their mother came to see them three times a week and brought them various things. She was wealthy because it was said that the family owned two large stores on Floriańska Street and their own house. The mother promised the Sisters a large reward for sheltering these

<sup>1983</sup> This account appears to refer to Rachela Zonszajn, the daughter of Cypora Zonszajn (née Jabłoń). The rescue is described earlier in this text.

children. The children went outside once and were caught by the Germans. Because of this incident the institution had much unpleasantness: reports, German inspections, etc.

Another Jewish child who was sheltered briefly at this orphanage was Sara Warszawiak, who passed as Irena Jabłońska. She was transferred to the Albertine Sisters' orphanage in Kraków in the winter of 1943, when the orphanage where she was staying in Brody, run by Ukrainian nuns, was shut down by the Germans. Sara, who had Semitic features, arrived in Kraków in poor health and was taken, and later adopted, by Professor Jan Pilch and his wife, Julia. Sara remained with the Pilchs for some time after the war. Despite her desire to be baptized, Fr. Archilles, a Capuchin (Franciscan) monk, dissuaded her from doing so.<sup>1984</sup>

#### XXVIII. Rząska, near Kraków

1. A ten-year-old girl named Hania Raj [Reich]<sup>1985</sup> gave the impression of being physically developed beyond her years. She was brought to us by her aunt, who said that the girl's parents were taken to a camp and then left for England, and that she did not have the means to keep the girl. Hania attended school and was a good student. At the request of her aunt she was prepared by the Sisters for Confession and Holy Communion. When the Russians came, the aunt took her and placed her in the Jewish Orphanage in Kraków.

2. A 70-year-old woman walking to Rząska met some Sisters and asked them whether she could stay overnight. The next day she asked to stay another night because she had no place to go. She did not admit to being Jewish. She prayed, received the sacraments, and only when the local priest admonished her did she stop taking Holy Communion. She lived in a room with the children, behind a screen, because there was no other place to put her. She was fluent in German and Russian and helped the children with their lessons. As soon as the Germans left, she went to Kraków.

#### XXIX. Kraków-Prądnik Czerwony

A certain lady came to Mother General asking her to accept Jaś into the shelter. He was the son of a rich neighbour from Rząska who was a lawyer. The parents were Catholics,

<sup>1984</sup> Sara Avinum, *Rising from the Abyss: An Adult's Struggle With Her Trauma as a Child in the Holocaust* (Hod Hasharon, Israel: Astrolog Publishing House, 2005), 96–106, 152, 185–86. See also the testimony of Sala Warszawiak (Irena Jabłońska), June 26, 1945, JHI, record group 301, no. 431.

<sup>1985</sup> Hania (Anna) Reich's story is set out earlier in the text. Józefa Rysińska, a Żegota liaison officer, took the child to Kraków from Pilzno and entrusted her to her aunt, Miriam Peleg-Mariańska. Peleg-Mariańska placed her niece with several Polish families before she was taken in by the Albertine Sisters in Rząska. Peleg-Mariańska claims that the nuns were never informed that Hania was Jewish, either when she was left at the convent or when she was removed after the Germans retreated from the area, and that therefore "no-one suspected her of being Jewish." See Peleg-Mariańska and Peleg, *Witnesses*, 54–56, 165–66. The accounts of the Albertine Sisters indicate that they either knew or suspected that the woman was Jewish. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that Hania would have acquired the level of knowledge of religious matters and practices expected of a 10-year-old Catholic child. Furthermore, one of the reasons Hania left the home of Jadwiga Kruczkowska, one of her benefactors, was that Hania "looked Jewish" and passing her off as Kruczkowska's niece was becoming problematic. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 404–5.

but of Jewish background. Jaś, using the name of Moskowski, was sent to our orphanage in Bochnia. He survived the war and returned to his family.

Additional Data:

1. One Sister stated that in Szczawnica a Mr. Majerczak hid a Jewish man in his basement. He brought this man food in a basket used for coal. After the war this person rewarded him.

2. Another Sister stated that while she was still living with her parents (Jan and Anna Zielonka, in the village of Filipy, in the county of Końskie), during the third year of the war, there was a Jewish family who went from house to house looking for a place to stay the night. Her parents took them in and that night the woman gave birth to a child. They could not stay any longer because the Germans made a thorough search of all of the houses.

3. A Sister stated that in 1939, after the German invasion, her friend from school, Salomea Baldinger, begged her to help her receive the sacrament of Baptism. The Baptism was performed by Fr. Józef Kosibowicz, the pastor of Sromowce Wyżne. As her Godmother, the Sister felt a responsibility to take care of her friend. Her friend's family was very angry with her. After two years the benefactor became a Sister. Not too long after Maria Salomea came to the Sister asking for help because her entire family had been killed by the Germans.

Miraculously, the friend was able to reach Kraków. Mother General instructed that she be accepted into the convent on Lubicz Street [in Kraków] as a helper. After a few weeks she came back to the Mother House to ask for different work because she said working with the mentally ill depressed her. She later left for Germany to work. After the liberation she returned to Poland. In 1952 she came to us to ask for a baptismal certificate which she could not obtain during the war. She received one, got married and I was present at her daughter's First Holy Communion. At the present time she is doing well.

The above statements are based on the testimonies of the following Sisters:

1. Adelajda Tomasiak—Kołomyja,
2. Adolfa Szczerbowska—Baworów, Brzeżany, Tarnopol,
3. Aniceta Wierzbicka—Brzeżany, Siedlce,
4. Anzelma Krupa—Skarżysko, Wołomin, Życzyn,
5. Apolonia Leśniak—Bochnia, Kołomyja,
6. Balbina Bielańska—Bochnia,
7. Bernadetta Wołk—Przemyśl,
8. Blandyna Tkaczyk—Kraków (Mother House),
9. Bonawentura Chrobak—Sulejów,
10. Cypriana Mrzygłód—Drohobycz,
11. Efrema Lis—Lwów—Zamarstynów
12. Emanuela Minko—Częstochowa, Mników, Siedlce, Wołomin (orphanage),
13. Emeryka Gaca—Tarnów (nursery),
14. Eleonora Janik—Przemyśl, Tarnopol,
15. Eufrazja Wiatrowicz—Wołomin (orphanage),
16. Eugenia Gajewska—Brzeżany, Busko-Zdrój,
17. Eulalia Dzidek—Siedlce, Skarżysko,
18. Ewencja Panasiuk—Rząska,
19. Ferdynanda Grzenkowicz—Kołomyja,
20. Fortunata Kołodziej—Rząska,
21. Helena Wilkołek—Kraków—Prądnik Czerwony,

22. Hermiana Bąk—Kraków (nursery),
23. Hugona Klimpel—Częstochowa,
24. Ignacja Pluta—Kraków (Krakowska Street),
25. Józefina Latka—Śniatyń,
26. Kaliksta Góźdz—Kielce,
27. Katarzyna Bikowska—Drohobycz,
28. Leokadia Sowińska—Mników,
29. Lidwina Święs—Tarnów,
30. Longina Konieczna—Tarnopol,
31. Łucjana Stano—Bochnia,
32. Magdalena Kaczmarczyk—Częstochowa,
33. Marcelina Wędzicha—Bochnia,
34. Maria Kotas—Baworów,
35. Maurycja Wohnout—Brzeżany, Tarnopol,
36. Modesta Wierchowska—Mników,
37. Pankracja Solarz—Opoczno,
38. Paulina Adamczyk—Wołomin (orphanage), Siedlce,
39. Rafaela Kupczyk—Stanisławów,
40. Scholastyka Bogacz—Częstochowa,
41. Serwacja Dobrotowska—Sambor,
42. Seweryna Domaradzka—Kraków (Krakowska Street), Tarnów (Shelter for the Poor),
43. Stanisława Kluz—Kraków (nursery), Tarnów (nursery), Lwów,
44. Suplicja Kogutowicz—Skarżysko, Kraków (educational institution),
45. Sykstusa Kardys—Busko-Zdrój, Śniatyń,
46. Taida Balanda—Drohobycz,
47. Teresa Wilhelm—Drohobycz,
48. Urbana Kondeja—Kraków (Krakowska Street),
49. Wita Pawłowska—Częstochowa,
50. Waleriana Żuchowska—Rawa Ruska.

Although these accounts were gathered a number of years after the war, rather than exaggerate, they appear to underreport the assistance extended to Jews. For example, the rescue activities of the Albertine Sisters in Życzyn, near Dęblin, described earlier on, are not mentioned in the above listing. In addition to the aforementioned Aleksandra Śmietanowska, the Albertine Sisters in Życzyn sheltered Hanka Arbesfeld (b. 1935),<sup>1986</sup> as well as Hanna Krall, a well-known journalist who claimed that as many as 45 Poles risked their lives to rescue her.<sup>1987</sup>

<sup>1986</sup> Testimony of Hanka Arbesfeld, Ghetto Fighters House Archives (Israel), catalog no. 4918, registry no. 02850 collection.

<sup>1987</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 410–13.

The Albertine Brothers were also engaged in rescuing Jews. After being separated from his mother, Zygmunt Weinreb found refuge in their shelter on Krakowska Street in Kraków. Afterwards, the Thiel family took him under their care and he survived the war.<sup>1988</sup>

Zygmunt Weinreb was born in Poland in 1935. He grew up in Kraków, in a mixed Jewish-Christian neighborhood. When the war began, his father left the family and tried to escape. He was never seen again. Zygmunt's mother managed to obtain false identification papers for herself and her young son. For a brief period of time, the Weinrebs stayed with the Puchala [Puchała] family in Niepolomice [Niepołomice] Wielickie. One day, Zygmunt's mother went to Kraków to retrieve some property, and did not return. Józef Puchala brought back the news that she had probably been captured carrying false papers and sent to a concentration camp. Now nine-year-old Zygmunt was left without "Aryan" documents, because he had been registered on his mother's papers.

Zygmunt left the Puchalas' home and roamed the streets alone. He met someone who advised him to go to the nearby monastery, where many Polish refugees of war were sheltered. There, the young boy met Jan and Olga Thiels, teachers at the monastery who supported him and tried to dispel the arising suspicions of his origins. When they found an apartment outside the monastery, the Thiels took Zygmunt with them, along with a friend of his, a Polish boy aged six. They sent the children to school and cared for all of their needs until liberation. After the war, the Thiels gave Zygmunt over to the Jewish community. In 1950, he moved to Israel, where he took the name Yizhar Alon and built a new life for himself, including a family of his own.<sup>1989</sup>

Weinreb's own testimony was recorded shortly after the war:

I stayed at the Albertine Brothers and Mrs [Olga] Thiel, the teacher, guessed that I was Jewish, and the Brother Superior did too, and they helped me a lot. They did not say anything to me, but the Brother told me to bathe in bathing trunks like the older boys, and the teacher got angry whenever anyone called me a Jew and secretly taught me things so that no one would be able to tell I was Jewish. But then everyone began whispering about me, so the teacher took me home with her and put me in a school where the headmaster, Mr [Bronisław] Chrzan, knew that I was Jewish and helped me a lot. ...

When the Russians arrived the Brother Superior read in the newspaper that there was a Jewish Committee, and he told me to go to Długa Street to find out if my father had registered there.<sup>1990</sup>

<sup>1988</sup> Olga Thiel and her husband Jan were recognized by Yad Vashem in 2009. Józef and Maria Puchała, who had sheltered Zygmunt Weinreb earlier, have also been recognized. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 649–50. Two Polish policemen in Kraków also provided help along the way: a Polish police commander assisted Zygmunt Weinreb's cousin to smuggle Zygmunt out of the Kraków ghetto; when Zygmunt was taken to a police station to check out his false identity, a police officer confirmed that identity as true without verification.

<sup>1989</sup> Thiel Family, RD.

<sup>1990</sup> Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, *The Children Accuse*, 114.

The following account by Tadeusz Seweryn, who headed the Kraków District of the Council for Aid to Jews, clarifies some aspects of Weinreb's story.

I know the case of a boy kept in the Albertus Friars Institute in Cracow. One day, at the beginning of 1944, the head of this Institute, whose name, if I correctly remember, was Jabłoński, approached my friend Bronisław Chrzan, a radical peasant leader and headmaster of the Prince Józef Poniatowski Elementary School No. 26, with the request that he accept in the school a Jewish boy, Zygmunt Weinreb. Asked why he himself did not want to keep him, Jabłoński answered that the boy lived with a group of Christian boys and therefore the teacher advised him to put on his bathing trunks when attending the steam bath with his colleagues. He did as he was told, but the other boys evidently didn't like it and shouted: "Take them off, what are you ashamed of?" They pounced on him and pulled the trunks down and so it came out that he was a Jew. 'I think it could be dangerous to keep the boy any longer,' said Jabłoński. "The children may spread the news and this will cause grave trouble for us and for this orphan." Bronisław Chrzan immediately agreed to accept the boy, wrote his name in the school register, provided him with a school card and kept him under his personal care to the end of the war.<sup>1991</sup>

Several Jewish youths—street children who sold cigarettes—were apprehended by the police in Kraków and sent to the reformatory for boys in Bronowice, even though their origin was suspect. The staff at that institution, as did the chaplain, tried their best to overlook the origin of the children.

Many of the sixty youths aged between six and eighteen were difficult boys whose life circumstances had taught them the tough rules of street life. Some were bullies; some were antisemites. Jerzy [Hoffman] recalled that one boy recognized him from the time when Jerzy hid with a Polish family, and he told everyone that Jerzy was a Jew. "They began to harass me terribly, they called me names, and I didn't know what to do," Jerzy recalled. A nurse in the institution urged the boys to stop and bribed them with treats, while she encouraged Jerzy to escape. He was afraid and stayed. More importantly, he had nowhere to go.

For Abraham [Blim], the institution offered stability, which his itinerant life on the city streets had lacked. He began to live the life of his alter ego, Józek. ... Educators prepared children of unconfirmed background such as Abraham for baptism. The fact that the institution was created specifically for street children was sufficient reason for its residents not to have proper identity papers. For Abraham, attending church and sessions with a priest held no religious meaning. He did what was expected of him. And he received additional food from the priest.

Some boys, like Abraham, awaited war's end in the reformatory; others chose to continue to try to survive on the move. Jerzy Hoffman stayed in the institution until his term ended and then sought the assistance of the Main Welfare Council. He was sent to an orphanage in Kochanów.<sup>1992</sup>

<sup>1991</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 87.

<sup>1992</sup> Joanna Sliwa, *Jewish Childhood in Kraków: A Microhistory of the Holocaust* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2021). Another Jewish boy who stayed at the Bronowice reformatory was Henryk Meller (b. 1932). Henryk had been caught in Kraków

## Rescue in German Camps

Jews imprisoned in concentration and slave labour camps encountered members of the Polish clergy and many other Polish prisoners who were willing to extend a hand to their fellow prisoners when the opportunity arose. Dr. E. Szor, an inmate of Auschwitz, confirmed the helpfulness of fellow prisoner, Jan Kledzik, who was a hospital attendant at that camp: “He displayed a father’s devotion to his fellow sufferers, irrespective of race and nationality.” Kledzik, in turn, acknowledged the helpfulness of other Poles who collaborated with him, including a priest, Rev. Wawrzyniec Wnuk.

As a former inmate of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, I wish to state how Poles saved and helped the Jews in the camp. Jews were hidden in hospitals; food that other prisoners received in parcels were shared with them. This was how the people working with me in the hospital gave help. They were: Andrzej Białecki, Stach Bukowski, Tadeusz Radomski, Marian Czerwiński, Bogdan Kolasiński. And in this way, thanks to our help, the following people regained their liberty: Doctors Knoch, Szor, Gabej, August, Dizerej, and Fastman [Ludwik Fastmann], the pharmacist Gotlieb, Zukier, Zieliński. The last two had already been selected for the gas chamber and, thanks, to Zygmunt, the Schreiber [clerk], they were taken from the hospital to the workers’ camp. They all survived. When I was in the workers’ lager before I started to work in the hospital, Father [Wawrzyniec] Wnuk from Gniezno and I saved Jews, who were so exhausted during roll call, that they collapsed and lay in the mud. Their co-religionists could not save them since they were afraid of the Nazis, but we Poles carried them on our shoulders to the block. There the Poles washed and fed them.<sup>1993</sup>

Rev. Wnuk was imprisoned in Auschwitz from August 1943 until June 1944, when he was transferred to Buchenwald and later to Dachau.

Michel (Mendel) Mielnicki, a young Jew from Wasilków, near Białystok, described the kindness of a Polish priest he encountered in the slave labour camp at Mittelbau-Dora, near Weimar.

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in the summer of 1944 as a street child and brought to a police station. He admitted he was Jewish after his made-up address and name did not clear. The police officer chose to help Henryk by sending him to the reformatory as a Polish youth. According to another source, after he was apprehended, Henryk was sent to the main institution for homeless boys in Kraków. The authorities there assured the police that the boy’s identity was in order, but evidently thought it best to shelter him elsewhere, for his safety. Henryk recalled conditions in Bronowice as “good and the work easy.” See Borwicz, *Vies interdites*, 75.

<sup>1993</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 478–79.

Well, very early one morning, I was awakened when my head hit the wooden sleeping shelf beneath it with a thud. I knew instantly what had happened. I was out of my bunk and onto the back of a prisoner who'd stolen my bread in a second. But not fast enough to stop him from stuffing my bread into his mouth. Possessed of a strength that in retrospect still surprises me, I quickly had him down on the floor with my hands locked on his throat, when the Polish priest, who was our Blockältester [block elder], came out of his room to see who was making all the racket.

I can't say whether it was my intention to strangle the thief or just to stop him from swallowing my bread (and thus my ability to stay alive). Whatever the case, I was on the brink of choking the final breath out of the man, when this priest, who was tall, and heavy enough to have pulled me away with one hand, instead said, "So what will you accomplish if you kill him? He's already eaten most of your bread, and you'll be hanged tomorrow. Remember your Ten Commandments. Let him go, and I'll tend to his punishment." So I let the son of a bitch go. At which point the big priest added, "God will help you." In Hebrew! Somehow, he had known from the outset that I was a Jew. I don't recall that in my subsequent dealings with him, which, given his position, were considerable, he ever so much as alluded to this again. And I couldn't be more grateful to this Christian man of the cloth if I tried. In his own way, he too saved my life.<sup>1994</sup>

Similar accounts attest to the selfless sacrifice of Polish priests and nuns imprisoned in other Nazi German camps. Rev. Michał Piaszczyński, who maintained friendly relations with Jews before the war and invited rabbis to the seminary in Łomża where he taught, shared his meagre food ration with fellow prisoners of Sachsenhausen (Oranienburg), where he died of malnutrition and disease in December 1940. When a Jew in his block, a lawyer from Warsaw by the name of Kott, was denied his food ration one day, Rev. Piaszczyński gave him his ration. The Jewish prisoner turned to Rev. Piaszczyński with tears in his eyes and said: "You Catholics believe that in your churches there is a living Christ in your bread. I believe that in this bread there is a living Christ who told you to share it with me."<sup>1995</sup>

An inmate of the Dachau concentration camp, where "altruism is almost completely unknown," records how Rev. Jan Tymiński of the diocese of Łomża volunteered to be transferred to one of the blocks that was ridden with the typhus epidemic in order to help his fellow prisoners who were less fortunate than he was: "He hops from one bunk to another, blesses the dying, no matter of what nationality or faith they are, consoles those who are still conscious."<sup>1996</sup> Rev. Tadeusz Gaik, who was also interned in Dachau, struck up a deep friendship

<sup>1994</sup> Michel Mielnicki, as told to John Munro, *Białystok to Birkenau: The Holocaust Journey of Michel Mielnicki* (Vancouver: Ronsdale Press and Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, 2000), 202–3.

<sup>1995</sup> Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, 144–46.

<sup>1996</sup> S.J. [Stanisław Jerzy] Sagan, *Food Carries Out!* (Toronto: n.p., 1982), 110.

with a Jew by the name of Dawid Jakubowski from his hometown of Bochnia, and provided him with food and a sweater.<sup>1997</sup>

Feliks Nelken (later Felix Gwozdz, b. 1920) was part of a group of Jews who were transferred from the Płaszów concentration camp to Dachau in 1945. Upon arrival in Dachau, the prisoners were registered by inmates, among them a Polish priest. The priest quietly told Nelken and his companion to come up with Polish names in order to register them as Poles. Nelken became Gwózdź. This ruse saved their lives, as the other Jewish prisoners perished.<sup>1998</sup> The testimony of Ryszard Ores (b. 1925), who was also transferred to Dachau in April 1945, is similar.<sup>1999</sup>

During a typhus epidemic in Dachau, the Jesuit Fr. Czesław Fabisiak, although himself in a very fragile state, volunteered to give blood to a Hungarian Jew by the name of Wachs (István Wax?), who was in need of a blood transfusion.<sup>2000</sup> Fr. Fabisiak recalled:

Among them was a sick Jewish prisoner from Hungary who was transferred from another sick room. He had been hated in his previous sick room for being Jewish and needed a blood transfusion to save his life; no one had been willing to give him their blood, so I offered to give my blood for analysis to see if we were a match. The exam revealed that the Hungarian Jew and the Christian priest shared the same kind of blood. He received the transfusing day seemed to be feeling somewhat better.

From that moment on, I treated him as though we were brothers by blood. When I visited him, I called him brother. It seemed to bother him greatly. He asked, "Why do you call me brother when I am not your brother?"

I said to him, "You being a Jew and me being a Polish man does not mean we are not brothers."

"No, no," he yelled at me, "I do not want to be your brother. I am Jewish, and I want to be only Jewish."

I told him, "You know that your life was saved by Polish blood, which is also Christian blood."

When he heard those words, he screamed at me, "No, I don't want that. I want only to be Jewish and of pure blood. I would prefer to die than be a Christian. I hate the Christians. I hate them with all my being."

<sup>1997</sup> Tadeusz Gaik, "Moje krótkie wspomnienie," in Gładysz and Szymerski, *Biografia byłych więźniów politycznych niemieckich obozów koncentracyjnych*, vol. 1, 72–74.

<sup>1998</sup> Testimony of Halina Nelken, SFV, Interview code 6258.

<sup>1999</sup> Richard O. [Ores] Holocaust Testimony (HVT-2936), FVA. See also Aleksander B. Skotnicki, *Ryszard Ores (1925–2011): Od sanitariusza w krakowskim getcie do dyrektora kliniki na nowojorskim Manhattanie* (Kraków: Stradomskie Centrum Dialogu, 2012).

<sup>2000</sup> Stanisław Cieślak, "Jezuici ratujący Żydów podczas hitlerowskiej okupacji," *Życie Konsekrowane*, nos. 3–4 (131–32) (2018): 140–55, at p. 142.

At the time I was grossly offended. I did not understand his way of thinking because I did not understand what had been happening to all the Jews in Germany.<sup>2001</sup>

Miroslav Grunwald, a Jewish prisoner of Dachau from Croatia, confirms the kindness of Polish prisoners, among them priests.

The first impression at the entrance was misleading: there was a sign “Arbeit Macht Frei” (“Work Will Set You Free”) so I was determined to work very hard so as to get free as soon as possible. An hour later we learned that the reality of the camp was different. The sign meant that our possible freedom depended, first of all, on a German victory (occupying the entire Soviet Union, as well as the British Isles). We were also warned that this was not a hotel or home for convalescence; that we were really convicts.

After that speech, we were ordered to undress completely (it was thirty below zero!). In this fatal five minutes, many people just fell down and were taken to the crematoria. I managed to get away with just contracting pneumonia and a high fever. A Polish doctor (an older prisoner) saved my life in a miraculous way. We were first brought into a bar-ricade for disinfection. This action deserves a description in detail. First came a prisoner (with a black triangle for anti-socials) to trim our hair. That was not so bad, but then he shaved all hairs from our body with an old-fashioned razor, without soap or cream, and fast, injuring almost everybody’s face. Then came another prisoner with a pail of carbolic acid and with a hard barn brush, swept our bodies. An enormous burning sensation left us really suffering. Then we went into the showers: first boiling hot water, then ice cold showers!

All of us that survived the bath with a suspiciously burnt skin went to another lineup for a medical examination. An SS man presided and two Polish doctors (prisoners) examined us and proclaimed us fit for instant labor or for a couple of days “rest.”

As soon as it was my turn, I was the first to establish a third line and this third group got an instant treatment. There was a pile of paper cement bags in which tar glued together several layers of paper. The layers were separated and our bodies were covered with sticky tar paper. This was supposed to reduce the skin inflammation and reduce the body temperature.

I was warned by one of the doctors that I still had to come every Saturday to remove the tar paper and take a bath, but he whispered to me that the healing process would occur only if I could manage not to remove the tar paper for several months.

This meant I had to hide every Saturday and not go to the bathhouse with the others. This would be a punishable offense if I were caught. I managed not to get caught all through the winter months of 1943-44; always being in mortal fear of being found behind the barracks.

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<sup>2001</sup> Fabisiak, *Memories of a Devil*, 205–6. Fr. Fabisiak does not spare some of the small number of German priests in Dachau. The German priests were treated better than the Polish priests (who were put in a barracks apart from all the other priests), for whom they exhibited open contempt, and even prevented the Poles from participating in religious observances. *Ibid.*, 285. Fr. Fabisiak mentions a group of prisoners that has been overlooked: Polish teenage boys brought to Germany as farm labourers who refused to copulate with German women, who then falsely denounced them. *Ibid.*, 270.

However, God helped me two-fold during this time. First, by my hiding undiscovered and, secondly, by allowing me to return to my barrack at noon with some foodstuff in my pockets, as I usually hid where it was most dangerous; behind the barrack of Polish priests who managed to give me some dry food through the back window.<sup>2002</sup>

Rev. Witold Kiedrowski, from the Chełmno diocese, who was imprisoned in the Majdanek concentration camp, witnessed how Rev. Julian Chrościcki, a priest from the Warsaw suburb of Włochy who had been arrested for helping Jews, accompanied a rabbi in reciting psalms from the breviary he had managed to smuggle into the camp.

In his capacity as pharmacist, Rev. Kiedrowski visited sickrooms in the camps in which he was interned, namely, Majdanek, Birkenau and Ohdruf, bringing both medical and spiritual assistance to prisoners of all nationalities, including Jews, for whom he would recite psalms. During the massacre of Jewish prisoners in Majdanek on November 3, 1943, Rev. Kiedrowski was badly beaten for trying to protect a Jewish boy.<sup>2003</sup>

Sister Julia (Stanisława) Rodzińska, a Dominican nun from Wilno, was arrested in July 1943 and imprisoned in the Stutthof concentration camp. She died there on February 20, 1945, after contracting typhus while visiting and caring for inmates infected with typhus. A fellow Jewish inmate by the name of Eva Hoff recalled, “She helped us with her inner strength.”<sup>2004</sup>

## Rescue of Jews during Death Marches

Even as the war was drawing to a close, Jews still found themselves in need of protectors. During the evacuation of prisoners from the Stutthof concentration camp in January 1945, a group of women prisoners, among them Jews, fled from German guards who opened fire on them. Ten of the survivors made it to a nearby Polish village, where a priest and another man directed them to an empty barn. Fighting raged all around as the Germans retreated from the area, and the next day the Soviets entered the village.<sup>2005</sup>

<sup>2002</sup> Mirosław (Fred) Grunwald, USHMM, Internet: <https://www.ushmm.org/remember/holocaust-reflections-testimonies/behind-every-name-a-story/mirosław-fred-grunwald>.

<sup>2003</sup> Witold Kiedrowski, “Świat potrzebuje pomnika żywej modlitwy,” *Miesięcznik Franciszkański*, September 12, 1987.

<sup>2004</sup> Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, 281–85. See also Justyna Mirosława Dombek, *Moc w słabości: Życie i męczeństwo bł. Julii Stanisławy Rodzińskiej, dominikanki*, 2nd expanded ed. (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Karmelitów Bosych, 2006).

<sup>2005</sup> Testimony of Hinda Danziger Kibort in Zelle and Sussman, *Witnesses to the Holocaust*, 94.

Eugenija Rubinshtein, a native of Lithuania interned in Stutthof, managed to run away from a column of prisoners and hid with Polish farmers.<sup>2006</sup> Lajosné Fleischer, a Jewish woman from Hungary who survived the forced death march during the evacuation of Stutthof, recalled:

If we marched through a village during the day, then from behind the fences they would throw us pieces of bread from open windows and boiled potatoes with their skin on. Running alongside our columns, Polish women poured hot coffee into our mess kits. They paid no attention either to the shouts of the SS men or the butts of their rifles. We who survived will remember with lifelong gratitude these simple Polish people who took food from their mouths and gave it to us. Thanks to these few morsels they saved the lives of many of us.<sup>2007</sup>

Lusia Feinstock-Shimmel, from Wilno, was one of the many Jewish women sent on the death march.

On the way, frozen, starved, and exhausted, she collapsed in the snow. She expected to be shot on the spot, but that did not happen. She lay unconscious in the field for hours, until a local farmer found her. He took her to his aunt's house. The aunt, Monika Schwertfeger took it upon herself to tend to Lusia, wash and treat her wounds, and feed and clothe her, even when Lusia revealed to her that she was Jewish. Monika spent five months caring for Lusia like the daughter she never had.<sup>2008</sup>

Jewish evacuees from Auschwitz also managed to escape and find refuge with Poles.<sup>2009</sup> Seven Jewish women—Sara Erenhalt (née Flaks), Genia Ekert, Tema Laufer, Tosia Zak, Stefa, and Leah Binstock and her sister—who were evacuated from Auschwitz by the Germans in the so-called death marches, managed to escape in the village of Poręba, near Pszczyna, and hid in a barn that belonged to an elderly priest, Rev. Alojzy Pitlok. Sara Erenhalt recounts:

We all entered some cottage. There was an old man. We greeted him saying “Praised be Jesus Christ.”<sup>2010</sup> We asked him about the night in his barn. He replied: “Poor little things,

<sup>2006</sup> Antonina Levinienė, Vilna Gaon Museum of Jewish History, Vilnius, Internet: <http://rescuedchild.lt/content.php?id=7090>.

<sup>2007</sup> Tomasz Ceran, “Prości polscy ludzie,” “Nieznane historie z dziejów ratowania Żydów pod okupacją niemiecką,” Supplement to PlusMinus, *Rzeczpospolita* [Warsaw], March 23–24, 2019.

<sup>2008</sup> Monika Schwertfeger, RD.

<sup>2009</sup> On this topic, see Aleksandra Namysło, *Po tej stronie był również Człowiek: Mieszkańcy przedwojennego województwa śląskiego z pomocą Żydom w okresie II wojny światowej* (Katowice and Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2021), 194–212.

<sup>2010</sup> A traditional Polish greeting that is falling into disuse except when greeting clergy: “Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus.” The response is: “Na wieki wieków. Amen,” which translated as “For ever and ever. Amen.”

how can I let you sleep in a barn at minus eighteen degrees.” It appeared that our host was a priest, dressed at that time in secular clothing. We started talking to him and asking for shelter at his home. He agreed immediately to hide me and Genia. ... We attempted to persuade him that we could not separate from our female companions because we were together all the time in the camp, and if they went away, they surely would die.<sup>2011</sup>

Fr. Pitlok agreed to host all of the women. He brought them food and took them into his house, despite the fact that the Germans had sequestered a room there. The Jewish women remained with him for three-and-a-half weeks until the arrival of the Soviet army. Five of the Jewish women were hidden in the cellar, while the two women with a non-Jewish appearance pretended to be the priest’s Christian servants. Rev. Pitlok was also willing to offer them help after the liberation. “He said that it did not matter that we were Jews, but it was important that our guardian angel had sent us to him and that he could save us. He also stressed that if we did not manage to find our families, we could always come back to his place and find employment.”<sup>2012</sup>

Sympathy for the victims of the death marches was widespread. At least 16 individuals and families from Poręba were known to have sheltered prisoners who escaped during the death march that passed through that village.<sup>2013</sup> Morris Dach was able to escape with two other men during the third day of the death march; they were hidden by a Polish farmer.<sup>2014</sup> Henryk Mandelbaum, a native of Ząbkowice Będzińskie, was rescued by Polish villagers in the vicinity of Jastrzębie-Zdrój after his escape,<sup>2015</sup> as were Helena Berman and Romana Duracz.<sup>2016</sup> Jan and Katarzyna Szczerbowski and their daughter, Irena, sheltered Krystyna Żywulska (Zofia Sonia Landau) in Jawiszowice, and Jadwiga Miś in Bieruń Nowy sheltered a Jew from Wieluń.<sup>2017</sup> Maria Dżambowa was taken in by a Polish woman who fed her and bought her a train ticket to Katowice, where

<sup>2011</sup> Testimony of Sara (Flaks Pater) Erenhalt, YVA, file O.3/1588 (Item 3555725).

<sup>2012</sup> Sara E. [Erenhalt] Holocaust Testimony (HVT-1085) and Leah B. [Binstock] Holocaust Testimony (HVT-369), FVA; Testimony of Sara (Flaks Pater) Erenhalt, YVA, file O.3/1588 (Item 3555725); Oral history interview with Leah Binstock, USHMM, Accession no. 1993.A.0087.11, RG-50.091.0011.

<sup>2013</sup> Andrzej Strzelecki, “Marsz śmierci”: *Przewodnik po trasie Oświęcim—Wodzisław Śląski* (Katowice: Towarzystwo Opieki nad Oświęcimiem, 1989), 49–53.

<sup>2014</sup> Testimony of Morris Dach, November 23, 1994, Holocaust Memorial Center, Farmington Hills, Michigan, Internet: <http://www.holocaustcenter.org/page.aspx?pid=515>.

<sup>2015</sup> Bolesław Ciepiera and Małgorzata Sromek, *Śladami Żydów z Zagłębia Dąbrowskiego: Wspomnienia* (Będzin: Stowarzyszenie Autorów Polskich Oddział Będziński, 2009), 78.

<sup>2016</sup> Testimony of Helena Berman and Romana Duracz, JHI, record group 301, no. 6182.

<sup>2017</sup> Henryk Świebocki, ed., *Ludzie dobrej woli: Księga pamięci mieszkańców Ziemi Oświęcimskiej niosących pomoc więźniom KL Auschwitz* (Oświęcim: Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau and Towarzystwo Opieki nad Oświęcimiem, 2005), 134, 372, 450. See also Krystyna

she found shelter with friends.<sup>2018</sup> Pieterkowski, a Jew, managed to escape and found shelter with a man named Grzebowski in Mikołów.<sup>2019</sup> Leon Reig, who managed to escape together with some other prisoners during the evacuation of the Monowice subcamp of Auschwitz, reported that they were treated well by Polish villagers, who sheltered and fed them.<sup>2020</sup> Ted Libfeld and his companions were given food, some clothes and lodging by Polish farmers after escaping from a death march near Pszczyna.<sup>2021</sup>

Poles who have been awarded by Yad Vashem for sheltering death march escapees in various localities include: Katarzyna Froehlich and Dorota Kuc-Froehlich (several other people involved in this rescue, among them Rozalia Kalabiś, were not recognized); Augustyn and Zofia Godziek; Brunon and Bronisława Jurytko of Książenice, who rescued 14 Jews; Paweł, Marta and Anastazja Muskietorz; Alfred Panic, Wilhelm and Wincenty Kostka, and Erna Stasiak-Kostka; Ludwik, Maria and Henryk Paszek; Gertruda Pustelnik; Maria and Wanda Sitko; Teodor and Franciszka Tendera; and Konrad, Wiktor and Maria Zacny, and their daughters, Stefania and Janina; Regina and Stefania Zimoń.<sup>2022</sup> The Hanak family, who also took in death-camp escapees, has not been recognized.<sup>2023</sup>

Characteristically, Jews who endured the death march, like Helen Lewis, a Czech Jew who was evacuated from Auschwitz on January 27, 1944, recalled, “We were on the road to begin with for a fortnight. It was indescribably cold, and the only food we got was from villagers—the Poles gave us some, the Germans, later, none at all.”<sup>2024</sup> In other words, while marching through territory populated by Poles, Jews would receive help from sympathetic Poles; however, they could not count on empathy once they arrived on lands populated by Germans. Nate Leipciger, who was marched from the Flossenbürg concentration camp to

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Żywulska's memoir, *I Survived Auschwitz* (Warsaw: tCHu; Oświęcim: Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau, 2004).

<sup>2018</sup> Testimony of Maria Dżambowa, JHI, record group 301, no. 3555.

<sup>2019</sup> Testimony of Pieterkowski, JHI, record group 301, no. 446.

<sup>2020</sup> Testimony of Leon Reig, JHI, record group 301, no. 94.

<sup>2021</sup> Testimony of Ted Libfeld, SFV, Interview code 6836.

<sup>2022</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 222, 319–20, 532–33; and vol. 5, 578–79, 586, 652–53, 711–12, 815, 940–41. The Zacny family of Pszczyna was recognized in 2019. Regarding Rozalia Kalabiś, see The Froehlich Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-froehlich-family>. See also the testimony of Dunia Urbańska (Urysson), JHI, record group 302, no. 124, who describes how she, another Jewish woman and several men who had escaped during the death march were sheltered in a village near Bielsko-Biała, where they were helped by a number of villagers.

<sup>2023</sup> Aleksandra Namysło, “Postawy mieszkańców rejencji katowickiej wobec ludności żydowskiej,” in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 793–94.

<sup>2024</sup> Gill, *The Journey Back from Hell*, 415.

the small town of Leonberg, near Stuttgart at the end of the war recalled, “The German people looked away as we went past, as if we were monsters.”<sup>2025</sup>

Many of those forced to endure the death marches, however, were not as fortunate. Prisoners, especially those too weak to walk or who tried to escape, were mowed down by German bullets and their bodies left by the roadside. Prisoners killed during the death marches—among them many whose identity was not known—were buried respectfully by Catholic Poles regardless of their religion.

In a Christian cemetery in the village of Książenice, Poland, about an hour and a half from Auschwitz-Birkenau, is a memorial which stands over a mass grave of 45 people, victims of the death march that left Auschwitz-Birkenau. .... The local priest, Pawel Rys [Rev. Paweł Ryś], decided, for humanitarian reasons, to bury the victims and also to document their ‘names’—the inmate numbers tattooed on their arms. The priest instructed the grave-digger to record the numbers. The original document is stored in the Auschwitz Archive and a copy is on display in the Holocaust History Museum at Yad Vashem.

Together with the thousands of other inmates in the death march, they departed from Auschwitz-Birkenau on 18th January 1945. The inmates received a piece of bread, one packet of canned food between four and a blanket. They were forced to walk tens of kilometers in the freezing cold wearing rags and trudging through the snow in wooden clogs. The inmates suffered from exhaustion and dysentery, eating handfuls of snow to ease their hunger. Any inmate who became weak and dropped behind was immediately shot by the SS. After a march of approximately 59 km the inmates arrived at a train station in the city of Gliwice where 100–150 inmates were crowded into open train carriages. The inmates were transported for hours in the extreme cold of -20°C and many of them froze to death. When the train stopped, the SS guards continued to march the inmates, who had not received food for three days. On the 22nd of January the inmates neared the forest by the settlements of Młyn [Młyn] and Rybnik. As the inmates entered the forest the guards began to shout that they were being attacked by partisans and began shooting towards the inmates. The site was filled with dead and injured. Residents of Młyn used wagons to transport some of the corpses for burial in Książenice cemetery. Their funerals were held on the 26th of January and the 12th of February. ...

Initial research in the Auschwitz Archive revealed that 26 of the buried were Jews from Germany, Czechoslovakia, France, The Netherlands, Poland and Hungary. Five of the buried were Polish political inmates and the others were of varied nationalities.<sup>2026</sup>

Yaki Gantz, an Israeli who made it his mission to identify the Jews among the victims of the death marches and to commemorate them, wrote, “It is amazing to see how many people helped the Jews then, and how many people want to

<sup>2025</sup> Nate Leipziger, *The Weight of Freedom* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2015), 121.

<sup>2026</sup> “Death March of Male Auschwitz Inmates,” YVA, Internet: [https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/death\\_march/overview.asp](https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/death_march/overview.asp).

help me now.” According to an article in an Israeli newspaper that featured this story, “Gantz promises he will not cease his search for mass graves. It is his way of thanking the Polish citizens who buried the victims of the death marches regardless of their religion, he says.”<sup>2027</sup>

**V**alerie Straussová, a Czech Jew, feigned death when she was shot during the evacuation of prisoners from the Schlesiersee labour camp in Lower Silesia. Wounded, she managed to drag herself to the Polish village of Wijewo, near Leszno, where she was taken in by Maria Wojciech. Maria entrusted Valerie to the care of her sister-in-law, Stefania (Jadwiga) Wojciechowska, a nun whose convent had been closed down by the Germans and the nuns dispersed. Maria was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Among the Nations, whereas Sister Stefania was merely awarded a certificate of appreciation.<sup>2028</sup>

In the second half of January 1945, with the approach of the front, the Schlesiersee labor camp for women, a branch of the Gross-Rosen camp, in Lower Silesia, was evacuated, and about 200 Jewish women from the camp were forced to participate in a death march, in freezing weather, in a northwesterly direction. In order to make them walk faster, the guards escorting them selected twenty “slow” prisoners and shot them to death. Waleria Straussova, a Jewish woman born in Czechoslovakia, was wounded, but survived. After the group had passed out of sight, Straussova dragged herself with her remaining strength to the Polish village of Wijewo in the county of Leszno in the Poznań district, where she collapsed on Maria Wojciech’s doorstep in a pool of blood. Despite the presence of German soldiers and policemen in the village, Wojciech took Straussova in, washed her, dressed her wounds, fed her and allowed her to rest. In the dead of night, Wojciech took Straussova in a little sledge to the home of her relative, Stefania Wojciechowska, a nun, who took care of Straussova until the Germans’ final retreat. When the village was liberated, Straussova was admitted to a nearby military hospital and after her recovery returned to her home in Prague.<sup>2029</sup>

**A**lek Elias Kleiner, a native of Kraków, was imprisoned in several German concentration camps before he ended up in Kaufering, a subsidiary of Dachau, near Landsberg in Bavaria, around the end of the war. During the evacuation of the camp in late April 1945, Kleiner and some other Jewish prisoners managed

<sup>2027</sup> Nissan Tzur, “Former Intel Agent Discovers Jews in Mass ‘Christian’ Graves,” *Times of Israel*, December 1, 2013. The article mentions several villages, among them Książenice and Miedźna, where ceremonies were held with the participation of the local Catholic priest and community in conjunction with the erection of monuments to commemorate the Jewish victims.

<sup>2028</sup> See also Testimony of Valerie Straussová, EHRI (European Holocaust Research Infrastructure) Document Blog, Internet: <https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2016/03/11/testimony-of-valerie-straussova/>; “Maria Wojciech from Wijewo Village,” *Memory and Identity*, Internet: <http://pamiecitozsamosc.pl/en/maria-wojciech-from-wijewo-village>.

<sup>2029</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 880–81.

to escape and make it to the Benedictine abbey in St. Ottilien, which had been taken over and converted into a military hospital for German soldiers. When they arrived, they encountered Polish nuns, who had likely been expelled from Warsaw after the uprising of 1944. On hearing their story, the nuns led the escaped prisoners to the cellar, took their prison clothes, burned them, and gave them new clothes and shoes. They then brought a priest, probably Fr. Moritz Schrank, who agreed to hide them in a stable with horses, pigs and cows. He brought them food every day until the American army arrived on May 9, 1945.<sup>2030</sup>

## The Future Pope John Paul II

Growing up in Wadowice, Karol Wojtyła had made friends with Jerzy Kluger, a Jewish boy.<sup>2031</sup> During the German occupation of Poland, Wojtyła entered a clandestine underground seminary in Kraków. He was ordained a priest in November 1946.

Wojtyła's rescue activities only came to light after he became Pope John Paul II. According to historian Paul Johnson,

His name also figured on a Nazi blacklist on account of his activities on behalf of the Jewish community in Cracow [Kraków] and its neighbourhood. As recorded in the archives of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, ... he belonged to an underground group which took Jewish families out of the ghettos, gave them new identity papers and, if necessary, found them hiding places.<sup>2032</sup>

According to another source, "Many people have told me: [Wojtyła] was one of the people who took risks for the Jews. We know, for example, that he made false papers for them during the war. ... this young man participated in making, inside the Bishop's palace, false papers destined for Polish members of the Resistance and Jews."<sup>2033</sup>

<sup>2030</sup> Memoirs of Alek Elias Kleiner, YVA, file O.3/8486 (Item 9438476); Testimony of Elias Kleiner, SFV, Interview code 476; Moritz Schranf postcard, March 26, 1953, USHMM, Accession no. 1997.A.0392.

<sup>2031</sup> After the war, Jerzy Kluger settled in Rome. He rekindled his friendship with Karol Wojtyła, then Auxiliary Bishop of Kraków, when he attended the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. See O'Brien, *The Hidden Pope*; Jerzy Kluger with Gianfranco De Simone, *The Pope and I: How the Lifelong Friendship between a Polish Jew and John Paul II Advanced Jewish-Christian Relations* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2012).

<sup>2032</sup> Paul Johnson, *Pope John Paul II and the Catholic Restoration* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982), 10.

<sup>2033</sup> Halter, *Stories of Deliverance*, 258–59.

Edith Zierer, who was liberated from the work camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna in January 1945, credits Wojtyła with saving her life in the final months of the war. Virtually weakened by tuberculosis and other ailments, she encountered Wojtyła, then a seminarian, at a railroad station. After joining other survivors and staying at an orphanage in Poland and a French sanatorium, she emigrated to Israel in 1951. She met Pope John Paul II again at a moving reunion at Yad Vashem in 2000.

When Pope John Paul II visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial and museum in 2000 he met with a group of Holocaust survivors, among them Edith Zierer of Haifa. “He who saves the life of even one Jew is likened to one who has saved an entire world,” she told him in Polish. “He put his hand on my shoulder and I was so moved. I had closed a circle,” she told the daily newspaper *Maariv*.

She was born to a wealthy and educated Jewish family in Katowice, Poland. In 1939, in advance of the German invasion of Poland, her family fled and moved from place to place. “We hid in the attic of Polish farmers, among the hens,” she recalled.

Her father, mother and sister were subsequently murdered, and Zierer remained incarcerated alone. She worked in a weapons factory in the Skarżysko-Kamienna labor camp in occupied Poland. “I worked for 12 hours a day. I was lucky that I spoke a good German and that the German bosses liked me. Otherwise I probably would have ended my life,” she said. “I worked from the end of 1942 until January 28, 1945. I was by myself, alone in the world, in harsh conditions, in freezing cold, doing hard labor. I was small, weak, without shoes, with frozen feet.”

After her release at the end of January 1945, Zierer lay helpless in an old train station in Poland. “I was thin, eaten up by lice, tired and exhausted. There wasn’t a drop of life in me. I was lying there, apathetic and motionless,” she later said in an interview.

“Suddenly, totally unexpectedly, a young priest made his way through the people and approached me. I looked up and saw a Christian priest in a brown robe standing in front of me, with a great light in his eyes. He turned to me of all the people who were sitting there in the station, and asked ‘Why are you sitting here like that?’” she recounted.

The young priest was Karol Wojtyła [Wojtyła], who in 1978 would become Pope John Paul II. He brought her a sandwich and tea. “I was thin, gaunt, tired and ill. To this day I remember the first bite ... I finished the sandwich and he told me to stand up because ‘We’re going,’ as he said. I wasn’t capable of standing on my skinny legs. I fell onto the floor of the train station and he was forced to carry me in his arms.”

Wojtyła carried her on his back for about three kilometers, until they reached the station from which a train took them to Krakow. “We were both alone on the railroad track, in the dark ... We arrived together, I on his back, at the next station,” she said.

In Krakow [Kraków] she was taken in by a relative, and later had the good fortune of being one of the 100 orphans taken in and rescued by Lena Kuchler. She wandered with them to Zakopane, Czechoslovakia and France. ...

In 1951 Zierer immigrated to Israel, where she raised a family and worked as a dental technician.<sup>2034</sup>

<sup>2034</sup> Ofer Aderet, “Edith Zierer, Holocaust Survivor Saved by Pope, Dies,” *Haaretz*, January 16, 2014.

After the war, Pola Hipsz returned to Poland from exile in Siberia. She credits Wojtyła, then a young priest, with helping her to locate her husband, Daniel Sztarksztejn, leading to their reunion in London.<sup>2035</sup>

In 1946, Józefa and Bronisław Jachowicz turned to Rev. Wojtyła, then a newly ordained priest, with a request to baptize Shachne Hiller. They had cared for the boy as if he were their own child since 1942, when he was just two years old and his mother smuggled him out of the Kraków ghetto. The parents died in Auschwitz. After being asked what the wish of the boy's parents had been when they entrusted him to their care, the Jachowiczes acknowledged that his parents had requested their son be raised as a Jew. Rev. Wojtyła replied that it would be unfair to baptize the child while there was still hope relatives might be found who would take him. Shachne was eventually reunited with family in the United States who adopted him, and he grew up as Stanley Berger.<sup>2036</sup>

On his first trip to Poland as Pope in June 1979, John Paul II visited Auschwitz, where he stated:

I have come and I kneel on this Golgotha of the modern world, on these tombs, largely nameless like the great tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I kneel before all the inscriptions that come one after another bearing the memory of the victims of Birkenau in languages ...

In particular I pause with you, dear participants in this encounter, before the inscription in Hebrew. This inscription awakens the memory of the People whose sons and daughters were intended for total extermination. This People draws its origin from Abraham, our father in faith (cf. Rom 4:12), as was expressed by Paul of Tarsus. The very people that received from God the commandment "Thou shalt not kill," itself experienced in a special measure what is meant by killing. It is not permissible for anyone to pass by this inscription with indifference.<sup>2037</sup>

On many occasions since that time, Pope John Paul II spoke movingly of the Jewish suffering in the Shoah.

Nevertheless, remarkably, a major Jewish news agency characterized Pope John Paul's attitude and behaviour toward Jews as "offensive":

Jewish feeling toward Pope John Paul may have been summed up by Elie Wiesel, author, human rights activist and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986. Writing in the New York

<sup>2035</sup> Marilyn Schimmel, *Witnesses: Voices from the Holocaust* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 2005).

<sup>2036</sup> "The Merit of a Young Priest," in Yaffa Eliach, *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 142–47.

<sup>2037</sup> Apostolic Pilgrimage to Poland, Homily of His Holiness John Paul II, Auschwitz-Birkenau, 7 June 1979, Internet: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1979/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_hom\\_19790607\\_polonia-brzezinka.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19790607_polonia-brzezinka.html).

Post, Wiesel accused the Pope of wanting to “dejudaeize the Holocaust” with his “strange and offensive behavior whenever he is confronted by the crudest event in recorded history.” ... “It is now clear: this Pope has a problem with Jews, just as Jews have a problem with him. His understanding for living Jews is as limited as his compassion for dead Jews,” wrote Wiesel, an Auschwitz survivor. ... Wiesel accused John Paul of wanting people to believe Christians suffered as much as Jews in Hitler’s concentration camps.<sup>2038</sup>

These charges began to proliferate. John Allemang, writing in Canada’s leading daily newspaper, accused the Pope of “play[ing] down their [i.e., the Jews’] sufferings in the Holocaust.”<sup>2039</sup> At a meeting with foreign journalists in January 1988, he was asked: “I would like to know if we are right, we Jews, in thinking that in Your Holiness’s continual [sic] references to the *Shoah* there is a certain tendency to minimize, to lessen the dimensions of the *Shoah*.” “I am amazed. That is all I can say. I am amazed at your question,” was the Pope’s response. Could there be any other response to this kind of baseless complaint?

Nonetheless, the charges persisted in certain quarters. Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, one time vice-president of the World Jewish Congress and chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, gave a speech to an international gathering of Jewish Second World War military veterans held in Israel on February 23, 2000, in which he deplored what he called the Pope John Paul’s wartime “acquiescence” to the “Nazi” persecution of Jews. He urged Israelis not to celebrate the Pope’s upcoming visit to Israel until he clarified what he was doing as a priest in Poland during the Second World War. Posters plastered through an ultra-Orthodox Jewish neighbourhood of Jerusalem called the Pope “the evil one” and promised his March 2000 pilgrimage to the Holy Land would not pass peacefully.<sup>2040</sup>

<sup>2038</sup> JTA, “Wiesel assails Pontiff for ‘offensive behavior,’” *The Canadian Jewish News* [Toronto], July 7, 1988. Elie Wiesel has a long history of making disparaging remarks about Poles. He is on record for holding Poles co-responsible for the camps Nazi Germany established in occupied Poland. “As for the Poles,” Wiesel wrote in 1968, “it was not by accident that the worst concentration camps were set up in Poland, worse than anywhere else.” See Elie Wiesel, *Legends of Our Time* (New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 163. The Nobel Peace Prize winner went on to demonize Polish society: “We had so many enemies! ... the Poles betrayed them. True, here and there a ‘good’ citizen was found whose cooperation could be bought [sic] with Jewish money. But how many good-hearted, upright Poles were to be found at the time in Poland? Very few.” See Introduction to Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall*, 3–4.

<sup>2039</sup> John Allemang, “Turbulent Times: Ten Years of John Paul II,” *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], October 15, 1988.

<sup>2040</sup> William A. Orme Jr., “Israelis Are of 2 Minds About John Paul’s Coming Sojourn,” *The New York Times*, February 25, 2000; “Pope begins pilgrimage in Egypt,” *National Post* [Toronto], February 25, 2000; “Jewish militants call Pope ‘evil one,’” *The Toronto Star*, February 29, 2000.

## The Conversion of Jews

Priests did not rush to convert Jewish children after the war. Another such example involves Chana Mandelbaum (b. 1937), who was left by her mother in the care of the Nabielski family of Chronów, near Nowy Wiśnicz. Known as Jańcia, the girl was hidden in that home for four years. She could not leave the house during daylight hours as her dark hair might draw unwarranted attention. Her mother never returned for her.

After the war, Mrs. Nabielski decided to have the girl baptized and to treat her as a foster daughter. She went to Rev. Wilhelm Boczek, the local parish priest, regarding the matter. He agreed to do it only on condition that the girl's family could not be found. As it happened, Chana was on the Jewish Committee's missing persons list in Kraków. It was decided to turn her over to the committee. The decision was extremely hard and painful for everyone. Chana was eventually reunited with her father, who had survived the war.<sup>2041</sup>

The case of Szlama Jakubowicz of Sochaczew, who spent the war working as an itinerant farm hand near his hometown of Sochaczew, is similar. Despite having registered with the Jewish committee after the war, he found it difficult to adjust to his new surroundings and decided to return to the last farmer he worked for. Fourteen years old at the time, Szlama approached the local priest requesting to be baptized. The priest dissuaded him, suggesting that he first attend mass and catechism classes. After the boy completed his classes the following year, he told the priest that he no longer wanted to be baptized. The priest reassured him in his decision, and they parted amicably. A cousin who returned from the Soviet Union found Szlama later that year, and Szlama decided to rejoin the Jewish community.<sup>2042</sup>

Batia Akselrad (later Eisenstein, b. 1932) of Krosno was sheltered by the Krukierrek family, who were acquainted with her parents. After the war, she remained with her adopted family, to whom she had become attached, as she was unaware that anyone from her immediate family had survived. She recalled the circumstances under which she decided to convert to Catholicism:

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<sup>2041</sup> "Looking for Jańcia," PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/your-stories/looking-jancia>.

<sup>2042</sup> Leociak, *Ratowanie*, 130–31, based on the testimony of Szlama Jakubowicz, JHI, record group 301, no. 2427.

Slowly and steadily I became attached to the Christian family and integrated myself within the family. Followed their customs and habits and became a practicing Polish Catholic youngster. This was also the year that I had to start school for the first time and I wanted to be like all the other children, namely Christian. I wanted to be accepted and not shunned. The family encouraged me in that direction. Presently I loved the family and was very attached to it. I went to the priest in Krosno and asked to be baptized. He was very surprised and told me that he knew my father. He asked whether there were any survivors in the family and I replied that I was the sole survivor. The priest baptized me on September 5th 1945, and that same month I started school for the first time. I was admitted to the seventh grade in the elementary school; I had to be prepared by a private teacher since I had to make up a great deal of schooling.<sup>2043</sup>

Afterwards, Batia learned that one of her brothers had survived, and she was removed from the Krukiereks' home against her will.

**A**fter the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, Szlomo Grzywacz (b. 1931) was relocated with other deportees to the vicinity of Kraków, where he was placed in an orphanage as Marek Kaczyński. A Polish family in Dębniki took him in, presuming he was Catholic.

As the war came to a close, Shlomo [Grzywacz] disclosed his Jewish identity to the family that had adopted him from the orphanage. Since he had become a choir [altar] boy by that time, the rescuers reported this to the priest, who baptized him. Some two years after the war, when he told them that he had been offered an opportunity to leave Poland for Palestine with Jewish children, the family and the priest were immensely agitated. However, when Shlomo eventually decided to leave, the priest gave him his blessings.<sup>2044</sup>

**D**avid Soroka and his wife decided to entrust their young daughter, Esther (b. 1940), to the care of their former housemaid, Jadwiga (Jadzia) Łukowska. She assured them that, if they remained alive, she would return the child. As part of a work crew, David was able to smuggle the child out of the Wilno ghetto. When the ghetto was liquidated in 1943, David and his wife were sent to the Kailis labour camp. David was transferred to the Stutthof concentration camp, and survived. His wife perished at the Ponary killing fields.

After liberation, David returned to Wilno to look for his child. But the Soviet Union had annexed Wilno, causing many Poles to move inside the newly drawn borders of Poland. In 1946, David learned that Łukowska had resettled in Wałcz, and he went there looking for his child.

<sup>2043</sup> Batia Eisenstein, "The Akselrads," in Leibner, *Krosno by the Wislok River*, April 2014, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/krosno/Krosno.html>, 244 ff.

<sup>2044</sup> Gafny, *Dividing Hearts*, 284; Nechama Tec, "Righteous Gentiles," *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, Internet: [https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Righteous\\_Gentiles](https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Righteous_Gentiles) (photograph caption).

Finally, and with great difficulty I arrived, only to learn that Jadzhe [Jadzia] had died 2 months earlier. My question, where is my child?

I came across a woman and she showed me through a window, a child playing in the garden and she called out to her, “Teresa, your father is here!” She came running, and took a look at me and said, “but this is a Jew! My father is on the front!” She ran back to play and I stood paralyzed in my spot!

I stayed overnight with this Christian and the next day the priest summoned me to him. He was very friendly and told me the child was not converted: “a lot of Jews were saved in my Church. I saw and suffered your pain and anguish what I saw around me, a folk that is washed in blood, we cannot force their children to be converted!”

I remained in the village for several days in order to gain the trust of this child. In the end I was able to take my child with me to Lodz [Łódź]. At the train station, the Polish neighbours, their children and the priest who played with my Esther, all came to say goodbye. I wanted to give the Christian woman more money, but she answered me, “we wanted to save your child from the hands of those bloody murderers, not for money.”

We arrived in Lodz and it took a while to distance her from her Christian beliefs. We finally made Aliyah to Eretz Israel after 3 hard months at sea on the “Exodus,” enduring more difficulties.

In the end, my Esther became a real Israeli child, grew up and married. Today she is a mother of 2 children.<sup>2045</sup>

The five-member Chucherko family took in Berish (Berek or Bernard) Feiler—a store owner in their village of Nowa Góra, near Krzeszowice, west of Kraków—and his wife Bela (Lola), who knocked on their door starving and weary in the summer of 1942. The Feilers had escaped the Aktion in Pilica. They asked if they could stay for the day and recuperate; they ended up staying for two years.

(The request for an overnight stay was often part of a survival strategy: a ploy before seeking a more permanent arrangement from an unsuspecting helper, who might not otherwise have agreed initially to a long-term commitment. Large sums of money, belongings or real property were then promised to entice the person into assuming the tremendous risk involved. Even at that stage, however, many rescuers did not fully comprehend the efforts that would be needed to care for their charges, nor did they foresee the length of time the arrangement would last. Often, the charges’ money would run out, and their host—usually not a wealthy person—would have to bear the cost of providing for them.)

The Chucherkos also agreed to hide Bernard’s brother, Chaim (Henryk) Feiler, and his wife, Sala. A few days later they were joined by Yitzhak-Shaya (Icchak) Grosman, Sala’s brother, who died shortly before the German occupation ended.

<sup>2045</sup> David Soroka, “‘Righteous Gentiles’ Have Saved My Child Esther,” in *Kanc, Svinzian Region*, cols. 1831–36.

Stefan Chucherko and his three sons—Eugeniusz, Henryk, and Leopold—built a hiding place for the Jewish refugees beneath the floor of the hayloft, in the farmyard. At first, the refugees paid for their upkeep, which was only fair, given their number and their hosts' extreme poverty. But even after the fugitives' money ran out, the Chucherkos continued to support them.

In 1943 or 1944, Bela Feiler gave birth to a baby boy. The crying infant posed an immense danger to everyone. (In many such cases, parents would take the life of their newborn child.) One night, Stefan left the baby in a basket near the home of the Noworytas, in nearby Miękinia. The childless couple took him in, suspecting he was born out of wedlock. They baptized the baby and raised him as their own.<sup>2046</sup> After the war, the local priest persuaded the couple to return the boy to his parents.

After the war, the town was occupied by Soviet forces. Hearing Berek's account, a Jewish officer offered to retrieve Berek's son, but Berek refused to take his child by force. Instead, he sought out the priest who had baptized the boy and he identified himself as the father. The priest arranged a meeting between Berek and the man who had taken in his baby. Weeping, the adoptive father pleaded with Berek to leave the boy in their care. "You are young, and we like the child very much. Please give us the child." Berek did not demand the return of his son. Instead, he acknowledged the bond between the boy and the adoptive father. "You are the same father as I am. You have the same rights to him like I am." Over time, the priest persuaded the adoptive couple to give the boy back to his birth parents.<sup>2047</sup>

**A**s we have seen, on occasion Jews placed Jewish children in Catholic convents after the war. The following account was recorded by a historian who had himself survived the war as a child.

Ten-year-old Joseph Sliwa was sheltered by a Polish foster family on the outskirts of Warsaw. The family received payment from the boy's mother, who was hiding elsewhere. After the Polish uprising in Warsaw in late 1944, contact with the mother was lost—Joseph never saw her again—and the payments stopped. Nevertheless, Joseph's benefactors continued to look after him at their expense and treated him lovingly. After liberation, the boy's uncle, who was a soldier in the Polish army, arrived and took him. Joseph was pleased at the thought that he would be living with a relative. However, it transpired that the uncle did not yet have a home of his own and saw no other choice than to place his nephew in a convent. ... It was not until a few months later, when his relatives had managed to get settled, that they moved him to a Jewish children's home.<sup>2048</sup>

<sup>2046</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 145–46; Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 83–84.

<sup>2047</sup> Sara R. Horowitz, "If He Knows to Make a Child...": Memories of Birth and Baby-Killing in Deferred Jewish Testimony Narratives," in Goda, *Jewish Histories of the Holocaust*, 145.

<sup>2048</sup> Bogner, *At the Mercy of Strangers*, 204.

Not all Jewish children returned to their families and faith after the war. Some chose to remain with their new identities and associations. Here is another such example involving the distant cousin of a survivor.

On my mother's side of the family there were cousins. My mother's mother's sister was Telca Trauman and she had two children, Lutek and Franka. Her son Lutek was married to Hela ... Lutek and Hela went through the wall [of the Warsaw ghetto] to live in the Aryan section. They took their daughter Hanka and lived with his mother Telca. His sister Franka also lived there, and brought her daughter Bronia.

Telca made believe she was deaf and mute in order to hide her Jewish accent. She had blue eyes, a good face. ... And they got through the war this way to die natural deaths. Bronia's father, Adolf, was taken away one day near the Umschlagplatz and killed, but Franka and her mother, Telca, were able to get some kind of papers and hide in the apartment in the Aryan section. Lutek Trauman was stopped one day, the Germans pulled his pants down, and when they saw that he was circumcised, they killed him on the spot.

Soon after they got to the Aryan side Bronia was put in a Catholic convent. She was five years old, and she was told by a priest, "You are a Jewish girl, but now you are a Christian, and never say anything. After the war you can be Jewish again." But Bronia after the war did not want to be Jewish anymore and she remained Catholic. After all the suffering, her mother, Franka, was driven out of her mind because her daughter remained a Christian. Bronia is still in Poland, while Hela and her daughter Hanka moved to Israel.<sup>2049</sup>

Jewish teenagers and adults who expressed a willingness to convert during the war in order to secure a hiding place were not pressed by priests to keep their side of the bargain. They were met with understanding. Zofia Sikoń, a poor, pious woman with two children who lived in Łukowica, near Nowy Sącz, agreed to shelter three siblings from a nearby village. She hoped they would convert to Catholicism after the war in gratitude for being saved. When she brought them to her parish priest after the war, they explained to the priest that they had simply promised to do so in order to placate their rescuer, that they did not want to convert and that they would not make good Catholics. The priest agreed with them and there the matter ended.<sup>2050</sup>

Emil and Maria Łoziński, a poor, elderly and poor couple, sheltered the three-member Rozenberg family (a pharmacist, his wife and their daughter, Helena) in Żółkiew, north of Lwów. The Łozińskis looked after them devotedly, without expecting anything in return. Worn down by constant anxiety and tension, Emil Łoziński one day asked his charges to leave. However, the next day,

<sup>2049</sup> Zosia Goldberg, as told to Hilton Obenzinger, *Running Through Fire: How I Survived the Holocaust* (San Francisco: Mercury House, 2004), 36–37.

<sup>2050</sup> Testimony of Helen Alt, SFV, Interview code 54678.

after attending church, he took back his request. The Rozenbergs wound up staying another 16 months, until the Soviet army arrived.<sup>2051</sup>

Although the Łozińskis had hoped that their charges would convert, this was in no way a condition of their rescue. To demonstrate respect for their hosts, after liberation, the Rozenbergs went to see the priest, whom they remembered well from before the war: “He’d come to the pharmacy, we’d chat. Nothing very personal, but pleasant. A decent man. Very respectful.”

So all three of us went to the priest’s apartment to meet with him. My father mentioned to him that Łoziński saved us, and that he thinks we should convert. The priest asked, “Are you converting because you’re grateful to Łoziński for saving your life, or because of your convictions?”

“Well,” my father said, “I don’t feel that strongly, but I am thinking about it because of Łoziński.”

The priest said, “If that’s the only reason, that’s not good enough. Thank God you survived, you survived as a Jew, you are Jewish stay what you are.”

We went back and told Łoziński what the priest said. He said, “Well, it’s the priest’s decision and you have to abide by what he said.”<sup>2052</sup>

In some cases, Jews decided of their own accord to convert during or after the war. Some tested the waters, then later changed their minds. Henryk (Chaim) Grinblat (later Henry Greenblatt, b. 1930), who worked as a cowherd for a farmer by the name of Mieczysław Ślepowroński, near Siedlce, decided he would become a Christian. He and another Jewish boy, who also worked as a cowherd in the vicinity, left their farms in 1946 and enrolled in a Jesuit orphanage, possibly a boarding school. The boys remained there for several months. Ultimately, they decided that Christianity was not for them, so they left the institution.<sup>2053</sup>

Helena Tenenbaum (later Ilana Ben-Israel, b. 1929) initiated the process of conversion to Catholicism after liberation in Lwów in order to express her gratitude to her Polish rescuers: Zuzanna Łozińska and her husband, Stanisław Faliszewski. She did so in accordance with the wishes of her deceased mother.

<sup>2051</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 465–66.

<sup>2052</sup> Wyshogrod, *Hiding Places*, 271–72.

<sup>2053</sup> Testimony of Henry Greenblatt, SFV, Interview code 12447; Henry Greenblatt, *Father’s Legacy: Remembrance of a Holocaust Childhood* ([U.S.A.]: Biblio Books, 2008). After escaping from the Siedlce ghetto, Henryk Grinblat turned to a Catholic priest when he was infected with a serious skin disease. Henryk claims the priest was unaware that he was Jewish. The priest directed him to his friend at a hospital, where the boy was treated by nuns who worked as nurses. It was there that he met Mieczysław Ślepowroński, the farmer who hired him as a cowherd. Henryk’s Jewish identity was divulged by his employer’s Jewish friend, who came to the farm for food. Nonetheless, the farmer allowed him to stay on. Henryk worked on the farm until 1946. Ślepowroński was a member of the Home Army.

Eventually, however, relatives arrived and took her with them to Palestine, where Helena reverted to Judaism.<sup>2054</sup>

Some converts chose to assimilate into Polish society. Others retained a sense of belonging to the Jewish people, even though they continued to cling to their new Catholic faith. After the war, 16-year-old Rachel Drażek from Ostrołęka, who had lost her family to the Holocaust and survived the war on the run, with the help of Poles, decided to become a nun. She entered the Benedictine monastery in Łomża. She was one of several Jewish survivors who took and persevered in that path.

“I was lonely. Every day I wanted to die,” she said.

“I was in pain—why don’t they search and find my brother? I felt guilty. That was my stigma. My decision was that if I became a Christian I’d enter a monastery so I could pray for the Jewish people.”

Later on, relatives of hers located her and tried to convince her to return to Judaism, but despite the tears, threats, offers of money and other temptations, she insisted on staying at the monastery.

The monastery records reveal fears that Jews would try to abduct her, so she was locked inside. It was also said that a large reward was offered to anyone who could get her out, but she declared that she’d never leave.

The Polish name she adopted was Maria Janina Malczewska. On becoming a nun, she became Sister Paula. In the mid-1970s she traveled to Israel after making contact with Brother Daniel, formerly known as Shmuel Oswald Rufeisen, a Polish Holocaust survivor who had become a monk. Her next stop was the Benedictine monastery on the Mount of Olives.<sup>2055</sup>

## Stories That Will Never Be Fully Told

Many cases of rescue of Jews by the Roman Catholic clergy may never be known, or fully known. Polish clergy involved in rescue activities seldom recorded their deeds. Due to their Christian modesty, they did not go out of their way to publicize them. Many of those rescued by the clergy have not come forward with their stories. In many cases, those who did come forward did not identify their benefactors by name. Most of the children sheltered in convents did not maintain contact with their benefactors nor did they apply to Yad Vashem for recognition of the nuns who rescued them.

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<sup>2054</sup> Testimony of Ilana Ben-Israel, SFV, Interview code 46091.

<sup>2055</sup> Ofer Aderet, “From Jewish Ghetto to Monastery: The Holocaust Survivor Who Chose Jesus,” *Haaretz*, January 25, 2019.

Halina Krzypow (later Greenberg, b. 1934) survived the war in an unspecified convent on the outskirts of Warsaw. The superior of the convent was aware she was Jewish. After the area was liberated, Halina was reunited with her parents, who were passing as Christians with the help of Poles.<sup>2056</sup>

A 12-year-old girl who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto was placed—by Maria Bortnowska of the Information Bureau of the Polish Red Cross—in a convent in an unspecified locality near Lublin, under the assumed name of Kasia Wiśniewska.<sup>2057</sup>

After escaping from a German-run estate near Zamość, where she was a forced labourer, Chaia Smichkowitz (b. 1924) found refuge in an unspecified convent in or near Lublin. With the help of a nun, she obtained the identity documents of a Christian woman. Chaia volunteered for labour in Germany under her false identity. She survived the war, working on a farm.<sup>2058</sup>

Daniel Witelski (b. 1936), the son of a Warsaw ghetto policeman, was placed in a Warsaw convent for about a year and then transferred to a children's institution in Świder, where he remained until the Ferman occupation ended.<sup>2059</sup>

Freda Felman (b. 1940) was entrusted by her parents to a Christian friend in 1942. But when the woman became fearful of hiding Freda, she left her in a Warsaw park. Some nuns found the three-year-old child and took her to a convent where she survived the war. Freda's parents also survived in hiding and eventually reclaimed their daughter. The family settled in Australia.<sup>2060</sup>

After escaping from the ghetto in Mińsk Mazowiecki with the help of her Polish nanny, Zipora Cheslava (Czesława) Domb (later Anbar, b. 1934) lived with

<sup>2056</sup> Testimony of Abraham Krzypow Hancher, SFV, Interview code 29922; Ajzner, *Hania's War*, 65.

<sup>2057</sup> Joanna Beata Michlic, "Daily Life of Polish Women, Dedicated Rescuers of Jews during and after the Second World War," in Gigliotti, Golomb, and Steinberg Gould, *Ethics, Art, and Representations of the Holocaust*, 220–21.

<sup>2058</sup> Testimony of Chaia Smichkovitz, YVA, file O.3/10392 (Item 3564946).

<sup>2059</sup> Testimony of Daniel Witelski, dated October 28, 1947, JHI, record group 301, no. 3005; Orzeł, *Dzieci żydowskie w czasach Zagłady*, 272. Little is known about Daniel Witelski's fate. Apparently, he left Poland in 1968, settled in the United States, and died in 2006. His adult life is described as "torturous, bizarre and horrifying." See Sven Sonnenberg, *A Two Stop Journey to Hell* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, 2001).

<sup>2060</sup> Jack Felman, "Growing Up As a Child of Holocaust Survivors," *Descendants of the Shoah*, Melbourne, Internet: <http://www.dosinc.org.au/stories5.htm>. Dr. Jack Felman, Freda's brother, states: "An intense hatred of Poles and Germans was more than evident in our home. When my wife and I visited Poland in 1975 I can still vividly remember the intense hatred I felt for the 8 days I had to endure in this country. Although I acknowledge the fact, I find it unbelievable that there are so many Jewish survivors who re-visit this country. As a doctor, I have had to counsel a number of these people who were traumatised after going back to Poland. In my own case, my parents shuddered at the prospect of going back, even when I told them that my wife and I were going to visit Poland."

her nanny in Warsaw under a false identity. When the Germans expelled the city's population after the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, Zipora jumped from a train and escaped to a village. For a time, she was employed by a priest. Afterwards, she was placed in a nearby convent.<sup>2061</sup>

After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto with his mother and sister, Mati Mazei Eizenberg Savitzki's sister was placed in a convent.<sup>2062</sup>

Many other untapped testimonies mention stays in convents. The following are from the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies: Vladimir S. (b. 1937) was placed in an orphanage run by nuns in Otwock;<sup>2063</sup> the three-year-old niece of Manny B. of Częstochowa;<sup>2064</sup> the young daughter (b. 1937) of Ludwig F. of Częstochowa;<sup>2065</sup> Hanna K. (b. 1939) of Warsaw;<sup>2066</sup> Kochevit P. (b. 1931);<sup>2067</sup> Helen R. (b. 1938);<sup>2068</sup> Ruth H. and her sister;<sup>2069</sup> Olga S. of Wilno.<sup>2070</sup> Aliza R. and her young daughter were helped by nuns from a convent near Złoczów.<sup>2071</sup> Jack G. (b. 1936) was protected by nuns when he was hospitalized with typhus.<sup>2072</sup> Just after the war ended, Tushia Silbering (b. 1925) was helped by nuns while searching for relatives in Kraków.<sup>2073</sup>

References to unidentified priests can also be found in many untapped testimonies.

Henia Weit, a native of Sambor, survived the war with the help of a number of Poles. After confiding in a priest, a woman who lived on a farm near Sambor agreed to employ Henia and her twin sister. Afterwards, they were taken in by a retired priest for a short period, before moving on. Hiding in farmers' stables and the woods, the sisters survived the war.<sup>2074</sup>

Rina Fuks Werner (b. 1939) escaped from Lwów to Warsaw with her family. Her parents had connections to the Polish underground. Their children

<sup>2061</sup> Testimony of Zipora Cheslawa (Domb) Anbar, YVA, file O.3/13133 (Item 7498113).

<sup>2062</sup> Testimony of Mati Mazei Eizenberg Savitzki, YVA, file O.3/14257 (Item 13169372).

<sup>2063</sup> Vladimir S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT-2662), FVA.

<sup>2064</sup> Manny B. Holocaust Testimony (HVT-1592), FVA.

<sup>2065</sup> Ludwig F. Holocaust Testimony (HVT-155), FVA.

<sup>2066</sup> Hanna K. Holocaust Testimony (HVT-1794), FVA.

<sup>2067</sup> Kochevit P. Holocaust Testimony (HVT-85), FVA.

<sup>2068</sup> Helen R. Holocaust Testimony (HVT-2539), FVA.

<sup>2069</sup> Ruth H. Holocaust Testimony (HVT-412), FVA.

<sup>2070</sup> Olga S. Holocaust Testimony (HVT-88), FVA.

<sup>2071</sup> Aliza R. Holocaust Testimony (HVT-256), FVA.

<sup>2072</sup> Jack G. Holocaust Testimony (HVT-4202), FVA.

<sup>2073</sup> Tushia Z. Holocaust Testimony (HVT-3175), FVA; Oral history interview with Tushia Silbering, USHMM, Accession number 199.A.12809.22, RG-50.225.0022.

<sup>2074</sup> Henia W. [Weit] Holocaust Testimony (HVT-418), FVA; Oral history interview with Henia Weit, USHMM, Accession no. 1989.345.27, RG-50.005.0027.

were hidden by the underground, with her brother being placed in the home of a priest. The family survived the war.<sup>2075</sup>

Julius Ciembroniewicz (b. 1929) was sheltered in a monastery outside of Kraków for almost four years.<sup>2076</sup>

Nuchem Smiga, a child at the time, was rescued by an unidentified priest near Płock.<sup>2077</sup>

Henry Rubanek (b. 1912) was protected by his friend Count Jan Zamoyski, who employed him as a forester in Huta Krzeszowska, near Biłgoraj under an assumed name. Henry assisted the local priest by teaching religion to children.<sup>2078</sup>

After the Red Army liberated the area in the summer of 1944, Esther Neiman Mendelman (later Kozłowski) went to Lublin. She ran into an aunt of her late husband, Rafael Mndelman. Her aunt and uncle had been saved by a priest.<sup>2079</sup>

Historians from Warsaw's Jewish Historical Institute mention the assistance provided by Rev. Baranowski in Zakopane, doubtless based on the testimony of a Jew, but provide no details.<sup>2080</sup>

A Jewish boy from Kraków was one of a group of several Jews smuggled out of Poland into Slovakia and then Hungary. After the Gestapo seized his parents, unidentified nuns had smuggled him out of the ghetto and sheltered him in a convent. The boy's fate is unknown.

We reached the border. The [Polish] guide shows us where the border is. We can see the Germans, we can see the dogs, and the lights. The guide shows us that we will cross between two posts and not to worry, because they know when the guards make their rounds. And indeed, just as they said, we crossed to the Slovakian side. Slovakian guides would come to pick us up and take us to the Hungarian border, to the town called Mikulasz [Mikuláš]. So we're waiting for the Slovak guides and they never show up! So, to make things more exciting, for we have to have fun, we cross back to the Polish side. The Polish guides put us in a hay-loft which belongs to them. Apart from the two of us, there is a little boy, four people from the Kaczmarek family, an engineer from Lwow [Lwów] who escaped from the Yanovski [Janowska] camp and a woman from Warsaw, Hanka. Except for the Kaczmarek family, all of us are Jewish.

<sup>2075</sup> Testimony of Rina Fuks Werner, YVA, file O.3 Video (Item 13142510).

<sup>2076</sup> Julius C. [Ciembroniewicz] Holocaust Testimony (HVT-2403), FVA.

<sup>2077</sup> The Jewish Holocaust Partial Survivors List from Plock, Poland, Internet: <http://www.zchor.org/SURVIVO.HTM>.

<sup>2078</sup> Henry R. [Rubanek] Holocaust Testimony (HVT-2947), FVA.

<sup>2079</sup> Oral history interview with Esther Kozłowski, USHMM, Accession number 1999.A. 0122.1222, RG-50.477.1222.

<sup>2080</sup> Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945*, 40; Szymon Datner, "Materiały z dziedziny ratownictwa Żydów w Polsce w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej," *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, no. 73 (January–March 1970): 133–38, at p. 133.

We sit there quietly. We can see the Germans and the dogs, we can hear German and there we are, not farther from the Germans than this balcony is from us [several meters]. We stay there for one day. Next day at night we start again. We walk for a long time, for the distance between Chabowka [Chabówka] and the border is about 20 kilometers.

We are in the care of two Slovak guides. They tell us that we will spend the night at their place and the next day they will take us to the train, buy us tickets and go to Mikulasz with us where the Hungarian guides will take over. The little boy spoke beautiful Polish. It was easy to tell he was an intelligent child. Of course, it was a Jewish child. He was from Cracow. He must have been from the family of the intelligentsia, for he spoke beautiful French, and nice German and Hebrew. He told us stories and sang French songs. We became very good friends. He was wearing a beret and a chain around his neck with a clover. I said, "You know, you're inside, and one does not wear a hat inside." And he says, "I won't take it off!" I say, "Do take it off, for the lady of the house will feel offended." So he took off his beret and it turned out his hair was red! That's why he kept his hat on!

We felt very close to this little boy. He told us his grandparents sent for him from Switzerland. His parents must have belonged to some Jewish organization. The Gestapo came, together with the Jewish police and they found weapons. They took the parents away, but the Gestapo man left the boy behind. Later he was at a convent; the nuns got him out of the ghetto.

There were rich Jews in Slovakia. I decided to get through to a Jew to ask if I could wash up the boy and ask for some clothes for him, for he didn't have anything! I said, "Excuse me, Mister, we have this child with us, who's been sent for by his grandparents. His grandparents paid for him and sent a man to Cracow. Please, help us take care of this child. Help me into a house so that the little one could wash up. Maybe you could get him some chocolate or something proper to eat, or maybe you have some old clothes? He only has what he's wearing." But they didn't help. Until today, I can't understand why. Maybe because they had not yet been beaten and kicked themselves.

We came up to a booth on the border. The guide said goodbye to us. There were two Hungarians in the booth who said they will take us to Koszyce [Košice, in Slovakia]. ...

Next day they took us to the local authorities in Koszyce. We walked in and there were soldiers there. They sent in two gendarmes to watch us. Finally, they called in Karol. Karol still had the papers to the name of Marian Warunek. I didn't show my papers. They told him not to worry, that they won't send us back to Poland and that we'll stay and go to Budapest.

It must have been Saturday. Our room was on the ground floor and I was sitting at the window, looking out. I said, "Karol, look, they are making a movie!" There were three Jews walking with a little boy; such as I've never seen in Lwow: Jews wearing gabardine, fur caps, white stockings, patent leather shoes, and yellow stars, for the Hungarians wore yellow stars. I said, "They must be making a film here." For can you imagine Jews like that walking on the streets of Hungary in 1943 as real people?! But it turned out those were real Jews, to whom nothing happened. It was such a shock for me. I thought, "Where on earth am I?"<sup>2081</sup>

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<sup>2081</sup> Testimony of Ewa S. (Stapp), September 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org> (Biographies).

Chava Fefer, one of the last survivors of the German Aktion in Tarnogród, near Biłgoraj, in the Lublin area, emerged from her hiding place in the emptied ghetto and turned to a friendly Polish family for help. The family sheltered her in their home for several weeks, but she did not wish to jeopardize their safety, so she decided to leave. Soon after she chanced on a young Pole. He would become her protector throughout the German occupation, enlisting the help of his sister, his parents, and a priest whose identity is not known.

Chava Fefer was alone in her house, hiding under a bed. The Germans suspected that someone was still in the house and shot into all the dark shadowy corners and into the bedclothes. It was a great miracle that none of the bullets hit her. The house filled with feathers and the Germans were convinced that there was no longer a living soul there and in resignation left the house.

Frightened and pale as death, Chava Fefer decided to creep out of her hiding place. She became aware that she was alone, the only survivor in the emptied ghetto. She barely took a step, shaking at every rustle. Suddenly she was startled. In a corner of the yard, near the gate, she noticed a figure, which stood as if pressed into the wall. She started to run away, but just at that moment she heard her name quietly whispered. The figure was her brother.

They embraced each other arms in silence. They would have cried, but their eyes were all dried out. Their words stuck in their throats. They took each other by the hand and moved carefully, like people lost in a dark wood. She remembered the name of a Pole, a close acquaintance of theirs, whom she believed would save them. But at that very moment heavy soldier's boots echoed through the empty street. They stood for a moment frozen with fear. Her brother panicked and without a word began to run back. In despair she wanted to call to him to go on with her, but he had disappeared from her sight and she ran on in a different direction, to the house of the Poles in whom she placed so much hope.

She finally succeeded in reaching this house. The people there, frightened by her appearance, stood in the open doorway, not knowing what to do. But they let her in and for three weeks hid her in their house.

Her first request was that they find out what happened to her brother. Carefully the Polish people began to creep around every house in the ghetto, looking for a trace of the brother who had disappeared. After long searches they succeeded in finding out that on that same day, immediately after running back to the house, he poisoned himself. The Germans found him dead.

Chava Fefer realized the danger in which the Polish people hiding her found themselves. These were good and honest people and she did not want to put their lives at risk. After about three weeks she fled into the woods.

It was on a cold evening at the end of autumn, when, finding herself on the road to Czeplie [?], she suddenly spied a young man, a Pole, eighteen years old. Fear seized her.... Frightened, she looked around for an escape route. As she stood confused the young man approached her. He must have noticed that she was afraid. He began to calm her.

His voice, his polite speech inspired trust. He introduced himself and told her his name was Frantiszek [Franciszek] Czapek. As long as he had lived, he said, he had never yet done anyone any harm, and she could be absolutely sure that nothing would happen to her.

They walked along together and he told her the he belonged to the underground and so was forced to hide out at his sister's house. She lived not far from the woods and he believed that she too could hide there. The young Pole did indeed bring her to his sister's. There she was hidden for several days in the barn.

Every evening the young man brought her bread and water. He was somewhat embarrassed at this and assured her that he too ate the same thing, because he was busy day and night working for the Polish underground. He smuggled weapons for the Polish partisans who were in the near-by woods. In all probability he took no money for this and therefore fed himself very poorly. He really did share his last morsel with the Jewish woman.

After several days the young man announced that he had to go away. He was leaving for Central Poland, which at that time was separated off by a border and was called "General Government." Chava Fefer saw no other way than to accompany him, since no one was left who could get her anything to eat.

They set out together on the road and passed the border, and went on until they arrived at the village from which the young man came. For a short time she hid in his parents' house. When it became dangerous, he reached an understanding with the parish priest, who agreed to hide Chava Fefer in the church. She stayed there until the Liberation, when the Soviet army took the village.<sup>2082</sup>

The following testimonials bear eloquent witness to the sacrifice and selflessness of countless Polish rescuers, among them members of the clergy, whose identities will never be known.

Dr. Aron Arkadiy Kaplan, a physician and surgeon, met Rakhil [Rachel], a teenaged girl whose last name is not recorded, in the military hospital in Wilno in 1944. Her family resided in Wilno before the war; her father was an engineer and her mother was a physician. A priest, whose name is unknown, resided nearby. He took Rakhil into his home when her family moved to the ghetto. He registered her as a Christian named Maria. She remained in hiding in the priest's home for a period of three years.<sup>2083</sup>

Yehuda Bauer, a pioneer of research and writing on the Holocaust, tells a story from his personal experience in Israel after the war ... "On my kibbutz," he writes, "there lives a man whom we shall call here Tolek. All he knows about himself is his name. He was born near Cracow [Kraków], or in Cracow, prior to World War II, and he was three when the war broke out. He was in an orphanage, probably because his father had died and his mother could not support him. A Polish woman took this circumcised man-child to her home and raised him there during the Nazi occupation, in alliance with a Catholic parish priest. When the Nazis came searching Polish homes for Jewish children, the woman

<sup>2082</sup> K. Shimoni, "The Heroic Struggle of the Two Heroes, the Adler brothers," in *Book of Tarnograd: In Memory of the Destroyed Jewish Community*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Tarnograd/Tarnograd.html>, translation of Sh. [Shimon] Kanc, ed., *Sefer Tarnograd: Le-zikaron ha-kehila ha-yehudit she-nehreva* (Tel Aviv: Organization of Former Residents of Tarnograd and Vicinity in Israel, United States and England, 1966), 373–80.

<sup>2083</sup> Recorded by Dr. Aron Arkadiy Kaplan, YVA, file O.3/9052 (Item 10787779).

used to hand over Tolek to the priest. Tolek still remembers how, at the age of five and six, he used to assist the priest at Mass, swinging the incense around, walking behind the priest through the church. They survived the war, and when liberation came, the woman took Tolek to a Jewish children's home and said, 'This is a Jewish child, I have kept him throughout the war, he belongs to your people, take him and look after him.' Tolek does not know the name of the Polish woman, nor does he know the name of the priest."<sup>2084</sup>

After fleeing to Soviet-occupied Białystok in 1939, a Jewish family named Tailblum, originally from Wołomin, was deported to the Soviet interior. On their return to Poland after the war, an unidentified Catholic priest, who had also been exiled and travelled with them in the same train car, protected them from hooligans and brought them food when the train stopped at various stations.<sup>2085</sup>

Lilli Lewin Folk's family was deported to the Soviet interior from Drohiczyn Poleski in April 1940. (Most of those seized in her town were Catholic Poles from prominent families.) After the war ended, the Lewins were transported back to Poland, with a stopover in Lwów. There, a Catholic priest from her hometown recognized her and took her family to a monastery, where they were dressed and given food, and new papers were made for them. The family was sent to Silesia.<sup>2086</sup>

## Rescue of Jews by Poles Outside Poland

Poles living outside occupied Poland, among them members of the Catholic clergy, also played a role in saving Jews. A little-known chapter of the war is the rescue effort of Henryk Sławik, who headed the Polish Committee (*chargé d'affaires*) in Budapest. He is credited with rescuing at least five thousand Polish Jews—both members of the military and civilians—who fled to Hungary during the war.

When Germany invaded Hungary in March 1944 and embarked on a massive deportation of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz, the fate of Polish Jews living in camps for Polish refugees became precarious. The rescue operation required that Polish Jews pass as Catholic Poles.

<sup>2084</sup> Gilbert, *The Righteous*, 179–80.

<sup>2085</sup> Tova Paskowitz-Tailblum, "My Wanderings in Foreign Lands," in Kanc, *Sefer zikaron kehilat Wolomin*, 468, translated as *Volomin: A Memorial to the Jewish Community of Volomin*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/wolomin/Wolomin.html>.

<sup>2086</sup> Testimony of Lilli Folk, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, Internet: <<https://collections.vhec.org/Detail/objects/604>>.

Sławik turned to the Polish Committee and the Polish Catholic Mission in Hungary for assistance. The Polish Catholic Mission, which was organized by the Pauline priest Fr. Michał Zembrzuski, consisted of some 60 priests who had taken refuge in Hungary after Poland was overrun in the fall of 1939. The priests were stationed for the most part in refugee camps. The Polish Catholic Mission, which was headed by Fr. Piotr Wilk-Witosławski, a Franciscan, and Rev. Jan Stączek, a diocesan priest, issued instructions to all its priests to assist any Jew who needed to assume a new identity as a Christian. Every Jew who sought a false birth and baptismal certificate was issued one without question and without having to undergo baptism or conversion. This fact became widely known among Polish Catholic refugees, yet not one of the Jews was denounced. All survived safely in Hungary.

Some 80 Jewish children were placed in an orphanage in the town of Vác, ostensibly as children of Polish officers, where they were passed off as Catholic. A Piarist priest from Slovakia, Rev. Pavel Boharčík (also known as Bucharczyk), instructed the children in the Catholic religion. The children and Jewish personnel attended Sunday mass at the local church as part of their guise. Itzhak Brettler, a Jew passing as a Catholic by the name of Władysław Bratkowski, taught the children the Old Testament and Torah. When Fr. Zembrzuski visited the orphanage, the Jewish children would greet him with the words, "Praised be Jesus Christ!"

Sławik, the Polish *chargé d'affaires*, was arrested by the Germans on March 19, 1944. He betrayed none of his Hungarian and Polish colleagues, though brutally tortured. He was sent to the Mauthausen concentration camp, where he was executed probably, in August 1944.<sup>2087</sup>

Henryk Sławik, Franciszek Świder, Maria Wąskowska-Tomanek, Jan Kołtataj-Srzednicki, the chairman of the Polish Red Cross in Hungary, and Rev. Pavel Boharčík were recognized as Righteous Gentiles. Yad Vashem issued the following summary of the rescue in recognition of their award.

With the defeat of Poland in September 1939 and the subsequent German occupation, thousands of Poles crossed into Hungary and settled there. The Polish refugees were followed by hundreds of Jewish families. More Jewish refugees arrived in 1942 and 1943, when the Polish ghettos were liquidated and Hungary was still relatively safe. Henryk Sławik, a Polish activist, together with his Polish unit was arrested when crossing the border and was interned as prisoner of war in Hungary. In the camp he was introduced to József Antall, a member of the Hungarian Ministry of Interior, responsible for civilian

<sup>2087</sup> Henryk Zvi Zimmermann, *Przeżyłem, pamiętam, świadczę* (Kraków: Baran i Suszczyński, 1997), chapter 32; Zych, *Diecezja przemyska obrządku łacińskiego w warunkach okupacji niemieckiej i sowieckiej 1939–1944/1945*, 201 (Rev. Jan Stączek); Tomasz Kurpierz, *Henryk Sławik: 1894–1944: Biografia socjalisty* (Katowice and Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2020), especially chapter 11.

refugees from Poland. Shortly after, Antall and Sławik created the Citizen's Committee for help for Polish refugees. Sławik was deeply devoted to his work ... Together with Antall, Countess Erzsébet Szapáry [the daughter of Maria-Ludwika Przezdziecka] and the head of the Polish Red Cross in Hungary, Jan Kollataj-Srzednicki, provided all Jewish refugees with forged Christian documents, and located Jews in the refugee camps in Hungary. Among them were also many orphaned children. Izaak Brettler (Władysław Bratkowski) and his wife, Mina, took care of many of them. In July 1943, they gathered a group of 76 children between the ages of three and 19 from Budapest and led them out to the locality of Vac [Vác], some 30 kilometers away.

There, Izaak organized a boarding school and with the help of the local Jews got in touch with the delegate to Hungary of the Polish Government-in-Exile, Henryk Sławik, and asked him for help. The latter agreed unhesitatingly. In September 1943, the boarding school was proclaimed a Polish educational institution acting on behalf of the Polish Committee in Hungary. All students and personnel were given forged documents and a Polish army officer, Franciszek Świder, was appointed director of the school. Maria Tomanek, a teacher, also volunteered to work there. With the invasion of German troops into Hungary on March 19, 1944, the institution appeared to be under threat. To give the school a more Polish and Christian image, all the students and teachers attended regular church services at the local church. In addition, a priest from Slovakia, Dr. Pavel Boharčík, came to the school to teach religion, but in reality he was teaching the students Hungarian.<sup>2088</sup>

**F**r. Włodzimierz Ledóchowski, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus stationed in Rome, made interventions on behalf of Jews in Rome.<sup>2089</sup> He oversaw the assistance provided by the Jesuits to Polish and Jewish refugees who found themselves in Romania after the joint German-Soviet invasion of Poland.<sup>2090</sup>

<sup>2088</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 768–69, supplemented by the entry for Henryk Sławik, RD.

<sup>2089</sup> Fr. Włodzimierz Ledóchowski intervened with the Polish consulate in Rome in June 1940 to secure a visa for Abraham Wasserstein, a German-born Jew who did not speak Polish but claimed Polish citizenship; the visa enabled him to leave Italy for neutral Turkey, and then go on to Palestine. See "Wladimir Ledóchowski (1866–1942), Superior General of the Jesuits, 'Black Pope,'" Internet: <http://www.ledochowski.eu/rodzina/wladimir1866.html>; David J. Wasserstein, "Abraham Wasserstein, 1921–1995," *Scripta Classica Israelica*, vol. 15 (1996): 1–6. Interventions by Polish authorities on behalf of citizens of Jewish origin, most of whom who had virtually severed all ties with Poland, were not isolated. Author Ruth Prawer Jhabvala recalled how her father had left Poland after World War I to avoid being "conscripted by the Polish army, in which no Jew wanted to serve. They were the worst anti-Semitic country in the world. Worse than Germany at that time." She then went on to remark, without realizing the incongruity of her statement, that when her father was arrested by the Germans in the early 1930s, he was able to secure his release through the intervention of the Polish authorities, as a citizen of Poland. See the interview with Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, *Writers and Company with Eleanor Wachtel*, CBC Radio, May 27, 2012.

<sup>2090</sup> Bartoszewski, *The Blood Shed Unites Us*, 83–84; Correspondence de l'Ambassadeur [Kazimierz Papée] avec le Général des Jesuites Père Wl. Ledóchowski concernant l'aide et

Fr. Stanisław Skudrzyk, a Jesuit priest stationed in Bucharest, fabricated some 500 birth and baptismal certificates for Jews.<sup>2091</sup> Mosze Jung was one of those who obtained a false document from a priest in Bucharest identifying him as a Catholic Pole.<sup>2092</sup>

Fr. Stanisław Suwała, a Pallottine priest who resided in Rome, rescued four Jews, among them Pacifico Pavoncello and his brothers Mosè and Angelo, who had been apprehended by the Italian police and held by the Gestapo. Fr. Suwała devised an elaborate plan that entailed staging a contagious illness and escape from hospitals. All four Jews survived.<sup>2093</sup>

Brother Bernard Mrozek, a Jesuit studying at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, helped about a dozen Jews who were sheltered there. When the Germans broke into the institution, he hastily moved the Jews to a nearby Jesuit church, where they hid in the attic.<sup>2094</sup>

Polish diplomats turned to Catholic priests in order to save Polish citizens of Jewish origin who found themselves outside of Poland during the war. Polish diplomatic authorities were able to secure passports for Polish refugees from some Latin American countries; however, since those countries issued passports only to Christians, falsified documents were necessary for Jews to use the passports.

Wojciech Rychlewicz, the Polish consul general in Istanbul, obtained false birth and baptismal certificates from Rev. Antoni Wojdas, a Salesian priest who served the Polish community in Turkey. (Rev. Wojdas was based in the Polish settlement of Polonezköy or Adampol.) The number of Jews who received such documents likely numbered in the hundreds. Confirmation of these activities have been unearthed recently by Jews who were rescued.<sup>2095</sup>

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l'assistance de l'Ordre aux Polonais et Juifs restés en Roumanie, September 1942, Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Watykanie, Józef Piłsudski Institute of America, folder 701/12/1.

<sup>2091</sup> Felicjan Paluszkiewicz, "Chasidei Ummot ha-Olam," *Przegląd Powszechny*, no. 9 (September 2001): 266–71; Stanisław Cieślak, "Jezuici ratujący Żydów podczas hitlerowskiej okupacji," *Życie Konsekrowane*, 3–4 (131–32) (2018): 140–55, at p. 153; Stanisław Cieślak, "Polscy jezuici zaangażowani w pomoc Żydom w latach II wojny światowej," in Wenklar, *Kościół, Żydzi, jezuici*, 125–98.

<sup>2092</sup> Testimony of Mosze Jung, YVA, file O.3/3515 (Item 3556639).

<sup>2093</sup> Testimony of Pacifico Pavoncello in Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 395–400.

<sup>2094</sup> Stanisław Cieślak, "Jezuici ratujący Żydów podczas hitlerowskiej okupacji," *Życie Konsekrowane*, nos. 3–4 (131–32) (2018): 140–55, at p. 153.

<sup>2095</sup> Eldad Beck, "The Angel from Istanbul," *Israel Hayom*, December 11, 2020; Jenni Frazer, "Revealed: The Polish Ambassador Who 'Saved Thousands' during the War," *The Jewish Chronicle*, December 17, 2020.

Father Antoni Wojdas, who served in a parish in the Polish settlement of Adampol in Turkey during World War II, issued baptism certificates for Polish Jews to save them from the Holocaust. Dr. Jakub Kumoch, ambassador of the Republic of Poland in Ankara told PAP [Polish Press Agency]. The found documents show that Fr. Wojdas collaborated with Polish diplomats who made it possible for Jews to escape from German-occupied Europe.

In the first years of World War II, the Consul General of the Republic of Poland in Istanbul, Wojciech Rychlewicz, issued to hundreds, perhaps thousands of Jews, false certificates that they were Catholics, thanks to which they could obtain a visa and go to Palestine and the Americas, reminds the ambassador.

“Several sources contained information about a Catholic priest helping Rychlewicz, but we did not know his identity, these materials show that this figure could have been the priest of the Polish parish in Adampol, the Salesian Antoni Wojdas,” Kumoch said in an interview with PAP. The Polish diplomat published on Twitter on Wednesday photos of documents confirming his assumptions.

Among them is a certificate signed by Fr. Wojdas and Rychlewicz confirming the Catholic religion of one of the Polish citizens. “However, two months later, Fr. Wojdas signed the baptismal certificate of the same man. Most likely, the certificate of the sacrament was false, and earlier the clergyman confirmed his religion knowing that he was not a Catholic,” explains Kumoch.

Documents certifying the religion made it easier for Jews to obtain visas enabling them to escape from Europe via neutral Turkey to Palestine, the USA or Brazil. After the outbreak of the war, especially many Jewish refugees from Poland appeared in Adampol (Polonezkoy [Polonezköy]) near Istanbul, a settlement established in the 19th century by Polish emigrants. ...

We can assume that Fr. Wojdas was helped by some Polish families in his heroic activity. We found a few baptism certificates signed by the Salesian. Most likely they are false, the persons signed as godparents never existed. The only real person appearing in one of the records as Godmother is Zofia Ryży, also known as “aunt Zosia,” a Polish activist from Adampol, whose house now houses a local museum, explains the Polish diplomat.

Kumoch adds that Fr. Wojdas also helped in the preparation of completely false baptismal certificates in Istanbul, which were to confirm the sacraments in Poland. He points out that these documents were issued on the appropriate forms, but signed with the names of non-existent clergymen.

Fr. Wojdas came to Turkey in 1935 and stayed there until his death in 1949, during his lifetime he probably did not talk about his cooperation with Rychlewicz, informs the ambassador.<sup>2096</sup>

**T**ogether with other senior Polish officials—General Zygmunt Szyszko-Bohusz, Liaison Officer Andrzej Jenicz, and Colonel Klemens Rudnicki—Rev. Józef Gawlina, a bishop attached to the Polish army, intervened on behalf of Izrael

<sup>2096</sup> Jerzy Adamiak, “Ambasador RP w Turcji: Odnaleziono dokumenty o księdzu z Adampola ratującym Żydów podczas wojny,” Polska Agencja Prasowa (PAP), June 30, 2021, Internet: <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C901704%2Cambasador-rp-w-turcji-odnaleziono-dokumenty-o-ksiedzu-z-adampola-ratujacym>.

Halberstam, a prominent Hasidic rabbi who found himself in the Soviet interior following the Soviet invasion of Poland in September 1939. After Germany attacked its erstwhile Soviet ally in the summer of 1941, the Soviet authorities began to release Polish citizens interned in prison and work camps. The Polish authorities agreed to evacuate Rabbi Halberstam from the Soviet Union with General Władysław Anders' army. But just before his train was to depart, Rabbi Halberstam was arrested by the NKVD because he had taken Soviet citizenship. (Many Polish Jews had opted for Soviet citizenship; almost all ethnic Poles refused to do so.) After negotiations with General Georgii Zhukov, Rabbi Halberstam was allowed to leave the Soviet Union with the Polish army. He arrived in Palestine at the end of 1943.<sup>2097</sup>

Polish nationals living in France also came to the aid of Jews. Sister Kazimiera Małolepszy (Małolepsza), a Polish nun of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, known as Sister Madeleine, was honoured by Yad Vashem for her part in the rescue of three Jewish sisters sheltered at the order's convent in Flers.

Oscar and Margurete Roth lived in Mulhouse, in the département of Haut-Rhin with their three daughters, and the girls' grandmother. When the war began, the Roths moved to Paris, believing that this would be better for them as Jews. They rented an apartment in Paris, Oscar found a job, and as French citizens, they lived reasonably for a while. When the mass arrests of Jews began in July 1942, the Roths split up to improve their prospects of survival. The grandmother, who was blind, was placed in an old age home, and the three daughters, Renée, Denise, and Liliane, aged eight to eleven, were sent to a Catholic institution. Oscar and Marguerite left their apartment and hid in a small room near Oscar's workplace. The Catholic institution that took in the three girls belonged to the St-Vincent-de-Paul order and was located in Flers, in the département of Orne. Sister Pannelay, the Mother Superior of the institution, sheltered the Jewish girls despite the danger. The Roth girls were the only Jews in the home, and in order to keep them from standing out, Sister Marie-Louise taught them basic Catholic customs. She confided in two other sisters in the institution, Sister Madeleine Malolepszy [Małolepszy], who was Polish, and Sister Anne-Marie le Cahérec. Sister Madeleine became very attached to the girls, for she understood their distress. It was difficult to be deprived of all contact with their family and to be alone in a Christian setting that was foreign to them. She thus treated them very kindly and devotedly. When she worked in the kitchen, she always gave them an extra portion. The girls became very attached to her and she was the one they turned to when they had a problem. The sisters kept the secret and helped the Jewish girls get along with the other children. Sister Marie-Louise devised a cover story for the Jewish girls, presenting them as three Parisian girls whose parents, afraid of air raids and lacking food, had sent them to this institution for safety and better nutrition. Although no attempt was made to convert the girls, Sister Marie-Louise had them baptized when the Germans entered Flers in March 1944, so that they could take part in religious ceremonies reserved for baptized Catholics and thereby mask their Jewishness more effectively. Until the area was liberated, Sister

<sup>2097</sup> Testimony of Izrael Halberstam in Siekierski and Tych, *Widziałem anioła śmierci*, 446–47.

Marie-Louise and her colleagues spared no effort to protect the girls, even when German soldiers were terrifyingly close. After the war, Renée Roth emigrated to the United States and documented the story of her survival in a children's book, *Touch Wood*. On February 19, 1992, Yad Vashem recognized Sister Marie-Louise Panneley and Sister Madeleine Malolepszy and Sister Anne-Marie le Cahérec as Righteous Among the Nations.<sup>2098</sup>

There was a substantial Polish population (minority) in interwar Lithuania, and a number of Poles from that country, including a priest, have been awarded by Yad Vashem. Rev. Polikarp Maciejowski, formerly a prefect at the Adam Mickiewicz Polish High School in Kaunas, served as the local pastor and chaplain to the Polish Benedictine Sisters in the village of Kolainiai (Chwałojnie), near Užventis. (Rev. Maciejowski was expelled from Kaunas in 1923 as a Pole, as were eleven Polish nuns the following year, when the Benedictine convent in Kaunas was Lithuanized.<sup>2099</sup>)

During the German occupation, Rev. Maciejowski provided extensive relief to Jews with the assistance of the Polish Benedictine nuns and other helpers, including members of his family. He was awarded by Yad Vashem in 2005 under his Lithuanized name, Polikarpas Macijauskas. (Polish orthography was not recognized in interwar Lithuania, nor was it recognized in post-1991 Lithuania until 2022.)

In 1924, young and well-read Polikarpas Macijauskas (Maciejovskis) became the rector of the church and monastery of Kolainiai. Here he soon established close relations with the local people—both the Catholics and the Orthodox. The residents of Kolainiai recall his warm relations with the local Orthodox priest, Butas; they would always exchange Christmas or Easter wishes, even though these holidays are celebrated at different times by each of the denominations.

The war came although nobody was expecting it. On 7 October 1941, the first war victim knocked on the monastery's door—it was Basė Braudienė [Basia Brojdel], a Jew from Kelmė. She found shelter there. Some time later the farmer Michailas Juškevičius brought another four women who had escaped from the Šiauliai Ghetto. Dressed in nun's clothes, the women freely walked in the parsonage garden. He hid many other Jews who he had saved with the help of Doctor Petras Girbudas and other honest people. Only the priest himself could recall the total number of the rescued.

Everybody had a share of his kindness. Jadvyga Šliogerienė from Kolainiai remembers: “I went to receive the Eucharist, I still have a photo with the priest. He was very gentle with us children. If he was going to visit a sick person, he would always take some apples for the patient to refresh the heart.”

<sup>2098</sup> Kazimiera Malolepszy, RD.

<sup>2099</sup> Artūras Grickevičius and Aušra Vasiliauskaitė, “Kauno seserų benediktinių vienuolyno pertvarka 1918–1926 m. (I),” *Soter: Religijos Mokslo Žurnalas*, vol. 57, no. 29 (2009): 69–84.

Vincenta Šiušienė remembers how the priest helped to liberate her two brothers who had been arrested during the Nazi regime. Nobody had asked him to do this—he himself went to them, said a word for them, and thus saved the lives of two young people!

Truth is the daughter of Time, as the old Roman saying goes. Time is needed to understand things, to assess a man or a phenomenon. To priest Polikarpas Macijauskas all were equal. When he could, he supported and saved. And it was not a Russian, a Jew, or a German—he hid a Human.

“I did not hide Your truth in my heart. I preached Your truth and Your salvation”—these words from a psalm, the credo of the priest’s life, are hewn on a stone slab in the Kražiai church, the basement of which is the place of eternal rest for Polikarpas Macijauskas, a priest and master of theology.<sup>2100</sup>

Priest Polikarpas Macijauskas (Maciejovskis) was doctor Petras Girbudas’ friend. He would hide Jews in the Kolainiai monastery and provide them with forged birth certificates. Užventis doctor Petras Girbudas and priest Polikarpas Macijauskas became true organisers of rescuing of the Jews in this region.

They would make agreements with local farmers and choose remote farms covered by trees. 18 years old Alfonsas Songaila would bring the Jews from the Šiauliai Ghetto to these farmsteads in a carriage pulled by a horse.<sup>2101</sup>

In all Petras [Girbūdas]’s deeds, he had the support of his friend, the Catholic Priest Polikarpas Macijauskas, who headed the women’s monastery in Kolainiai, some 15 km from Užventis. From the end of 1941, the Jewish woman Basja Brojde lived in the monastery, disguised as a nun. Basja had survived the massacre in her native town of Kelmė but had lost her husband and children. In 1942, Brojde was joined, for two months, by 15-year-old Chana Pelc from Telšiai. The girl had a document in a Lithuanian name and only Father Macijauskas knew her true identity. In every sermon, the priest told his parishioners about their Christian duty to help the persecuted and openly talked about helping Jews. In the cellar of his house, adjacent to the monastery, Jews could always find rest and shelter. The survivors related later that the priest used to say Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead, reminded the survivors about the Jewish holidays and did not approve of those of his co-religionists who were helping only baptized Jews. ... Among those helped by Dr. Girbūdas and Father Macijauskas were Rachel Leshem (later, Kacev) and her mother-in-law Riva Leshem, Esther Blecher (later, Kreingel) with her mother-in-law Musia Blecher, Bluma Shachnovich and her sister Chaja, the Chalozin brothers, Simcha Magid with his son, Ita Swer, and others.<sup>2102</sup>

The Macijauskas [Maciejowski] family—Jonas Juozas Macijauskas [Maciejowski], his wife Katerina, his sister Germana Macijauskaitė [Maciejowska] and Jonas’ mother Felicja Macijauskienė [Maciejowska]—lived in Pakievukai [Pakėvukai] homestead, not far from Vai-

<sup>2100</sup> Vilna Gaon Museum of Jewish History, Vilnius, Internet: <http://rescuedchild.lt/content.php?id=7487>.

<sup>2101</sup> Vilna Gaon Museum of Jewish History, Vilnius, Internet: <http://rescuedchild.lt/content.php?id=7484>.

<sup>2102</sup> Polikarpas Macijauskas, RD. See also Paldiel, *Churches and the Holocaust*, 229–30; and Sandler, *The Lithuanian Slaughter of Its Jews*, 106, regarding Rev. Polikarp Maciejowski’s temporary shelter of Yakov Zak and Shmuel Kholozhin.

guva, Kelmė District, and helped Jews during all years of war. Often they were asked to accept Jews by Jonas Macijauskas' brother, Kolainiai dean Polikarpas Macijauskas [Polikarp Maciejowski], who was renowned for his good deeds in the entire neighbourhood. Chana Pelcaitė (later Zakienė) born in Telšiai hid in Macijauskas' family, Pakievukai homestead, for four months. The girl was only 14, when her entire family was shot dead in the summer of 1941. Many more people found shelter with the family of Jonas and Katerina Macijauskas including Sara Olšvangaitė-Montvilienė (daughter of a shoemaker Saiva Olšvangas from Užventis), Michailas Gutmanas, doctor Dolnickis, etc.<sup>2103</sup>

The following account pertains to Maria Rudziańska, a Polish woman who lived in Kaunas, Lithuania's capital.

From the mid-1930s a Polish woman Maria Rudžianskienė [Rudziańska] lived in Kaunas and worked as a housemaid for the Jewish Segalson family. Moshe and Haya Segalson had two children, Lusik and Katya, whom Maria knew from birth. ... At the beginning of summer 1941 the Segalsons' son went to the pioneer camp on the Baltic shore, and their daughter—to her maternal grandmother who lived in the town of Punia near Alytus. Katya was at her grandmother's when the Germans entered Lithuania, while Lusik's pioneer camp was evacuated to the east. In accordance to the Segalsons' request Maria set off for Punia in order to bring Katya back to Kaunas—they could not do it themselves since it was prohibited for Jews to travel freely. Upon their arrival to Kaunas, they found Katya's parents in the ghetto, where they shared a house with a number of Jewish families, among them the family of Perla (Pera'le) Hofmekler, Haya Segalson's cousin. Pera'le's husband, Michael Hofmekler, was a well-known violinist and conductor in the pre-war Lithuania. The Hofmeklers lived with their only three-year-old daughter Dalia. ... In March 1944 the Segalsons somehow found out about another approaching Aktion. They immediately contacted Maria who was ready to shelter Katya. At the same time another Lithuanian, Genė Pukaitė, the Segalsons' former neighbor, suggested to take the girl under her care. The parents sent Katya to Genė, while little Dalia Hofmekler was transferred to Maria. Dalia was hidden inside a kitchen cabinet that Maria allegedly bought from Jews. Thus the girl managed to leave the ghetto. Maria could not keep the girl by her side, so she took her to an elderly Polish couple, farmers who lived in the vicinity of Jonava and were ready to help. It took Dalia some time to get used to her new life; she missed her mother and even Maria's weekly visits could not distract her from the sad thoughts. Thus passed the last months before the liberation.<sup>2104</sup>

The above entry, however, is silent about the role of the priest mentioned in Dalia Hofmekler-Ginzburg's testimony.

My mother set with Mania [Maria Rudziańska] that she will wait in the other side of the gate, she found a wagon driver and asked him to deliver a small kitchen cupboard outside the ghetto. I was put inside the cupboard that had two doors and two drawers and the wagon driver together with the guard Bretter let the wagon pass through the gate. Bretter

<sup>2103</sup> Vilna Gaon Museum of Jewish History, Vilnius, Internet: <http://rescuedchild.lt/content.php?id=7508>.

<sup>2104</sup> Maria Rudžianskienė, RD.

even opened one of the drawers that I can breathe better. That's how I separated from my mother into Mania's loving hands. Mania brought me to her relatives in the village I can't remember the name of.

The life in the village was not easy. The old couple was poor and hardly earned their own living, they had few pigs and a small vegetables garden. I was presented in the village as the daughter of Mania, the priest of the village was a family friend and came home to christen me as Catholic. The Polish name Jadvyga [Jadwiga] was given to me. I was taught to pray in Polish. Mania was visiting me and bring candies. The days of Mania's visiting were the happiest days while I was in the village. Genutė was also coming to visit me few times. ...

It must be mentioned that the story of my rescuing was not for any payment or reward, not Mania, not Bretter and not the old couple, it was all done for human love by taking big life risk.<sup>2105</sup>

**E**thnic Poles played a prominent role in rescue activities on interwar Lithuanian territories. Nine Polish families (consisting of 18 people) from the predominantly Polish county of Giedraičiai (Giedrojcie) were recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Gentiles,<sup>2106</sup> as well as some Poles from the heavily Polish counties of Kėdainiai (Kiejdany)<sup>2107</sup> and Vandžiogala (Wędziogół).<sup>2108</sup> A Jewish woman from Butrimonys (Butrymańce) recalled the widespread assistance of the local Polish minority: "Parankova [Parankowa] became known among us unfortunate Jews as a Polish hamlet where nobody would hand you over to the murderers; 'to me Parankova is truly the Jerusalem of Lithuania!'"<sup>2109</sup> Marija Leščinskienė (Maria Leszczyńska), an ethnic Pole, is known as the "mother" of the Jewish partisans from the Kaunas ghetto.<sup>2110</sup> Survivor accounts mention Poles from

<sup>2105</sup> Vilna Gaon Museum of Jewish History, Vilnius, Internet: <http://rescuedchild.lt/content.php?id=16908>.

<sup>2106</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 8, 215–16. The following families are mentioned: Czajkowski, Godlewski, Gulbinowicz, Lutkiewicz, Masewicz, Rauba (2 families), Rynkiewicz, and Stankiewicz. See Vilna Gaon Museum of Jewish History, Vilnius, Internet: <http://rescuedchild.lt/content.php?id=2592>, where the nationality of all of these rescuers is given as Polish.

<sup>2107</sup> Two Polish families recognized by Yad Vashem, Augustynowicz and Rymowicz, are shown on the Lithuanian list, whereas the Bogdanowicz family appears on the Polish list of rescuers.

<sup>2108</sup> Three Polish families recognized by Yad Vashem, Wonżod, Eimont and Truskowski/Witkowska, are shown on the Lithuanian list, whereas the Kaczan family appears on the Polish list of rescuers. See Ryszard Jakowski, "Wspomagając wędziagolskich Żydów..." *Nasza Gazeta* [Vilnius], February 1, 2017.

<sup>2109</sup> Rivka Lozansky Bogomolnaya, *Wartime Experiences in Lithuania* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2000), 75. See also *If I Forget Thee...: The Destruction of the Shtetl Butrimantz: Testimony by Riva Lozansky and Other Witnesses* (Washington, D.C.: Remembrance Books, 1998), passim.

<sup>2110</sup> Christopher Lawrence Zuger, *The Forgotten: Catholics of the Soviet Union from Lenin through Stalin* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 450; Freda Hodge,

Butrimonys (Butrymańce);<sup>2111</sup> villages near Stakliškės (Stokliszki);<sup>2112</sup> Keleriškiai, near Kaišiadorys (Kieleryszki, near Koszedary);<sup>2113</sup> Telšiai (Telsze);<sup>2114</sup> Kapčiarništis (Kopciowo);<sup>2115</sup> and other localities.<sup>2116</sup>

## Postwar Restoration of Jewish Religious Objects

Jewish religious objects (e.g., Torah scrolls, prayer shawls, and phylacteries) were entrusted to Catholic priests for safekeeping in a number of locales. Once the German occupation ended, as we have already seen, priests returned those objects to the remnants of the Jewish community.

A delegation of Jews from Buczacz entrusted Torah scrolls and other religious objects to the Latin-rite Roman Catholic church as well as to the (Uniate)

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comp., *Tragedy and Triumph: Early Testimonies of Jewish Survivors of World War II* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University, 2018), 176.

<sup>2111</sup> *If I Forget Thee...*, passim; Martin Dean, ed., *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part B (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, in association with the United States Memorial Museum, 2012), 1046. The brothers Piotr and Bronisław Gołombiewski (Petras and Bronius Golumbiauskas in Lithuanian) were executed in April 1942 together with the seven Jews they were sheltering near Butrimonys. See Vilna Gaon Museum of Jewish History, Vilnius, Internet: <http://rescuedchild.lt/content.php?id=4172>.

<sup>2112</sup> Testimony of Sarah Epstein (Sara Epshteyn) in Joshua Rubenstein and Ilya Altman, *The Unknown Black Book: The Holocaust in the German-Occupied Soviet Territories* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2008), 297.

<sup>2113</sup> Waław and Anna Paszkowski (also given as Paškovski or Paškauskas) and their stepson, Stanisław Krywicz (also given as Krivičius), were recognized by Yad Vashem in 1999. A homage to that Polish family can be found in Nancy Wright Beasley, *Izzy's Fire: Finding Humanity in the Holocaust* (Richmond, Virginia: Palari Publishing, 2008), 251, passim.

<sup>2114</sup> Waław and Halina Szukszta were recognized as Righteous Gentiles in 2006. See Szukszta Family, RD.

<sup>2115</sup> Dorothy Leivers, *Jews of Kopcheve* (Bergenfield, New Jersey: Avotaynu, 2006), 47–49.

<sup>2116</sup> Solomon Abramovich and Yakov Zilberg, eds., *Smuggled in Potato Sacks: Fifty Stories of the Hidden Children of the Kaunas Ghetto* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2011), 48–53, 63–64, 79, 85–87, 103–4, 161–62, 218, 254, 274–79, 316–17, 327–29, 337, 343–45, 379; Sandler, *The Lithuanian Slaughter of Its Jews*, 76, 80, 105–7, 131, 133, 159, 187–88, 559. See also Vilna Gaon Museum of Jewish History, Vilnius, Internet: <http://rescuedchild.lt/> (Rescuers of Jews) for additional examples. Aba Gefen mentions a large number of rescuers with Slavic, as opposed to Lithuanian names in his *Defying the Holocaust: A Diplomat's Report* (San Bernardino, California: Borgo Press 1993), but identifies only one person specifically as a Pole: pp. 58–59, 76 (Meteliai/Metel near Simnas/Simno). However, elsewhere, Gefen states that Poles in Lithuania were friendlier to the Jews than Lithuanians. See the Oral history interview with Aba Gefen, October 17, 2011, USHMM, Accession no. 1995.A.1272.387, RG-50.120.0387.

Basilian monastery in that town. After the war, those objects were recovered and given to the Jewish community in Wrocław.<sup>2117</sup> Here is another such account from Lublin.

Arriving in Lublin, after I was let go from the Red Army in the year 1944, ... Lublin could be compared to a [prison] camp. The bombs fell on the side where the Nazis were. No people could be seen in the streets. I ran into single Jews and they told me about the terrifying fate that had befallen all the Jews of Poland.

As a soldier in the Red Army, they invited me to the “Peretz House,” where there were several hundred Jews—men and women, mostly partisans from the forests, a large number from out of the country, who were dragged by German fascists to the Polish camps to be killed.

The day was precisely Hoshana Rabbah. The Jews made a pulpit out of stones in order to conduct services, and a Polish priest that had concealed 6 Torah scrolls, brought them to the “Peretz House.” All of the several hundred Jews began to pray and prepare for the Festival Holiday.<sup>2118</sup>

In August 2013, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported that a Torah scroll, hidden in a Redemptorist monastery in Tuchów since Second World War, was returned to the former synagogue in Dąbrowa Tarnowska. The synagogue, devastated by the Germans during the war, has been faithfully restored by the Poles in recent years. (Although it was the Germans who destroyed Jewish synagogues and other buildings in Poland, it is the Poles who are rebuilding these monuments with virtually no financial assistance from the German government.) The synagogue in Dąbrowa Tarnowska now houses a museum and centre for intercultural events with emphasis on Jewish matters.<sup>2119</sup>

A Torah scroll that since 1942 has been hidden in a Tuchow [Tuchów] monastery was returned to the synagogue in Dabrowa [Dąbrowa] Tarnowska in southern Poland.

The Torah was returned earlier this month but reported for the first time on Saturday.

It had been brought to the monastery in Tuchow, approximately 60 miles from Krakow [Kraków], by an anonymous person who asked the Redemptorist priests to hold the scrolls until the synagogue in Dabrowa again became a place of prayer, according to Father Kazimierz Piotrowski of the Redemptorist monastery in Warsaw.

<sup>2117</sup> Account of Shmuel (Samuel) Rosental (Samuel Rosenthal) in I. Kahan (Yisrael Cohen), ed., *Sefer Buczacz: Matsevet zikaron le-kehila kedosha* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1956), 258–63, translated into English as *Book of Buczacz: In Memory of a Martyred Community*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/buchach/buchach.html>; Testimony of Samuel Rosental, JHI, record group 301, no. 2086.

<sup>2118</sup> Yehuda Weinstock, “Returned from the Red Army,” in Shuval, *The Szczepreszyn Memorial Book*, 191.

<sup>2119</sup> Ośrodek Spotkania Kultur, Internet: <http://www.oskdabrowa.pl/>.

“After the war for many years the synagogue was systematically devastated. The Torah was thus kept in a monastery in Tuchow,” Piotrowski told the Catholic News Agency.

The synagogue in Dabrowa Tarnowska was built in the second half of the 19th century; during World War II the Germans turned it into a workshop. Over the past few years the building was renovated and it is now the House of Cultures in Poland.

Following the building’s dedication, the Redemptorists decided to donate the Torah scroll there. In 2010, the mayor of Dabrowa Tarnowska gave the scroll to conservationists, and today it can be seen in the prayer hall of the former synagogue.<sup>2120</sup>

Jewish accounts also mention appeals made by priests after the war, e.g., in Sokołów Podlaski, to return property to the rightful Jewish owners.<sup>2121</sup>

## Postwar Jewish Financial Assistance for Catholic Institutions

In the immediate aftermath of the war, some Jewish circles recognized that Jews owed a debt of gratitude to Poles who put their lives on the line for Jews. Apart from providing assistance to Jews and Jewish organizations in Poland, the American Joint Distribution Committee (AJDC) allocated a small portion of its funds to support Catholic institutions that had rescued Jews.

The Joint also directed its financial assistance to non-Jews. Special consideration was offered to those who rescued and hid Jews during the occupation; for example, 1 million zlotys [zlotys] was allocated to this purpose during the first quarter of 1947. At the same time, several caregiving facilities—orphanges, convents, and boarding schools—administered by monastic communities that hid Jewish children received AJDC support.<sup>2122</sup>

In a letter, dated April 1, 1948, addressed to Monsignor Zygmunt Kaczyński, the pastor of All Saints Church in Warsaw, William Bein, director of the Warsaw office of the AJDC, wrote: “I wish to inform you that, albeit in a small measure, we want to contribute, in the name of those Jews who survived with the truly

<sup>2120</sup> “Torah Scroll Hidden Since WWII in Polish Monastery Returned to Polish Synagogue,” August 25, 2013, Internet: <https://www.jta.org/2013/08/25/news-opinion/world/torah-scroll-hidden-in-polish-monastery-returned>.

<sup>2121</sup> Gelbart, *Sefer ha-zikaron: Sokolow-Podlask*, 426, translated as *Memorial Book Sokolow-Podlask*, Internet: [https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokolowa\\_podlaski/Sokolowa\\_Podlaski.html](https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokolowa_podlaski/Sokolowa_Podlaski.html).

<sup>2122</sup> Records of the American Joint Distribution Committee: Warsaw Office, 1945–1949, Internet: <https://archives.jdc.org/our-collections/finding-aids/warsaw/1945-1949/>.

humanitarian help of the Church, to its rebuilding. We are enclosing a cheque in the amount of 100,000 złoty for the rebuilding of All Saints Church.”<sup>2123</sup>

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It bears repeating that this compendium is not comprehensive. Nonetheless, it is a striking testimony to the extraordinary courage, compassion and sacrifice shown by many members of the Polish Catholic clergy and the Polish population during the Holocaust. Their contribution to the rescue of Jews was very real and substantial. It was carried out in perilous circumstances and at great personal risk. Their efforts merit recognition and gratitude.

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<sup>2123</sup> Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 83.

# APPENDICES



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## Parishes and Church Institutions Where Assistance Was Provided to Jews (Excluding Institutions Run by Religious Orders)

The following list includes parishes and diocesan institutions of the Latin and Armenian rites in some 580 localities; the vast majority of these rescue efforts, involving more than 700 priests, are described in the text. The list is not exhaustive. Religious and monastic orders of men involved in rescue activities are excluded, having been listed separately.

Archdioceses and dioceses are not comparable because of their divergent sizes (i.e., number of parishes and religious institutions, number of priests and members of religious orders) and because of the varied circumstances in Polish lands that the Germans administered differently. For instance, the Archdiocese of Gniezno–Poznań was incorporated directly into the Reich, where almost every parish and church institution was shut down and clergy were expelled.

**Archdiocese of Gniezno—Poznań:** Boguszyn/Bronikowo (near Kępno).

**Diocese of Chełmno**

**Diocese of Włocławek:** Chełmca Duża, Grodziec, Konin, Osiećciny.

**Archdiocese of Warsaw:** Warsaw (a large number of parishes and institutions in and near the city), Annopol, Babice, Bełchów, Brwinów, Cegłów, Czerniaków, Dąbrówka Szlachecka, Góra Kalwaria, Goszczyn, Grodzisk, Grójec, Izabelin, Kampinos, Kiernozia, Konstancin, Laski, Leszno, Łomianki, Mińsk Mazowiecki, Młyniec, Mszczonów and nearby, Niegów, Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, Otwock, Podkowa Leśna, Pruszków, Radzymin, near Skierniewice, Rokitno, Słomczyn, Szymanów, Włochy, Wołomin, Zaborów, Zakroczym, Zalesie Górne.

**Diocese of Łódź:** Łódź (several parishes and institutions), Głowno.

**Diocese of Lublin:** Lublin (several parishes and institutions in and near the city), Biłgoraj, Borów, Chełm, Depułtycze Królewskie, Dzierzkowice, Firlej, Garbów, Głusk, Grabowiec, Janów Lubelski, near Kajetanówka/Trzęsiny, Kraczwice, Kraśnik, Krasnystaw, Krężnica Jara, Krzczonów, Lubartów, Łuków and nearby, near Nałęczów, Opole Lubelskie, Piaski, Potok Górny, Pryszczowa Góra, Puławy, Sawin, Siedliszcze, Szczebrzeszyn, Tarnogóra, Tomaszów Lubelski, Turkowice, Turobin, Urzędów, Wąwolnica, Wólka Kańska, Żółkiewka, Żułów, Żyrzyn.

**Diocese of Płock:** Czernice Borowe, Gostynin, Maków Mazowiecki, Mława-Wólka, Mława, near Płock, Przasnysz, Radzanów.

**Diocese of Sandomierz:** Sandomierz (several parishes and institutions), Bliżyn, Boże, Chobrzany, Chotcza, Ćmielów, Garbatka-Letnisko, Iwaniska, Jedlińsk, Końskie, Mniszew, Nowe Miasto nad Pilicą, Przedbórz, Radom (several parishes), Rytwiany, Skarżysko-Kamienna, Tczów, Trójca.

**Diocese of Siedlce (Podlasie):** Siedlce, Czerwonka Liwska, Domanice, Garwolin, Gołębki, Grębków, Hańsk, Kłoczew, Kock, Konstantynów, Łochów, Łosice, Łuków, Oleksin, Osiek, Piszczac, Radzików, Rozbity Kamień, Ryki, Skórzec, Sobieszyn, Sokołów Podlaski, near Sterdyń, near Stoczek Węgrowski, Ugoszcz, Węgrów, Włodawa, Żelechów, Żeliszew Podkościelny, Życzyn.

**Archdiocese of Kraków (Cracow):** Kraków (many parishes and institutions in and near the city), Biały Kościół, Czyżyny, Dobczyce, Imbramowice, Luborzyca, Maków Podhalański, Michałowice, near Myślenice, Nowy Targ, Piaski Wielkie, Raciborowice, Raba Wyżna, Ruszczka, Sułkowice, Wadowice, Wawrzeńczyce, Wojakowa, Zakopane, Zielonki.

**Diocese of Częstochowa:** Częstochowa (several parishes), Będzin, Gidle, Gorzkowice, Kłomnice, Kościelna, Olsztyn, Przyrów, Radziechowice, Sosnowiec, Zawiercie.

**Diocese of Katowice (Silesia):** Katowice, Poręba, Rybnik.

**Diocese of Kielce:** Kielce (several parishes and institutions), Białogon, Busko-Zdrój, Bydlin, Działoszyce, Gorzków, Jędrzejów, Kamienna (Czarkowy), Kazimierza Wielka, Koniecpol-Chrzastów, Koszyce, Kroczyce, Lelów, Leszczyna, Miechów, Mierzwin, Mstyczów, Nowa Słupia, Niegardów, Nowe Brzesko, Oleśnica, Olkusz, Osiek, Pilica, Proszowice, Rogów, Świętomarz, Świaniary, Szczaworyż, near Wolbrom, Zadroże.

**Diocese of Tarnów:** Tarnów (several parishes and institutions), Baranów Sandomierski, Bobowa, Bochnia, Bolesław, Brzeźnica, Brzozowa, Czchów, Czerwna, Dobra, Gorlice, Gręboszów, Grywałd, Gumniska, Jodłowa, Kolbuszowa, Łapczyca, Łęzkowice, Limanowa, Lipnica Wielka, Lipniki, Lisia Góra, Luszowice, Maniów, Miechowice Małe, Mościce, Nagoszyn, Nowy Sącz, Olesno, Ostrowy Tuszowskie, Pilzno, Podegrodzie, Podleszany, Przydonica, Radomyśl Wielki, Ropczyce, Święcany, Szarwark, Szczawnica, Szczucin, Tropie, Wadowice Solne, Wadowice Górne, Wola Rzędzińska.

**Archdiocese of Lwów:** Lwów (numerous parishes and institutions); Lwów voivodship: Bełz, Brzozdowce, Chodorów, Gródek Jagielloński, Horyniec, Lubaczów, Mosty Wielkie, Naroł, Nawaria, Oleszyce, Rodatycze, Ryczki, Siemianówka, Sokal, Uhnów, Zimna Woda, Żółkiew; Stanisławów voivodship: Bolechów, Bursztyn, Bybło, Dolina, Felizienthal (Felicental), Horodenka, Kołomyja, Kościejów, Nadwórna, Nowosielce, Pistryń, Ponikwa, Rozdół, Roźniatów, Stryj, Tarnawica Polna, Tłumacz, Wołosów; Tarnopol voivodship: Barysz, Baworów, Białobożnica, Biały Kamień, Brody, Brzeżany, Buczacz, Budzanów, near Busk, Chlebowice Świrskie, Chodacków Wielki, Chomiakówka, Czerwonogród, Dobropole, Dunajów, Huta Nowa, Janówka (near Tarnopol), Jazłowiec, Jelechowice, Jezierna, Kokutkowce, Kopyczyńce, Kuropatniki, Liczkowce, Łopatyn, Markowa, Mikulińce, Proszowa, Pomorzany, Przemyślany, Puź-

niki, Radziechów, Skała Podolska, Świrz, Szczurowice, Tarnopol, Tłuste, Trembowa, Trościaniec Wielki, Wicyń, Zaleszczyki, Założce, Zborów, Złoczów.

**Diocese of Łuck:** Łuck, Dąbrowica, Dederkały, Dubno, Janowa Dolina, Klesów, Kowel, Luboml, Ołyka, Powursk, Równne, Rożyszcze, Rymacze, Sarny, Swojczów, Szumbar, Trylisica, Uściług, Wełnianka, Wiszenki, Włodzimierzec, Włodzimierz Wołyński, Wyrka, Żytyń.

**Diocese of Przemyśl:** Przemyśl (several parishes and institutions), Bachórzec, Bączal, Barycz, Bieliny, Blizne, Borysław, Bratkowice, Brzostek, Brzozów, Bukowsko, Chmielnik, Domaradz, Domostawa, Drohobycz (several parishes and institutions), Dydnia, Dynów, Felsztyn, Frysztak, Gać, Gniewczyna, Golcowa, Gorzyce, Grodzisko Dolne, Humniska, Husów, Iwonicz, Jaćmierz, Jaśliśka, Jasło, Jaworów, Jedlicze, Kańczuga, Leżajsk, Lubatowa, Lutowiska, Majdan Królewski, Manasterz, Michałowka, Nisko, Nowosielce, Nowotaniec, Nowy Żmigród, Odrzykoń, Pruchnik, Przeworsk, Pstrągowa, Pysznica, Raclawice, Radomyśl nad Sanem, Rakszawa, Rozwadów, Rudki, Rudna Wielka, Rymanów, Rzeszów, Sambor (several parishes and institutions), Sanok, Sieniawa, near Skołyshzyn, Sławęcín, Staroniwa, Stary Żmigród, Stojańce, in and near Strzyżów, Święcany, Trzcieniec, Trzcínica, Trześńia, Trześńiów, Turka, Ulanów, Urzejowice, Ustrzyki Dolne, Warzyce, Wesoła, Wielowieś, Wola Rzeczycka, Zarzecze.

**Archdiocese of Lwów (Armenian Rite):** Lwów, Kutý, Stanisławów.

**Archdiocese of Wilno:** Wilno (numerous parishes and institutions), Balingródek, Belmont, Białystok (several parishes and institutions), Bieniakonie, Borodzénicze, Brasław, Budslaw, Choroszcz, Cudzeniszki, Dąbrowa Białostocka, Dereczyn, Dołhinów, Dryświaty, Duniłowicze, Dziewieniszki, Ejsymonty Wielkie, Ejszyski, Gródek, Grodno and nearby, Hermaniszki, Hoduciszki, Holszany, Idołta, Indura, Iszczołna, Jasionówka, Juchnowiec Kościelny, Kiemieliszki, Knyszyn, Kolonia Wileńska, Konstantyów, Kundzin, Kurzeniec, Landwarów, Lida, Łyntupy, Mejszagoła, Michaliszki, Mickuny, Mołodeczno, Nacza, Niemeczyn, Nowa Wilejka, Nowe Troki, Nowy Dwór, Ostrowiec, Ostryna, Pielasa, Plebania, Podborze, Podbrodzie, Połusze, Porozowo, Porudomino, Raduń, Raków, Rukojnie, Słobódka, Słonim, Suraż, Święciany, Szarkowszczyzna, Trokiele, Turgiele, Urbany, Wasilków, Werenowo (Werenów, Woronów), Węsławienięta, Widze, Wilejka, Wiszniew, Wojstom, Wołkołata, Wołkowysk, Worniany, Zadoroże, Zdzięcioł.

**Diocese of Łomża:** Łomża, Borkowo, Czerwin, Dobrzyjałowo, Grajewo, Hodyszewo, Jabłoń Kościelna, Jedwabne, Kolno, Łapy, Ostrołęka, Piekuty Nowe, near Pietkowo, Poświętne, Przytuły, Radziłów, Rutki, Sokoły, Stary Lubotyń, Stawiski, Suchowola, Szumowo, Topczewo, Tykocin, Waniewo, Wizna, near Wołomin.

**Diocese of Pińsk:** Pińsk, Białowieża, Bielsk Podlaski, Brańsk, near Brańsk, Brześć nad Bugiem, Derewno, near Drohiczyn (on the Bug River), Drohiczyn Poleski, Dziadkowice, Hancewicze, Horodyszczce, Kamień, Kleck, Kobryń, Łunin, Międzyrzec, Mir, Naliboki, Narew, Niedźwiedzica, Nieśwież, Nowogródek, Ostrożany, Pohost Zahorodny, Porzecze, Słobódka, Stolin, Stołowicze, Świsłocz, Szereszów, Wołożyn, Wsielub.



## Religious and Monastic Orders of Women Who Rescued Jews

Sixty-six religious and monastic orders of women of the Roman Catholic Latin Rite carried out rescue activities in some 450 convents and other institutions throughout German-occupied Poland. The list that follows derives from a 17-volume work, *Żeńskie zgromadzenia zakonne w Polsce 1939–1947*,<sup>2124</sup> undertaken by the Catholic University of Lublin, from the research of historians Ewa Kurek and Agata Mirek, as well as from other accounts we have cited elsewhere. This list cannot be treated as exhaustive of the rescue effort of Polish nuns.

**Albertine Sisters (Congregation of the Albertine Sisters Serving the Poor)**, (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Albertynek Posługujących Ubogim—*albertynki*): Baworów (near Tarnopol), Bochnia, Brzeżany, Busko-Zdrój, Częstochowa, Drohobycz, Kielce, Kołomyja, Kraków (2 institutions), Kraków-Podbrzezie, Kraków-Prądnik Czerwony, Lwów-Persenkówka, Lwów-Zamarstynów, Mników (near Warsaw), Opoczno, Przemysł-Bakończyce, Rawa Ruska, Rymanów, Rząska (near Kraków), Sambor, Siedlce, Skarżysko-Kamienna, Śniatyn, Stanisławów, Sulejów (near Piotrków Trybunalski), Tarnopol, Tarnów, Wołomin, Życzyn (near Dęblin).

**Sisters of the Angels** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr od Aniołów—*siostry od Aniołów*): Chylice (near Warsaw), Wilno, Wyszary (near Wilno).

**Antonian Sisters of Christ the King** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Antonianek od Chrystusa Króla Trzeciego Zakonu Regularnego św. Franciszka z Asyżu—*antonianki*): Łódź.

**Antonine Sisters (Sisters of Social Service of St. Anthony)**, (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Opieki Społecznej pod wezwaniem św. Antoniego—*antoninki*): Wieluń (2 institutions).

**Benedictine Sisters (Order of St. Benedict)**, (Mniszki Zakonu Świętego Benedykta—*benedyktynki*): Lwów, Nieśwież, Ponary (near Wilno), Przemyśl, Staniątka (near Kraków), Wilno.

<sup>2124</sup> The data regarding assistance to Jews compiled in the first 16 volumes of *Żeńskie zgromadzenia zakonne w Polsce 1939–1947*, published between 1982–2002, was summarized by Agata Mirek in her overview article, “Udział sióstr zakonnych w ratowaniu ludności żydowskiej w Polsce w latach 1939–1945 na przykładzie wybranych zgromadzeń,” published in Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 135–60. See also Agata Mirek, “Il contributo degli ordini religiosi femminili al salvataggio degli ebrei in Polonia durante la Seconda Guerra mondiale,” in Mikrut, *Perseguitati per la fede*, 609–42.

- Benedictine (Sisters of Our Lady of Loreto)**, (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Matki Bożej Loretańskiej—*benedyktynki loretański*): Warsaw.
- Benedictine Missionary Sisters** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Benedyktynek Misjonarek—*benedyktynki misjonarki*): Łuck.
- Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** (Mniszki Benedyktynki od Nieustającej Adoracji Najświętszego Sakramentu—*benedyktynki sakramentki*): Lwów, Warsaw.
- Benedictine Samaritan Sisters of the Cross of Christ** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Benedyktynek Samarytanek Krzyża Chrystusowego—*benedyktynki samarytanski*): Henryków (near Warsaw), Niegów-Samaria (near Wyszków), Pruszków and Pruszków-Żbików (near Warsaw).
- Bernardine Sisters (Franciscan)**, (Mniszki Trzeciego Zakonu Regularnego św. Franciszka z Asyżu—*bernardynki*): Borki-Łuków, Łowicz.
- Sisters of the Family of Bethany** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Rodziny Betańskiej—*betanski*): Lublin, Mełgiew (near Lublin), Międzyzlesie (near Warsaw).
- Discalced (or Barefoot) Carmelite Sisters** (Mniszki Bose Zakonu Najświętszej Maryi Panny z Góry Karmel—*karmelitanski bosi*): Lwów, Przemyśl, Warsaw.
- Carmelite Sisters of the Infant Jesus** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Karmelitanek Dzieciątka Jezus—*karmelitanski Dzieciątka Jezus*): Czerna (near Krzeszowice), Sosnowiec.
- Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Miłosierdzia św. Karola Borromeusza—*boromeuszki*): Łańcut, Przemyśl.
- Capuchin Poor Clares** (Klaryski Kapucynki—*klaryski kapucynki*): Przasnysz.
- Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration** (Mniszki Klaryski od Wiecznej Adoracji—*klaryski od wiecznej adoracji*): Kraków, Lwów, Stary Sącz.
- Daughters of Divine Love** (Zgromadzenie Córek Bożej Miłości—*córki Bożej Miłości*): Pleszów and Wola Justowska (near Kraków).
- Daughters of Mary Immaculate** (Zgromadzenie Córek Maryi Niepokalanej—*córki Maryi Niepokalanej*): Hrubieszów, Kielce, Końskie, Lida, Radom, Rawa Mazowiecka, Warsaw, Wiszniew (near Wołożyn).
- Daughters of the Purest Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary** (Zgromadzenie Córek Najczystsze Serca Najświętszej Maryi Panny—*córki Najczystsze Serca NMP (sercanki bezhabitowe)*): Janów Podlaski, Kolno, Nowe Miasto nad Pilicą, Otwock, Pińsk, Sitnik (near Biała Podlaska), Skórzec (near Siedlce), Świder (near Warsaw), Warsaw (2 institutions), Wilno.
- Sisters of Divine Providence** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Opatrzności Bożej—*siostry Opatrzności Bożej*): Międzyrzec Podlaski, Przemyśl, Rodatycze (near Gródek Jagielloński), Rzeszów, Skole (near Stryj), Sterdyń (near Sokołów Podlaski).
- Sisters Shepherds of Divine Providence** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Pasterek od Opatrzności Bożej—*pasterki*): Lubartów, Lublin.

**Dominican Sisters** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr św. Dominika—*dominikanki III Zakonu*): Biała Niżna (near Nowy Sącz), Chorzów, Dzibułki (near Żółkiew), Kielce, Kraków, Wilno, Złoczów, Żurów (near Rohatyn).

**Dominican Sisters (cloistered)**, (Mniszki Zakonu Kaznodziejskiego—*dominikanki II Zakonu (klazurowe)*): Przyrów (Święta Anna, near Częstochowa), Kolonia Wileńska (near Wilno), Kraków.

**Dominican Missionary Sisters of Jesus and Mary** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Dominikank Misjonarek Jezusa i Maryi—*dominikanki misjonarki*): Warsaw, Zielonka (near Warsaw).

**(Grey) Sisters of St. Elizabeth (Silesia)**, (Zgromadzenie Sióstr św. Elżbiety Trzeciego Zakonu Regularnego św. Franciszka z Asyżu—*elżbietanki (śląskie; szare)*): Otwock, Warsaw.

**(Franciscan) Sisters of St. Elizabeth (Cieszyn)**, (Zgromadzenie Sióstr św. Elżbiety Trzeciego Zakonu Regularnego św. Franciszka z Asyżu—*elżbietanki (cieszyńskie)*): Cieszyn.

**Felician Sisters (Sisters of St. Felix of Cantalice)**, (Zgromadzenie Sióstr św. Feliksa z Kantalicjo Trzeciego Zakonu Regularnego św. Franciszka z Asyżu—*felicjanki*): Bezwola (near Radzyń Podlaski), Chełm, Dobranowice (near Wieliczka), Jadwinów (near Lubartów), Kraków (2 institutions), Lwów (3 institutions), Otwock, Przemyśl (2 institutions), Pustomyty (near Lwów), Sądowa Wisznia (near Jaworów), Staniątki (at the Benedictine convent near Kraków), Warsaw (2 institutions), Wawer (near Warsaw), Widawa (near Zduńska Wola), Zbaraż.

**Franciscan Sisters Servants of the Cross (Laski)**, (Siostry Franciszkanki Służebnice Krzyża—*franciszczanki służebnice Krzyża*): Bukowina Tatrzańska (near Zakopane), Laski (near Warsaw), Żułów (near Kraśniczyn/Krasnystaw).

**Franciscan Sisters of the Suffering** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Franciszkanek od Cierpiących—*franciszczanki od cierpiących*): Kozienice (2 institutions), Łuck, Warsaw, Wilno.

**Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Franciszkanek Rodziny Maryi—*franciszczanki Rodziny Maryi*): Anin (near Warsaw, 2 institutions), Beresteczko, Białołęka Dworska (near Warsaw, 2 institutions), Brwinów (near Warsaw, 2 institutions), Bóbrka (near Lwów), Brzezinki (near Warsaw), Dubno, Dźwiniaczka (near Borszczów), Grodzisk Mazowiecki, Izabelin (near Warsaw), Kołomyja, Kostów, Kostowiec (near Warsaw), Krasnystaw, Łomna (near Turka), Lwów (3 institutions), Malechów (near Lwów), Mickuny (near Wilno), Międzyzlesie (near Warsaw, 3 institutions), Mińsk Mazowiecki, Mirzec (near Starachowice), Mszana Dolna (near Rabka), Nieborów (near Łowicz), Nienadowa, Ostra (near Buczacz), Ostrówek (near Klembów/Warsaw), Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski, Pastyń (near Kołomyja), Płudy (near Warsaw), Podhajce (near Brzeżany), Pustelnik (near Warsaw), Puźniki (near Buczacz), Raków, Robercin (near Grójec), Sambor, Sopicowo (near Warsaw), Tłuste (near Zaleszczyki), Turka, Warsaw (5 institutions), Wilno, Wola Gołkowska (near Warsaw), Woł, Zazule (near Złoczów).

**Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Mary** (Franciszczanki Misjonarki Maryi—*franciszczanki misjonarki*): Radecznicza (near Zamość), Warsaw, Zamość.

- Salesian Sisters (Daughters of Mary Help of Christians)**, (Zgromadzenie Córek Maryi Wspomożycielki—*salezjanki*): Laurów in Sakiszki (near Wilno).
- Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth (Nazarene Sisters)** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Najświętszej Rodziny z Nazaretu—*nazaretanki*): Częstochowa, Gulbiny (near Wilno), Komańcza (near Sanok), Kraków, Nowogródek, Olsztyn (near Częstochowa), Stryj, Warsaw.
- Missionary Sisters of the Holy Family** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Misjonarek Świętej Rodziny—*misjonarki Świętej Rodziny*): Białystok, Holszany (near Oszmiana), Prużana.
- Sisters Canonesses of the Holy Spirit de Saxia** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Kanoniczek Ducha Świętego de Saxia—*duchaczki*): Biskupice, Busko-Zdrój, Chmielnik, Kraków, Leżajsk, Lublin (2 institutions), Pacanów, Proszowice, Zabłocie (near Warsaw).
- Sisters of the Gratification of the Most Holy Face** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Wynagrodzicielek Najświętszego Oblicza—*obliczanki*): Częstochowa, Lublin, Miedzeszyn (near Warsaw), Wilno, Zielonka (near Warsaw).
- Sisters of the Most Holy Name of Jesus Under the Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Help of the Faithful** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Najświętszego Imienia Jezus pod opieką Maryi Panny Wspomożenia Wiernych—*siostry Imienia Jezus, marylki*): Klimontów, Suchedniów (near Skarżysko-Kamienna), Wilno.
- Sisters of the Robe of Jesus** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Westiarek Jezusa—*westiarki*): Duchnice (near Pruszków).
- Servants of Jesus** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Sług Jezusa—*sługi Jezusa*): Bychawka (near Lublin), Kielce, Kielczewice, Lublin, Tarnów.
- Sisters Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus** (Zgromadzenie Służebnic Najświętszego Serca Jezusowego—*sercanki*): Brody (near Lwów), Krosno, Przemyśl-Błonie, Radomsko, Rymanów Zdrój, Zakopane.
- Oblate Sisters of the Heart of Jesus** (Instytut Sióstr Oblatek Serca Jezusa—*oblatki Serca Jezusa*): Częstochowa.
- Sisters of the Most Holy Soul of Christ the Lord** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Najświętszej Duszy Chrystusa Pana—*siostry Duszy Chrystusowej*): Kraków-Prądnik Biały, Kraków-Azory, Kraków-Skotniki, Zielonki (near Kraków).
- Sisters (of Charity) of St. Joseph** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Świętego Józefa—*józefitki*): Łaszczów (near Tomaszów Lubelski), Mielec, Narajów (near Brzeżany), Skałat, Sokal, Szmańkowczyki (or Szmańkowce, near Czortków), Stryj, Tarnów, Trzęsówka (near Kolbuszowa), Zamość.
- Michaelite Sisters (Sisters of St. Michael the Archangel)**, (Zgromadzenie Sióstr św. Michała Archanioła—*michalitki*): Godowa (near Strzyżów), Miejsce Piastowe (near Krosno), Przytyk, Radom, Wielopole Skrzyńskie (near Rzeszów), Wysoka Głogowska (near Głogów Małopolski), Wysoka Strzyżowska (near Strzyżów).
- Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy (Magdalene Sisters)**, (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Matki Bożej Miłosierdzia—*magdalenki*): Częstochowa, Derdy (near Warsaw), Kalisz, Kraków, Lwów, Rabka, Radom, Walendów (near Warsaw), Warsaw (Żytunia Street), Warsaw-Grochów (Hetmańska Street), Wilno, Werki (near Wilno).

**Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Niepokalanego Poczęcia Najświętszej Maryi Panny—*niepokalanki*): Jarosław, Koźle, Nowy Sącz, Pruszków-Żbików (near Warsaw), Skolimów (near Warsaw), Słomim, Szymanów (near Warsaw), Tarnów, Warsaw, Wrzosów-Buraków (near Warsaw).

**Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (of Pleszew)**, (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Służebniczek Niepokalanego Poczęcia Najświętszej Maryi Panny z Pleszewa—*służebniczki pleszewskie (wielkopolskie)*): Brodnica, Czersk nad Wisłą, Piotrków Trybunalski, Przesmyki, Warsaw, Włodzimierzów.

**Sisters of Mary Immaculate** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Maryi Niepokalanej—*siostry Maryi Niepokalanej, marianki*): Katowice, Zgoda (Świętochłowiec).

**Sisters Servants of the Immaculate Blessed Virgin Mary (of Mariówka), known outside of Poland as Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Służek Najświętszej Maryi Panny Niepokalanej z Mariówki—*służki*): Bychawa (near Lublin), Czyżów Szlachecki, Drzewica, Grodno, Jeżewo, Kurozwęki (near Staszów), Łomża, Mariówka (near Przysucha), Mościska (near Przemyśl), Nowe Miasto nad Pilicą, Sandomierz, Warsaw.

**Sisters Servants of the Virgin Mother of God Immaculately Conceived (of Dębica)**, (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Służebniczek Bogarodzicy Dziewicy Niepokalanie Poczętej—*służebniczki dębickie*): Dębica, Dominikowice (near Gorlice), Jezierna (near Zborów), Nowy Sącz, Proszówki (near Bochnia), Żołynia (near Łańcut).

**Sisters Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived (of Stara Wieś)**, (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Służebniczek Najświętszej Maryi Panny Niepokalanie Poczętej ze Starej Wsi—*służebniczki starowiejskie*): Będzin, Brzeżany, Chotomów (near Warsaw), Chorostków (near Kopyczyńce), Czerwona Wola (near Jarosław), Częstochowa, Drohobycz, Gorlice, Grodzisko Dolne (near Przeworsk), Jagielnica (near Czortków), Jasionów (near Brzozów), Końskie, Kopyczyńce, Kraków-Prądnik Czerwony, Łązniew (near Warsaw), Lesko, Lisków (near Kalisz), Łódź, Lublin, Miechów, Nienadówka (near Rzeszów), Piotrków Trybunalski, Róża (near Mielec), Rzepińce (near Buczaczy), Skała Podolska, Stara Wieś (near Brzozów), Staromieście (near Rzeszów), Szywnawałd, Tapin (near Przemyśl), Tarnopol, Tarnów, Turkowice (near Hrubieszów), Wirów (near Drohiczyn), Wola Rzędzińska (near Tarnów).

**Sisters of Common Work of Immaculate Mary** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr “Wspólnej Pracy” od Niepokalanej Maryi—*siostry “Wspólnej Pracy” od Niepokalanej Maryi*): Warsaw.

**School Sisters of Notre Dame** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Szkolnych de Notre Dame—*siostry de Notre Dame*): Lwów (2 institutions), Mikuliczyn (near Kołomyja).

**Sisters (Ladies) of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary** (Zgromadzenie Panien Ofiarowania Najświętszej Maryi Panny—*prezentki*): Kraków, Ujazdy (near Rzeszów), Wilno.

**Sisters Servants of the Mother of the Good Shepherd** (Zgromadzenie Służebnic Matki Dobrego Pasterza—*pasterzanki*): Białystok, Częstochowa, Piaseczno (near Warsaw).

**Sisters of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary** (Zakon Nawiedzenia Najświętszej Maryi Panny—*wizytki*): Wilno.

- Seraphic Sisters (Daughters of Our Lady of Sorrows)**, (Zgromadzenie Córek Matki Bożej Bolesnej; Zgromadzenie Córek Najświętszej Maryi Panny od Siedmiu Boleści—*serafitki*): Drohobycz, Jarosław, Nowy Targ, Pysznica (near Stalowa Wola), Stryj.
- Norbertine Sisters (Sisters of St. Norbert)**, (Zakon Norbertanek—*siostry kanoniczki regularne zakonu premonstratensów, norbertanki*): Imbramowice (near Wolbrom), Kraków.
- Pallottine Sisters (Missionary Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate)**, (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Misjonarek Apostolstwa Katolickiego—*pallotyunki*): Nowogródek, Rajca (near Nowogródek).
- Passionist Sisters (Sisters of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ)**, (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Męki Pana Naszego Jezusa Chrystusa—*pasjonistki*): Będzin, Błazny, Głowno, Kielce, Końskie, Łąka Zaklikowa (near Janów Lubelski), Płońsk, Stopnica.
- Resurrectionist Sisters (Sisters of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ)**, (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Zmartwychwstania Pana Naszego Jezusa Chrystusa—*zmar-twychwstanki*): Bukowina Tatrzańska (near Zakopane), Częstochowa, Lwów, Mir, Starawieś (near Węgrów), Warsaw (4 institutions), Wejherowo.
- Sacré Coeur Sisters (Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus)**, (Zgromadzenie Najświętszego Serca Jezusa Sacré-Coeur—*siostry Sacré Coeur*): Lwów (2 institutions), Warsaw, Zbylitowska Góra (near Tarnów).
- Sisters of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr św. Teresy od Dzieciątka Jezus—*terezjanki*): Luboml, Włodzimierz Wołyński.
- Ursuline Sisters of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus (Grey Ursulines)**, (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Urszulanek Serca Jezusa Konającego—*urszulanki szare*): Brwinów (near Warsaw), Czarna Duża (near Wołomin), Czarny Bór (near Wilno), Janów Poleski, Łódź, Milanówek (near Warsaw), Ołtarzew (or Ożarów, near Warsaw), Radość (near Warsaw), Sieradz, Warsaw (3 institutions), Wilno, Zakopane.
- Ursuline Sisters of the Roman Union** (Unia Rzymska Zakonu św. Urszuli—*urszulanki Unii Rzymskiej*): Częstochowa, Kołomyja, Kraków (2 institutions), Lublin, Lwów, Rokiciny Podhalańskie (near Rabka), Pokrzywno (near Poznań), Siercza (near Wieliczka), Stanisławów, Tarnów, Warsaw (2 institutions), Włocławek, Zakopane.
- Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul** (Zgromadzenie Sióstr Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego à Paulo—*szarytki*): Biała Podlaska, Białystok, Budzanów, Czerwonogród (or Nyrków, near Zaleszczyki), Góra Kalwaria, Ignaców (near Mińsk Mazowiecki), Kalwaria Zebrzydowska (near Kraków), Kielce (2 institutions), Klarysew (near Warsaw), Kraków, Kurozwęki (near Staszów), Lublin, Lwów, Mienia (near Mińsk Mazowiecki), Opoczno, Otwock, Przasnysz, Przeworsk, Radom, Siedlce, Supraśl, Szczawnica, Warsaw (8 institutions), Werki (near Wilno), Wilno, Zebrzydowice.

## Religious and Monastic Orders of Men Who Rescued Jews

Rescue activities were carried out in some 85 homes, parishes and institutions of 25 religious and monastic orders of men of the Latin-rite throughout German-occupied Poland. Most of the recorded rescue efforts in these locales are described in the text. The following list does not include male diocesan clergy, who constituted the majority of the male clergy.

**Albertine Brothers** (Bracia Albertyni, Zgromadzenie Braci Albertynów Trzeciego Zakonu Regularnego św. Franciszka Serafickiego Posługujących Ubogim (Alb)—*albertyni*): Przemyśl, Kraków, Lwów, Warsaw.

**Augustinians** (Zakon św. Augustyna (OSA)—*augustianie*): Kraków-Prokocim.

**Benedictines** (Mnisi Reguły św. Benedykta (OSB)—*benedyktyni*): Tyniec.

**Bernardines** (*bernardyni*) or **Franciscans** (*franciszkanie*): Kalwaria Zebrzydowska (near Kraków), Kraków, Lwów, Panowice (near Podhajce), Radecznicza (near Zamość), Tarnawica Polna (near Tłumacz), Zbaraż.

**Brothers Hospitallers of St. John of God** (Zakon Szpitalny św. Jana Bożego (OH)—*bonifratrzy*): Warsaw.

**Canons Regular of the Lateran (Canons Regular of St. Augustine of the Congregation of the Most Holy Saviour at the Lateran)**, (Zakon Kanoników Regularnych św. Augustyna Kongregacji Laterańskiej Najświętszego Zbawiciela (CRL)—*kanonicy regularni (laterańscy)*): Kraków.

**Capuchins** (Zakon Braci Mniejszych Kapucynów (OFM<sup>Cap</sup>)—*kapucyni*): Drohobycz, Horodno (Polesie voivodship), Kraków, Lublin, Nowe Miasto nad Pilicą, Warsaw.

**Carmelites** (Zakon Braci Najświętszej Maryi Panny z Góry Karmel (OCarm)—*karmelici*): Bołszowce (near Rohatyn), Pilzno.

**Discalced Carmelites** (Bracia Bosi Najświętszej Maryi Panny z Góry Karmel (OCD)—*karmelici bosci*): Czerna (near Krzeszowice), Kraków, Wilno.

**Cistercians** (Zakon Cystersów (OCist)—*cystersi*): Mogiła (near Kraków).

**Dominicans** (Zakon Braci Kaznodziejów (OP)—*dominikanie*): Czortków, Lwów, Podkamień (near Brody), Warsaw.

**Conventual Franciscans (Order of Friars Minor Conventual)**, (Zakon Braci Mniejszych Konwentualnych (OFMConv)—*franciszkanie konwentualni*): Czyszki (near Lwów),

- Grodno, Hanaczów (near Lwów), Kostowiec (near Warsaw), Lwów, Niepokalanów (near Sochaczew), Sanok, Słonim, Święty Stanisław (near Halicz), Warsaw.
- Reformed Franciscans** (Zakon Braci Mniejszych (OFM), Prowincja Matki Bożej Anielskiej—*franciszkanie reformaci*): Dursztyn, Kraków, Przemyśl-Panewniki, Rawa Ruska, Sądowa Wisznia (near Jaworów).
- Franciscans (not identified)**, (*franciszkanie*): in and near Kraków, in and near Warsaw.
- Jesuits (The Society of Jesus)**, (Towarzystwo Jezusowe (SJ)—*jezuici*): Albertyn (near Słonim), Lwów, Nowy Sącz, Otwock, Słonim, Stara Wieś (near Brzozów), Tarnopol, Turkowice (near Hrubieszów), Warsaw (various priests), Wilno.
- Missionaries of La Salette (Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette)**, (Zgromadzenie Misjonarzy Matki Bożej z La Salette (MS)—*saletyni*): Kobylanka (near Gorlice).
- Marians** (Zgromadzenie Księża Marianów Niepokalanego Poczęcia Najświętszej Maryi Panny (MIC)—*marianie*): Bielany (near Warsaw), Warsaw.
- Michaelites (Congregation of St. Michael the Archangel)**, (Zgromadzenie św. Michała Archanioła (CSMA)—*michalici*): Działkowicze (near Kobryń), Struga (near Warsaw), Miejsce Piastowe (near Krosno).
- Oblates of Mary Immaculate** (Zgromadzenie Misjonarzy Oblatów Maryi Niepokalanej (OMI)—*oblaci*): Okopy (near Rokitno, Volhynia).
- Orionines (Sons of Divine Providence)**, (Małe Dzieło Boskiej Opatrzności (FDP)—*orioniści*): Łaźniew (near Warsaw), Warsaw.
- Pallottines** (Stowarzyszenie Apostolstwa Katolickiego (SAC)—*pallotyni*): Warsaw.
- Paulines** (Zakon św. Pawła Pierwszego Pustelnika (OSPPE)—*paulini*): Częstochowa, Leśniów (near Żarki).
- Redemptorists (Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer)**, (Zgromadzenie Najświętszego Odkupiciela (CSsR)—*redemptoryści*): Mościska (near Przemyśl), Tuchów (near Tarnów), Warsaw, Wilno.
- Resurrectionists** (Zgromadzenie Zmartwychwstania Pana Naszego Jezusa Chrystusa (CR)—*zmartwychwstańcy*): Międzyrzec Podlaski, Nowy Sącz (or Kraków), Warsaw.
- Salesians (The Salesian Society, The Society of St. Francis de Sales)**, (Towarzystwo św. Franciszka Salezego (SDB)—*salezianie*): Częstochowa, Głusków (near Warsaw), Łódź, Lwów, Przemyśl, Supraśl, Warsaw (3 institutions).
- Vincentians (Missionaries of St. Vincent de Paul)**, (Zgromadzenie Księża Misjonarzy św. Wincentego à Paulo (CM)—*misjonarze*): Kraków, Lwów, Tarnów, Warsaw (various priests).

## Polish Catholic Clergy Recognized as “Righteous Among the Nations” by Yad Vashem, Israel’s Holocaust Remembrance Authority

Among the almost 7,200 Poles recognized by Yad Vashem as of January 1, 2021, there were 105 members of the Roman Catholic clergy of the Latin rite, including 38 priests and 67 nuns. Proportionally, in relation to their overall numbers, the Polish clergy has been awarded more often than the Catholic clergy of almost every other German-occupied country;<sup>2125</sup> this despite the incomparably greater hardships faced by the Polish clergy and the death penalty imposed on Poles for helping Jews. The representation of Catholics among the clergy recognized by Yad Vashem far exceeds the Protestant and Orthodox clergy.

Nevertheless, it remains a fact that of the vast majority of members of the Polish Roman Catholic clergy who came to the assistance of Jews have gone unrecognized. Usually, these individuals belonged to a chain of rescuers or a communal operation. Rarely if ever was the rescue of a Jew effected by a *single* nun, priest or monk. On the other hand, it is probable that *many* acts of assistance, rendered by *many* persons, would have each been *vital* to the rescue of any given Jewish survivor.

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<sup>2125</sup> Yad Vashem recognitions as of 2006 for Christian clergy rescuers—mostly Roman Catholic—in various countries were as follows: Austria—none, Belgium—103, Croatia—3, Czech Republic—none, England—one, France—136, Germany—7, Hungary—25, Italy—52, Latvia—one, Lithuania—15, Luxembourg—none, Poland—59, Netherlands—8, Slovakia—5 (including two Eastern-rite Greek Catholics), Switzerland—one, and Ukraine (part of interwar Poland)—9 Greek Catholics (Eastern-rite Roman Catholics). Since 2006, the number of clergy recognized by Yad Vashem, especially Catholic, has grown considerably. Recognitions of Polish clergy have almost doubled.

Polish Roman Catholic Priests Recognized by Yad Vashem  
(with year of recognition)

1. Wojciech Bartosik, 2014 (Wawrzeńczyce, near Kraków)
2. Brunon Boguszewski, 1978 (Kraków)
3. Józef Czapran, 2022 (Lwów)
- (Michał Czuba, seminary graduate<sup>2126</sup>)
4. Antoni Dunajewski, 2019 (Kolbuszowa, near Rzeszów)
5. Stanisław Falkowski, 1993 (Piekuty Nowe, near Brańsk)
6. Mikołaj Ferenc, 2013 (Capuchin until 1943, then a diocesan priest; Markowa, near Podhajce)
7. Władysław Głowacki, 1982 (Warsaw)
8. Marcei Godlewski, 2009 (Warsaw)
9. Antoni Godziszewski, 2020 (Częstochowa)
10. Józef Gorajek, 1989 (Wąwolnica, near Lublin)
- (Jan Gozdek, status unclear<sup>2127</sup>)
11. Henryk Hilchen, 2018 (Warsaw)
12. Antoni Kania, 2013 (Huta Nowa, near Monasterzyska)
13. Adolf Kruszewski, 2020 (Jabłoń Kościelna, near Wysokie Mazowieckie)
14. Michał Kubacki, 1997 (Salesian; Warsaw)
15. Ferdynand Machay, 2017 (Kraków)
16. Polikarp Maciejowski, under the name of Polikarpas Macijauskas, 2005 (Kolainiai, Lithuania)
17. Albin Małyśiak, 1993 (Kraków; made a bishop postwar)
18. Gabriel Marszałek, 2015 (Borownica, near Sanok)
19. Stanisław Mazak, 1984 (Szczerowice, near Radziechów)
20. Aleksander Osiecki, 1990 (Brzeźnica, near Dębica)
21. Andrzej Osikowicz, 1995 (sometimes spelled Osikiewicz; Borysław)
22. Jan Patrzyk, 1979 (Lipinki, near Gorlice)
23. Jan Pawlicki, 1969 (Zborów)
24. Jan Poddębniak, 1986 (Krężnica Jara, near Lublin)
25. Jan Raczkowski, 2012 (Otwock, near Warsaw)
26. Jan Sielewicz, 2000 (Worniany, near Wilno)
27. Adam Skałbania, 2006 (Salesian; Głusków, near Warsaw)
28. Kazimierz Słupski, 2018 (Puźniki, near Buczacz)
29. Franciszek Smorzewski, 1979 (Stolin, Polesie or Polesia)
30. Adam Sztark, 2001 (Jesuit; Słonim)

<sup>2126</sup> Michał Czuba was recognized in 1989 for rescuing four members of the Wajsman family in the town of Radziechów. Although described as a priest in some documents, his status is not clear. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 161.

<sup>2127</sup> Jan Gozdek was recognized in 1988 for rescuing two Jewish men in the village of Józików, near Końskie. Although described as a priest, his status is not clear. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 252; Jan Grek-Gozdek, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-grek-gozdek-jan>.

31. Witold Szymczukiewicz, 1966 (Rukojnie, near Wilno)
32. Edward Tabaczkowski, 2018 (Tłumacz, near Stanisławów)
33. Zygmunt Trószynski, 2020 (Marian; Warsaw)
34. Oskar Wiśniewski, 2018 (Franciscan; Warsaw)
35. Ludwik Wolski, 2008 (Otwock, near Warsaw)
36. Ludwik Wrodarczyk, 2000 (Oblate of Mary Immaculate; Okopy, Volhynia)
37. Mieczysław Zawadzki, 2007 (Będzin)
38. Jan Zawrzycki, 2007 (Rymanów, near Krosno)
39. Ignacy Życiński, 1993 (sometimes spelled Życzyński; Trójca, near Zawichost)

Poles Recognized by Yad Vashem Who Became  
Roman Catholic Priests after the War  
(with year of recognition)

1. Antoni Bradło, 1986<sup>2128</sup>
2. Franciszek Leszczyński, 1997<sup>2129</sup>
3. Fanciszek Rzotky, 1997<sup>2130</sup>
4. Adam Stalmach, 1990<sup>2131</sup>
5. Witold Stolarczyk, 1995<sup>2132</sup>

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<sup>2128</sup> Antoni Bradło (b. 1933) was recognized together with his parents and three siblings; they rescued 13 Jews in the village of Lubcza near Pilzno. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 111.

<sup>2129</sup> Franciszek Leszczyński (b. 1920) was recognized together with his parents and two brothers; they sheltered 13 Jews in the village of Bocianka, near Siemiatycze. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 452.

<sup>2130</sup> Franciszek Rzotky (1923–1971) was recognized together with Tadeusz and Janina Lewandowski. His story is found in the text. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 453.

<sup>2131</sup> Adam Stalmach (b. 1923) was recognized together with his parents. He was ordained a priest after the war. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 567; The Stelmach Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-stelmach-family>.

<sup>2132</sup> Witold Stolarczyk (1921–2020) was recognized together with his parents; they rescued five Jews in the village of Dąbrowica, near Włoszczowa. He was ordained a priest in 1950. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 755. According to Rev. Stolarczyk, their Jewish charges lived openly in his family’s home, and the villagers were aware of their presence and Jewish origin. See The Stolarczyk Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-stolarczyk-family-1>.

Polish Roman Catholic Nuns Recognized by Yad Vashem  
(with year of recognition)

1. Irena Adamek, 1984 (Sister Małgorzata, Dominican Sister; Kolonia Wileńska, near Wilno)
2. Władysława Bartkowiak, 2002 (Sister Euzebia, Sister of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ; Mir)
3. Stanisława Bednarska, 1984 (Sister Stefania, Dominican Sister; Kolonia Wileńska, near Wilno)
4. Irena Bielawska, 1983 (Mother Superior Maria Honorata, Felician Sister; Przemyśl)
5. Anna Borkowska, 1984 (born Janina Siestrzewitowska, Sister Bertranda, Dominican Sister; Kolonia Wileńska, near Wilno)
6. Anna Budnowska, 2016 (Sister Tekla, Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Łomna)
7. Stanisława Chmielewska, 2014 (Sister Helena, Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Podhajce, near Brzeżany)
8. Genowefa Czubak, 1980 (formerly Sister Dolorosa, Missionary Sister of the Holy Family; Prużana)
9. Helena Dobiecka, 2020 (Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Pustelnik, near Warsaw)
10. Aleksandra Drzewiecka (Drzewecka), 1992 (Wilno)
11. Helena Frąckiewicz, 1984 (Sister Diana, Dominican Sister; Kolonia Wileńska, near Wilno)
12. Bronisława Galus, 2001 (Sister Róża, Sister Servant of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived (of Stara Wieś); Turkowice, near Hrubieszów)
13. Wanda Garczyńska, 1983 (Sister Wanda, Sister of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary; Warsaw)
14. Matylda Getter, 1985 (Mother Matylda, Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Warsaw)
15. Maria Stefania Góraska, 1997 (Sister Andrzeja, Ursuline Sister of the Agonizing Heart of Jesus; Warsaw)
16. Anna Grenda, 1986 (Sister Ligoria, Sister Servant of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus; Przemyśl)
17. Weronika Hendzel, 2017 (Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; Warsaw)
18. Bronisława Hryniewicz, 1994 (Sister Beata, Daughter of the Purest Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary; Skórzec, near Siedlce)
19. Kornelia Jankowska, 2013 (Sister Kornelia, Sister of the Most Holy Name of Jesus Under the Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Help of the Faithful; Suchedniów, near Skarżysko-Kamienna)
20. Bronisława Jaroszyńska, 1981 (Sister Klara, Franciscan Sister Servant of the Cross; Laski, near Warsaw)
21. Stanisława Józwickowska, 1994 (Sister Stanisława, Daughter of the Purest Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary; Skórzec, near Siedlce)
22. Leokadia Juśkiewicz, 1986 (Sister Longina, Sister Servant of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus; Przemyśl)

- Maria Kazuczyk, 2010 (tertiary; Janowicze, near Białystok)
23. Aniela Kędzierska, 2015 (Sister Celina, Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Sambor)
  24. Janina Kierocińska, 1992 (Mother Teresa, Carmelite Sister of the Infant Jesus; Sosnowiec)
  25. Aniela Kotowska, 1983 (Sister Klara, Felician Sister; Przemyśl)
  26. Teofila Kozłowska, 2017 (Sister Servant of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived (of Stara Wieś); Chotomów, near Warsaw)
  27. Bronisława Krzemińska, 2017 (Sister Witolda, Sister Servant of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived (of Stara Wieś); Chotomów, near Warsaw)
  28. Marcjanna Łączniak, 2017 (Sister Ambrozja, Sister Servant of the Virgin Mother of God Immaculately Conceived (of Dębica); Dominikowice)
  29. Bernarda Lemańska, 2018 (Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Warsaw)
  30. Ludwika Lis, 2020 (Mother Superior, Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Lwów)
  31. Zofia Liszka, 2015 (Sister Serapiona, Sister Servant of the Virgin Mother of God Immaculately Conceived (of Dębica); Dominikowice)
  32. Zofia Makowska, 1993 (Sister Bogumiła, Franciscan Missionary Sister of Mary; Zamość)
  33. Halina Małkiewicz, 1981 (Sister Ludwika, Sister of St. Elizabeth; Otwock)
  34. Kazimiera Małolepszy (Małolepsza), 1992 (Sister Madeleine, Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; Flers, Orne, France)
  35. Antonina Manaszczuk, 1989 (Sister Irena, Sister Servant of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived (of Stara Wieś); Turkowice, near Hrubieszów)
  36. Stanisława Marciniak, 1987 (Sister Gertruda, Sister of St. Elizabeth; Otwock)
  37. Krystyna Marcinowska, 2017 (Sister Eugenia, Daughter of the Purest Heart of the Blessed Virgin; Warsaw)
  38. Maria Mikulska, 1974 (Sister Benedykta, Benedictine Sister; Wilno)
  39. Janina Mistera, 1985 (Sister Joanna, Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; Ignaców, near Mińsk Mazowiecki)
  40. Maria Neugebauer, 1984 (Sister Imelda, Dominican Sister; Kolonia Wileńska, near Wilno)
  41. Zofia Olszewska, 2016 (Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Łomna)
  42. Maria Ostreyko, 1984 (Sister Jordana, Dominican Sister; Kolonia Wileńska, near Wilno)
  43. Józefa Pawłowska, 2014 (Sister Vita, Albertine Sister; Częstochowa)
  44. Ludwika Peńsko, 2018 (Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Płudy, near Warsaw)
  45. Maria Pietkiewicz, 2004 (Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; Kamionek, in Warsaw)
  46. Zofia Pięłowska, 2016 (Sister Blanka, Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Lwów)
  47. Aniela Polechajło, 1989 (Sister Stanisława, Sister Servant of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived (of Stara Wieś); Turkowice, near Hrubieszów)
  - Janina Popławska (Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; Ignaców, near Mińsk Mazowiecki; awarded a certificate of appreciation in 1996)
  48. Teresa Reformat, 2020 (Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary)
  49. Joanna Reiter, 1986 (Sister Zygmunta, Felician Sister; Wawer, near Warsaw)

50. Marianna Reszko, 1985 (Sister Marcjanna, Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; Ignaców, near Mińsk Mazowiecki)
51. Józefa Romansewicz, 1989 (Sister Hermana, Sister Servant of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculately Conceived (of Stara Wieś); Turkowice, near Hrubieszów)
52. Adela Rosolińska, 2013 (Sister Serafia, Sister of the Most Holy Name of Jesus Under the Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary Help of the Faithful; Suchedniów, near Skarżysko-Kamienna)
53. Maria Janina Roszak, 1984 (Sister Cecylia, Dominican Sister; Kolonia Wileńska, near Wilno)
54. Olga Schwarz (Szwarc), 2018 (Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Warsaw)
55. Rozalia Domicella Sidełko, 1986 (Sister Bernarda, Sister Servant of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus; Przemyśl)  
-- Maria Siwek, 2002 (tertiary; Brzączowice)
56. Julia Sosnowska, 1996 (Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; Warsaw)
57. Aniela Stawowiak, 2018 (Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Płudy and Międzyzylesie, near Warsaw)
58. Katarzyna Stępa, 2020 (Sister Teresa, Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Warsaw)
59. Romualda Stępak, 2018 (Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Międzyzylesie and Płudy, near Warsaw)
60. Zofia Szczygielska, 2018 (Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; Przeworsk)  
-- Jadwiga Urbańczyk, 2002 (tertiary; Brzączowice)
61. Eugenia Wąsowska-Renot, 1980 (formerly Sister Alfonsa, Sister Servant of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus; Przemyśl)
62. Aniela Wesołowska, 2018 (Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Puźniki, near Buczacz)  
-- Stefania (Jadwiga) Wojciechowska (Wijewo; awarded a certificate of appreciation in 1997)
63. Bronisława Wilemska, 1995 (Sister of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul; Kraków and Szczawnica)
64. Anzelma Wojdyła, 2020 (Franciscan Sister of the Family of Mary; Lwów)
65. Jadwiga Wyszomirska, 2017 (Daughter of the Purest Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary; Warsaw)
66. Julia Zagrodzka, 2016 (Sister Kantalicja, Felician Sister; Sądowa Wisznia, near Jaworów)
67. Helena Zienowicz, 1992 (Sister of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary; Wilno)

Protestant Clergymen from Poland  
Recognized by Yad Vashem<sup>2133</sup>  
(with year of recognition)

1. Feliks Gloeh, 1984 (Evangelical)
2. Władysław Kołodziej, 1980 (Methodist)
3. Iosif Nazaruk, 2005 (Baptist)
4. Grigory Tsitsura, 2000 (Evangelical)

Greek Catholic (Eastern Rite Roman  
Catholic) Clergymen from Poland Recognized by Yad Vashem  
(on Ukraine list)  
(with year of recognition)

1. Brother Teodosy (Tadeusz Cebryński), 1984
2. Brother Lazar, 1984
3. Antin Navolsky (Izvol'ski), 1993
4. Fr. Nykanor (Mykola Deyneha), 1985
5. Josif Pietrash (Petrash), 1993
6. Vasili Popel, 2003
7. Clement Sheptytsky (Kazimierz Szeptycki), 1995
8. Marko Stek, 1995
9. Daniil Tymchina (Tymchyna), 2008

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<sup>2133</sup> Emanuel Ringelblum also mentions a former Evangelical clergyman who he calls Mr. Z. (his identity has not been established) and two Methodist clergymen, Witold Benedyktowicz and Ignacy Kasprzykowski, who helped rescue Jews in Warsaw. Mr. Z. sheltered four Jewish children and helped other Jews. Witold Benedyktowicz, then a theology student, was ordained in 1947. From 1969 to 1983, he was head of the Methodist Church in Poland. He helped smuggle Jews out of the ghetto and found shelters for them. His sister, Zofia, was one of those who took in Jews. Benedyktowicz was denounced by a Jewish Gestapo agent named Joske Erlich (Josek Ehrlich) and spent nine months in Pawiak prison. Together with his wife, Kasprzykowski, who lived outside of Warsaw, “takes care of adults and children, has them live in his house, feeds and protects them.” Many Jews, especially children, were in hiding in this area, and the rural population protected them. See Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War*, 240–42.

Eastern Orthodox Clergymen  
from Poland Recognized by Yad Vashem  
(with year of recognition)

1. Ignatij Grogul, 1993 (Ukraine)
2. Vladimir Imshennik, 1993 (Belarus)
3. Konstantin Komar, 2001 (Belarus)
- Benedykt Kopiec, 1988 (Poland) – not yet a priest at the time of rescue
4. Stefan Kuchinskiy, 2017 (Belarus)

## Polish Catholic Clergy Who Lost Their Lives for Helping Jews

Among the hundreds of Christian Poles put to death by the Germans for coming to the assistance of Jews, there were dozens of members of the Catholic clergy.

Not all of the victims of German repressions cited below can be confirmed as *solely* attributable to helping Jews. Often there were other circumstances at work in a priest's arrest and execution. In such instances, although the exact charges levelled by the Germans may not have been known, the priest in question *is* known to have been active in rendering assistance to Jews. That much can be said with certainty.

In some cases, the murder of priests and other religious was immediately triggered by and clearly owing to their illegal involvement with Jews. In many other cases, the degree to which this involvement was a factor in their deaths is impossible to determine—though technically, under the rule of German terror, it would have been sufficient in itself.

All but a handful of the examples listed below have been recorded in Wiktor Jacewicz and Jan Woś's monumental register of members of the Polish clergy killed during the German occupation.<sup>2134</sup> The starting point, however, is another publication which draws heavily on Jacewicz and Woś's research.<sup>2135</sup>

The entries below have been verified for accuracy and supplemented by other sources, where known. Occasionally, the priest in question has not been identified by name. Those cases are usually based on the testimony of Jews recorded many years after the fact.

- [1] Fr. Antoni Grzybowski, a Jesuit, was executed on October 20, 1943 for providing shelter to Jews at the Jesuit novitiate of the Byzantine rite in Albertyn, near Słonim, where he was rector of the Latin rite chapel (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 39). Fr. Grzybowski provided Jews with birth and baptismal certificates and found refuge for them with trusted persons. According to one source, he was executed by Soviet partisans dressed as Germans.<sup>2136</sup>

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<sup>2134</sup> Jacewicz and Woś, *Martyrologium*, vols. 1–5.

<sup>2135</sup> Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*.

<sup>2136</sup> Stanisław Cieślak, "Jezuici ratujący Żydów podczas hitlerowskiej okupacji," *Życie Konsekrowane*, nos. 3–4 (131–32) (2018): 140–55, at pp. 146–47.

- [2] Rev. Andrzej Osikowicz (Osikiewicz), pastor of Borysław, was deported to Majdanek in February 1943, for helping Jews and openly encouraging his parishioners to do so; he perished there on December 29, 1943 (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 74).<sup>2137</sup>
- [3] Rev. Henryk Opiatowski, vicar and Home Army chaplain from Brańsk, was arrested on July 15, 1943, and imprisoned in Bielsk Podlaski, for assisting Jews, partisans, and escaped Soviet prisoners-of-war. He perished in a mass execution of Polish prisoners soon afterwards (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 76).<sup>2138</sup>
- [4] Rev. Mieczysław Akrejc, pastor of Brasław, in northeastern Poland, perished in June 1942, while interceding on behalf of Jews being taken to their execution (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 77).
- [5] Rev. Jan Urbanowicz, dean and pastor of Exaltation of the Holy Cross parish in Brześć nad Bugiem in Polesie (Polesia), was executed in June 1943, for aiding Jews by issuing false baptismal certificates and finding shelters for them; he also spoke out against the looting of Jewish property (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 84).<sup>2139</sup>
- [6] Rev. Teodor Popczyk of St. Barbara's parish in Częstochowa was shot on June 16, 1943, after being identified by a Jew who had received false documentation from his parish (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 124).<sup>2140</sup>
- [7] Rev. Adam Sekuła, a vicar in Dobra near Limanowa, was killed at the jail in Nowy Sącz on April 7, 1941, after refusing to betray the names of Jews to whom he had issued birth and baptismal certificates (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 141).
- [8] Fr. Michał Klimczak (Fr. Dionizy), guardian of the Conventual Franciscan monastery and pastor of Our Lady of the Angels (*Matki Bożej Anielskiej*) parish in Grodno, was executed outside Grodno on July 15, 1943 (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 168).<sup>2141</sup>
- [9] Monsignor Albin Jaroszewicz, dean and pastor of St. Francis Xavier parish in Grodno, was not executed on July 14, 1943, as claimed (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 168).<sup>2142</sup> Although arrested by the Germans twice, he survived the war only to be arrested

<sup>2137</sup> See also *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 568; Grądzka-Rejak and Namysło, *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, vol. 1, 254–55.

<sup>2138</sup> See also Hoffman, *Shtetl*, 232; Kopówka and Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki*, 174; Krahel, *Martyrologia duchowieństwa archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945*, 315.

<sup>2139</sup> See also Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers*, 126; Smilovitskii, *Katastrofa evreev v Belorussii 1941–1944 gg.*, 132; Kopówka and Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki*, 175–76.

<sup>2140</sup> See also Jan Pietrzykowski, "Księża diecezji częstochowskiej w walce z okupantem," *Wrocławski Tygodnik Katolicki*, May 10, 1970.

<sup>2141</sup> On Fr. Dionizy (Michał Klimczak) see Tadeusz Krahel, "Zginęli 15 lipca 1943 r. przy fortach koło Naumicz," *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 8 (August 2003); Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 150, 154; Krahel, *Martyrologia duchowieństwa archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945*, 574. Fr. Dionizy was arrested at least twice, last on July 15, 1943. He was executed the same day, outside Grodno, together with two other priests, Rev. Justyn Skokowski and Rev. Kazimierz Szypiłło, as well as many other Polish residents of Grodno in the Sonderaktion targeting the intelligentsia.

<sup>2142</sup> This entry is based on incorrect information found in Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers*, 126.

- by the Soviets in 1945, tried, and sentenced to eight years imprisonment in a concentration camp. He perished in July 1946.<sup>2143</sup>
- [10] Rev. Władysław Grobelny, vicar of Kobryń, near Brześć nad Bugiem, was executed on October 15, 1942, together with the Jews he was helping (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 222).
- [11] Monsignor Jan Wolski, pastor of Kobryń, near Brześć nad Bugiem, was executed on October 15, 1942, for assisting partisans and Jews who fled from the ghetto (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 223).
- [12] Monsignor Zygmunt Surdacki, vicar general of the diocese of Lublin (following the arrest of the diocese's bishops), was arrested in March 1941 for, among other transgressions, aiding Jews. He was deported to Auschwitz, where he died on April 30, 1941 (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 271).<sup>2144</sup>
- [13] and [14] Two unidentified young priests were shot to death on February 21, 1942, in the Lwów suburb of Zamarstynów, when they were caught bringing two Jewish families to their monastery (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 278).<sup>2145</sup>
- [15] Another unidentified monk from Lwów was shot dead on February 28, 1942, when he was caught carrying food and money to the ghetto and tried to escape (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 279).<sup>2146</sup>
- [16] Rev. Fabian Poczobutt-Odlanicki, dean and pastor of Łunin and delegate of the Polish government in exile for Polesie (Polesia), was executed on August 4, 1944, for organizing aid to Jews and partisans (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 300).<sup>2147</sup>
- [17] Rev. Antoni Mackiewicz, pastor and dean of Mir, near Stołpce (voivodship of Nowogródek), was executed in Kołdyczewo concentration camp on November 14, 1942, for helping Jews (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 322). According to other sources, however, although he did assist Jews, Rev. Mackiewicz was arrested as part of a general sweep directed against the Polish intelligentsia in the region.<sup>2148</sup>
- [18] Rev. Tadeusz Kaczmarczyk, a vicar from Nowy Sącz, refused to betray the Jews to whom he had provided birth and baptismal certificates, even under torture; he was executed on August 21, 1941 (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 343).
- [19] Rev. Władysław Deszcz, also from Nowy Sącz, was executed on August 21, 1941 (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 344). He provided Jews with baptismal certificates and

<sup>2143</sup> Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 156, 230; Krahel, *Martyrologia duchowieństwa archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945*, 202–3.

<sup>2144</sup> See also Zdzisław Goliński, *Biskupi i kapłani Lubelszczyzny w szponach gestapo 1939–1945* (Lublin: Związek Kapłański "Unitas," 1946), 13; Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 331–32; Szymon Datner, "Materiały z dziedziny ratownictwa Żydów w Polsce w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej," *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, no. 73 (January–March 1970): 133–38, at pp. 133–34.

<sup>2145</sup> See also Jacek E. Wilczur, *Do nieba nie można od razu: Zapiski z okupowanego Lwowa* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Prawnicze, 1991), 34.

<sup>2146</sup> See also Wilczur, *Do nieba nie można od razu*, 34–35.

<sup>2147</sup> See also Kopówka and Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki*, 175.

<sup>2148</sup> Tec, *In the Lion's Den*, 73, 96, 98–99, 254 n.13.

other forms of assistance (like smuggling himself into the ghetto to bring sacraments to converted Jews). According to another source, however, the two priests from Nowy Sącz were arrested in May 1941 for their suspected role in the escape of Jan Karski, a member of the Polish underground, from the local hospital where he was being held in between interrogation and torture sessions. They were executed in a mass reprisal against 32 Poles in Biegonice.<sup>2149</sup>

- [20] Monsignor Witold Iwicki, vicar general of the diocese of Pińsk, after refusing an offer of clemency, was executed in Janów Poleski on January 22, 1943, for assisting Jews (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 376).<sup>2150</sup>
- [21] Rev. Paweł Dożyk, pastor of Derewna (Pińsk diocese), was shot to death on August 8, 1943, for aiding partisans and Jews (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 377).
- [22] Monsignor Józef Bajko, pastor of Naliboki, near Nowogródek (Pińsk diocese), and
- [23] his vicar, Rev. Józef Baradyn, were locked in a barn and burned alive in August 1943 for aiding Jews and partisans (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 378).
- [24] Rev. Leopold Aulich, dean of Iwje (Iwie) and pastor of Kamień, near Nowogródek (Pińsk diocese), and
- [25] his vicar, Rev. Kazimierz Rybałtowski, were both executed on July 24, 1943, on suspicion of aiding Jews and partisans (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 379).
- [26] Rev. Błażej Nowosad, pastor of Potok Górny, near Biłgoraj, was beaten by the SS Galizien who wanted to find out the location of Polish partisans and Jews that were hiding in the vicinity; then he was shot to death on December 19, 1943 (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 395).<sup>2151</sup>
- [27] Fr. Adam Sztark, administrator of the parish in Żyrowice, provided various forms of assistance to Jews. For example, he placed Jewish children in the convent of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Słonim, where he was chaplain. On December 18, 1942 together with two Sisters from this convent—Kazimiera Wołowska, the superior, and Bogumiła Noiszewska, who was in charge of the local polyclinic—Fr. Sztark was arrested. All three were shot the

<sup>2149</sup> Wood and Jankowski, *Karski*, 89–90.

<sup>2150</sup> See also Datner, *Las sprawiedliwych*, 104, 113. Smilovitskii, *Katastrofa evreev v Belorussii 1941–1944 gg.*, 132. According to another source, although Rev. Iwicki had extended help to Jews, he was arrested as a hostage after the Home Army had staged a breakout in Pińsk. See Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 84.

<sup>2151</sup> According to other sources, Rev. Nowosad was among a score of Poles killed in a pacification carried out by Ukrainian policemen, German gendarmes and the Ukrainian self-defence. Rev. Nowosad was known for extending help to everyone in need, including Jewish fugitives. See Mariusz Leszczyński, “Ks. Błażej Nowosad,” *Niedziela* [Zamość–Lubaczów], no. 42 (2003); Józef Fajkowski and Jan Religa, *Zbrodnie hitlerowskie na wsi polskiej 1939–1945* (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1981), 438–39; Mariusz Zajączkowski, *Ukraińskie podziemie na Lubelszczyźnie w okresie okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1944* (Lublin: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, Oddział w Lublinie; Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2015), 197–98.

following day, in a mass execution of several hundred Poles (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entries 463 and 702).<sup>2152</sup>

- [28] Fr. Wojciech Kopliński, known as Fr. Anicet, a Franciscan from the Capuchin monastery on Miodowa Street in Warsaw, was arrested in June 1941 for, among other offences, helping Jews. He was deported to Auschwitz and perished in a gas chamber there on October 16, 1941 (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 531).<sup>2153</sup>
- [29] An unidentified priest from Warsaw who worked closely with Maria Malicka and her brother, Tadeusz Romaszewski, in providing false birth and baptismal certificates and other identification to Jews was shot to death on December 19, 1942, after one of the Jews who was caught with the false documents identified his benefactors (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 537—based on a Jewish survivor’s account). This story is dealt with in depth earlier in the text. The information about the priest’s death has not been confirmed; it appears to be an embellishment.<sup>2154</sup>
- [30] Monsignor Roman Archutowski, rector of the Archdiocesan Seminary of Warsaw, was arrested (for the second time) in November 1942 for, inter alia, helping Jews. He was imprisoned in Pawiak and tortured. He was deported to Majdanek on March 25, 1943, and died there on April 18, 1943 (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 547).<sup>2155</sup> Rev. Archutowski was one of the many victims, often elderly, of the sadistic Jewish Kapo of Majdanek known as Bubi.

Suddenly, Bubi, the *Lagenjüngster*, appears before us. A thirteen-year-old Jew, the bane of Field 3, a sadist about whom I heard things when I was still in Warsaw. In all the clatter and noise, we never heard the squeaky double doors of the barracks opening. Seeing a prisoner sitting down, Bubi leaps toward him and beats him on the face with his hand [fist]; next, he orders the tall man to bend over and whips him in the behind. The painful lashes last a long time. His whip is reinforced with wire. The priest [Rev. Archutowski] emits a quiet groan. An old, gray-haired Polish Jew, block overseer Bass, standing near me, mumbles curses at Bubi under his breath. But what can we do, we are helpless.<sup>2156</sup>

<sup>2152</sup> See also Gutman and Krakowski, *Unequal Victims*, 236–37; Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, 385–86, 390–92; Grądzka-Rejak and Namysło, *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, vol. 1, 311–12.

<sup>2153</sup> See also Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, 334–35; Szymon Datner, “Materiały z dziedziny ratownictwa Żydów w Polsce w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, no. 73 (January–March 1970): 133–38, at pp. 133–34.

<sup>2154</sup> Damian Sitkiewicz, “Maria Malicka: O pomocy udzielanej Żydom przez organizację narodową Grupa ‘Szańca,’” *Kolbojnik: Biuletyn Gminy Wyznaniowej Żydowskiej w Warszawie*, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 28–31.

<sup>2155</sup> See also Friedman, *Their Brother’s Keepers*, 126; Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, 210–12; Władysław Bartoszewski, *Warszawski pierścień śmierci 1939–1944* (Warsaw: Interpress, 1970), 220; Grądzka-Rejak and Namysło, *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, vol. 1, 88.

<sup>2156</sup> Jerzy Kwiatkowski, *485 Days at Majdanek* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 2021).

- [31] Rev. Franciszek Garncarek, pastor of St. Augustine's Church in the Warsaw ghetto, was murdered on December 20, 1943; he was shot on the steps of the presbytery of another church outside the ghetto (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 574).<sup>2157</sup>
- [32] Fr. Józef Leńko of the Missionary Congregation of St. Vincent, a vicar at Holy Cross parish in Warsaw, was arrested (for the second time) and brought to Pawiak prison on February 7, 1944, for helping Jews. He was deported to Gross-Rosen concentration camp, where he perished on May 20, 1944 (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 585). Fr. Leńko had been particularly active in issuing false baptismal certificates to Jews.<sup>2158</sup>
- [33] Fr. Leon Więckiewicz, of the Missionary Congregation of St. Vincent, a vicar at St. Augustine's Church in the Warsaw ghetto, was arrested for helping Jews on December 3, 1943; he was deported to Gross-Rosen concentration camp, where he died on August 4, 1944 (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 590).<sup>2159</sup> According to another source, however, it is believed that the immediate cause of Fr. Więckiewicz's arrest was not his extensive assistance to Jews but his open display of support for a group of Poles slated for execution.<sup>2160</sup>
- [34] Rev. Alfonsas Lipniūnas, a Lithuanian priest, was assistant pastor of St. Teresa's Church (next to Ostra Brama) and a preacher at the University Church of St. John, in Wilno. He was arrested by the Gestapo on March 17, 1943. According to one version, this was because of his sermons admonishing those who stole Jewish property and participated in violence against Jews. In fact, he was one of forty prominent Lithuanians who were accused of inciting young Lithuanians to resist conscription into the SS. They were arrested in March 1943 and sent to the Stutthof concentration camp. Rev. Lipniūnas survived the evacuation of the camp in January 1945. He died on March 28, 1945, soon after the entry of the Soviet army. (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 642—based on Philip Friedman's *Their Brothers' Keepers*).<sup>2161</sup>
- [35] and [36] Two Basilian Fathers from the Uniate Catholic monastery in Wilno were arrested for helping Jews; they were never heard from again (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 643—based on Philip Friedman's *Their Brothers' Keepers*).
- [37] Rev. Józef Kuczyński, pastor of Wsielub, near Nowogródek (Pińsk diocese), was executed on July 31, 1942, for helping Soviet POWs and sheltering Jewish children (*Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 665).<sup>2162</sup>

<sup>2157</sup> See also Engelking and Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto*, 652–53.

<sup>2158</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 648.

<sup>2159</sup> See also Engelking and Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto*, 652 (Więckowicz).

<sup>2160</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 647–48.

<sup>2161</sup> Rev. Alfonsas Lipniūnas, Stutthof German Concentration Camp, Internet: <http://stutthof-museum.blogspot.com/2016/03/rev-alfonsas-lipniunas.html>.

<sup>2162</sup> Rev. Józef Kuczyński was arrested on June 29, 1942 in a sweep targeting Polish intelligentsia known as Polenaktion. According to other sources, the precise reason for his arrest and execution is unclear. See Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 130, 228.

- [38] Szczęsny (Felix) Zachuta, a clandestine seminarian in Kraków, was arrested in April 1944, for preparing Jews for baptism, then an illegal activity. He was executed shortly after his arrest.<sup>2163</sup>

Another important source—Zygmunt Zieliński's *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*—identifies additional priests put to death for helping Jews.

- [39] Rev. Franciszek Żak, administrator of the parish of Ponikwa, near Brody and a catechist in Dolina (archdiocese of Lwów), was imprisoned in Stanisławów and executed in March 1942, for rendering various forms of assistance to Jews. The false birth and baptismal certificates he provided helped some escape to Romania and Hungary.<sup>2164</sup>
- [40] Rev. Bolesław Gramz, pastor of Idołta, near Braśław.<sup>2165</sup>
- [41] Witold Sarosiek, pastor of Kundzin.<sup>2166</sup>
- [42] Monsignor Karol Lubianiec, pastor of Plebania, dean of Mołodeczno and vicar general for Byelorussia.<sup>2167</sup>

<sup>2163</sup> Jacewicz and Woś, *Martyrologium*, vol. 3, 119; Andrzej R. Małecki, “65. rocznica tajnego nauczania UJ (Part 2),” *Alma Mater*, no. 92 (May 2007): 50–55, at p. 54.

<sup>2164</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 157. See also Krętosz and Pawłowiczowa, *Słownik biograficzny duchowieństwa Metropolii Lwowskiej obrządku łacińskiego ofiar II wojny światowej 1939–1945*, 176.

<sup>2165</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 44, 54. On Rev. Bolesław Gramz, see Tadeusz Krahel, “Ksiądz Bolesław Gramz,” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 8 (August 1999); Krahel, *Martyrologia duchowieństwa archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945*, 166–69. Rev. Gramz extended help to Jews, Gypsies and others in need. He was arrested on June 8, 1944 by the Belorussian police and executed. The precise reason for his arrest is unknown. See also Viktorija Sakaitė, “Lietuvos dvasininkai—žydų gelbėtojai,” *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 2 (12) (2002): 222–32, based on the archival records of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum.

<sup>2166</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 50, 54. See also Viktorija Sakaitė, “Lietuvos dvasininkai—žydų gelbėtojai,” *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 2 (12) (2002): 222–32 (Vitold Garosek), based on the archival records of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum. On Rev. Witold Sarosiek, see Tadeusz Krahel, “Ks. Witold Sarosiek (1988–1944),” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 4 (April 2000). Rev. Sarosiek was a member of the Home Army who extended help to Jews and others in need. He was arrested on April 10, 1944, imprisoned in Białystok, and sent to the Gross-Rosen concentration camp, where he died on December 14, 1944. The precise cause of his arrest is not known.

<sup>2167</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 44, 54. On Monsignor Karol Lubianiec, see Tadeusz Krahel, “Ks. Prałat Karol Lubianiec,” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 8 (August 2000); Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 195, 229. Monsignor Lubianiec, born in 1866, settled in the village of Plebania near Kraśne where he was in charge of a small church; he was highly regarded by people of all faiths. He was arrested in July or September 1942, imprisoned in Wilejka, and executed. Neither the precise cause of his arrest nor the circumstances of his death are clear. See also Viktorija Sakaitė, “Lietuvos dvasininkai—žydų gelbėtojai,” *Genocidas ir*

- [43] Rev. Kazimierz Grochowski, pastor of St. Andrew's parish in Słonim;<sup>2168</sup> Helping Jews was not the only "subversive" activity engaged in by the last four priests listed above, who hailed from the archdiocese of Wilno;<sup>2169</sup>
- [44] Rev. Dominik Amankowicz, pastor of Widze (archdiocese of Wilno), collapsed and died on July 26, 1941, after terrified Jews seeking shelter in the church rectory described the mass execution of Jews they had just narrowly escaped (Zieliński, 52). The foregoing information regarding Rev. Amankowicz appears to be incorrect. It refers to the circumstances of the death of Rev. Mieczysław Akrejć of Braśław.
- [45] Rev. Romuald Świrkowski, pastor of Holy Spirit parish in Wilno, located near the ghetto, assisted Jewish fugitives by providing false documents and finding shelters for them. He was arrested on January 15, 1942, and executed in Ponary on May 5, 1942. The precise reason for his arrest is not clear. According to one version, he was betrayed by one of the Jews whom he had helped.<sup>2170</sup> He may have been arrested in connection with his underground activity as representative of the Archbishop's curia's representative on the voivodship council attached to the Command of the Wilno District of the Union of Armed Struggle.<sup>2171</sup>
- [46] Rev. Piotr Pianko, administrator of the parish in Szumowo, near Zambrów, was shot on September 4, 1941, in his liturgical vestments for refusing to announce German orders calling on the population to obey the German authorities, surrender their arms and capture Soviet soldiers.<sup>2172</sup> The memoirs of Józef Klimaszewski (nom de guerre, "Cień") indicate that Rev. Pianko incurred German wrath for defending

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*rezystencja*, no. 2 (12) (2002): 222–32 (Liubianec), based on the archival records of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum.

<sup>2168</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 44. Rev. Kazimierz Grochowski's rescue efforts are described earlier on. See also Bielawski, *Zbrodnie na Polakach dokonane przez hitlerowców za pomoc udzielaną Żydom*, Entry 210; Viktorija Sakaitė, "Lietuvos dvasininkai—žydų gelbėtojai," *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 2 (12) (2002): 222–32 (Grochowski), based on the archival records of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum.

<sup>2169</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 44, 54.

<sup>2170</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 52.

<sup>2171</sup> On Rev. Romuald Świrkowski see Tadeusz Krahel, "Ks. Romuald Świrkowski (1986–1942)," *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białoostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 2 (February 2000); Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 116, 225; Tadeusz Krahel, "Il salvataggio degli ebrei da parte del clero dell'arcidiocesi di Vilnius nel 1941–1944," in Mikrut, *Perseguitati per la fede*, 643–61, at p. 651; Krahel, *Martyrologia duchowieństwa archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945*, 426–27. According to the archival records of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, Rev. Świrkowski's execution was motivated by his assistance to Jews. See Viktorija Sakaitė, "Lietuvos dvasininkai—žydų gelbėtojai," *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, no. 2 (12) (2002): 222–32 (Svirkovskij).

<sup>2172</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 74. See also Jacewicz and Woś, *Martyrologium*, vol. 2, 84.

- Jews.<sup>2173</sup> A different version of Rev. Pianko's execution exists, along with Rev. Aleksander Łuniewski, by German gendarmes.<sup>2174</sup>
- [47] Rev. Leon Bujnowski, pastor of Niedźwiedzica (Pińsk diocese), was arrested on June 27, 1942, during a religious ceremony, on various charges including suspicion of helping Jews. He was executed on July 13, 1942.<sup>2175</sup>  
Rev. Jan Urbanowicz ([*supra* 5], *Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 84);<sup>2176</sup>  
Rev. Józef Kuczyński ([*supra* 37], *Martyrs of Charity*, Entry 665);<sup>2177</sup>
- [48] Rev. Władysław Klimczak, pastor of Porzecze, near Pińsk, was executed on July 13, 1942 for aiding Jews.<sup>2178</sup>
- [49] Rev. Jan Grodis, principal of Romuald Traugutt high school in Nieśwież (Pińsk diocese), was executed for assisting Jews and Soviet partisans.<sup>2179</sup> According to a Jewish source, Rev. Grodis, who "was beloved by his students and especially the Jewish ones, ... expressed his deep shock at the German policies towards the Jews and respected the Jewish suffering."<sup>2180</sup>
- [50] Rev. Edward Tabaczkowski, pastor of Tłumacz, was put to death on October 20, 1942. He provided many false birth and baptismal certificates and other forms of assistance to Jews. He sheltered Leon Weiser, a Jewish student, in the rectory.<sup>2181</sup> According to one source, Rev. Tabaczkowski was betrayed to the Gestapo by a Jewish woman from Tłumacz.<sup>2182</sup>

The following clergymen have been identified in various other sources as having been killed for helping Jews:

- <sup>2173</sup> Józef Klimaszewski ("Cień"), *W cieniu czerwonego boru*, typescript, 20 (in the author's possession).
- <sup>2174</sup> See the eyewitness account in Jan Żaryn, "Przez pomyłkę: Ziemia łomżyńska w latach 1939–1945: Rozmowa z ks. Kazimierzem Łupińskim z parafii Szumowo," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, nos. 8–9 (September–October 2002): 112–17.
- <sup>2175</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 83–84. See also Maria Suhecka, "Proboszcz z Niedźwiedzicy," *Tygodnik Powszechny* [Kraków], April 1, 1990.
- <sup>2176</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 84.
- <sup>2177</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 84.
- <sup>2178</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 84.
- <sup>2179</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 84.
- <sup>2180</sup> Cholawsky, *The Jews of Bielorussia during World War II*, 278.
- <sup>2181</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 154–55. See also Gutman and Krakowski, *Unequal Victims*, 227; Barański, *Przeminęli zagończycy, chliborobi, chasydzi...*, 417–18; Bielawski, *Zbrodnie na Polakach dokonane przez hitlerowców za pomoc udzielaną Żydom*, Entry 741; Blond, *Memorial Book of Tlumacz*, cols. xxxiv, cxxix and clxxiii; Krętosz and Pawłowiczowa, *Słownik biograficzny duchowieństwa Metropolii Lwowskiej obrządku łacińskiego ofiar II wojny światowej 1939–1945*, 154–55.
- <sup>2182</sup> Lesław Jeżowski, "Ks. Edward Tabaczkowski," *Semper Fidelis* [Wrocław], no. 3 (16) (1993): 10.

- [51] an unidentified priest in the village of Ossowo, near Wilno, was said to have been killed for extending help to Jews.<sup>2183</sup> However, Rev. Sykstus Hanusowski, the local pastor, survived the war. His postwar fate is unclear; according to one source, he was arrested by the Soviets and deported to the Gulag. There is more about Rev. Hanusowski in the text.
- [52] Rev. Dominik Przyłuski, pastor of Garbów, near Lublin, died of a heart attack in December 1942, when, reportedly, his rectory was searched by the Germans looking for Jews. The Jews who had been hiding there were not found.<sup>2184</sup> According to another source, however, the Morel family, for whom Rev. Przyłuski was providing food, were hidden in the barn of the Gęsik family. They were shot by a local policeman.<sup>2185</sup>
- [53] Fr. Remigiusz (Antoni) Wójcik, administrator of the parish in Święty Stanisław, near Halicz (archdiocese of Lwów),
- [54] Fr. Peregryn (Jan) Haczela, guardian of the Conventual Franciscan monastery in Święty Stanisław, and
- [55] Brother Szczepan (Franciszek) Kosiorek were denounced by Ukrainian nationalists and arrested for possession of illegal weapons, which had been planted on their premises. According to another version, they were hiding a Jewish woman in the bell tower of their church. In any case, after their arrest by the Ukrainian police in July 1942, they were either taken to the Gestapo prison in Stanisławów or murdered on the way there. According to one eyewitness, Fr. Wójcik was held by the Gestapo and beaten for three days. On the fourth day, he was ripped apart by dogs in the prison courtyard.<sup>2186</sup>
- [56] Fr. Maximilian (Maksymilian) Kolbe was arrested in February 1941. One of the reasons for his arrest was the shelter and care his Franciscan monastery in Nie-

<sup>2183</sup> Chciuk, *Saving Jews in War-Torn Poland, 1939–1945*, 33, based on the testimony of Borys Kaminski, an Orthodox priest.

<sup>2184</sup> Franciszek Stopniak, "Katolickie duchowieństwo polskie i Żydzi w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej," in Izabella Borowicz, ed., *Polskie podziemie polityczne wobec zagłady Żydów w czasie okupacji*. Conference Papers, Warsaw, April 22, 1987 (Warsaw: Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, and Polskie Towarzystwo "Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata," 1988), 70.

<sup>2185</sup> Anna Malinowska, *Komendant: Życie Salomona Morela* (Warsaw: Agora, 2020), 371. See also Jan Konefał, "Z Mandżurii do Grabowa: Kapłańska droga ks. Dominika Przyłuskiego 1872–1942," *Roczniki Teologiczne*, vol. 47, no. 4 (2000): 185–96, at p. 194.

<sup>2186</sup> Krętosz and Pawłowiczowa, *Słownik biograficzny duchowieństwa Metropolii Lwowskiej obrządku łacińskiego ofiar II wojny światowej 1939–1945*, 215, 238–39, 291–92; Barański, *Przeminęli zagonczycy, chliborobi, chasydzi...*, 84, 173; Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją hitlerowską 1939–1945*, 495. See also Siekierka, Komański, and Różański, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie stanisławowskim 1939–1946*, 503–4, based on the eyewitness account of Michał Przygrodzki.

pokalanów had extended to large numbers of Jewish refugees. Fr. Kolbe was put to death in Auschwitz on August 14, 1941.<sup>2187</sup>

- [57] Rev. Józef Pawłowski, rector of the Higher Seminary in Kielce (until November 1939) and pastor of the cathedral parish, was arrested on February 10, 1941, for ministering to the faithful and extending aid indiscriminately, i.e., to Jews along with others. He was deported to Auschwitz and then to Dachau, where he was murdered on January 9, 1942.<sup>2188</sup>
- [58] Rev. Jan Gielarowski, pastor of Michałówka, near Radymno, with the assistance of an elderly priest from a nearby village, provided false birth and baptismal certificates to a number of Jews and sheltered Jews in the parish rectory. He provided Jadwiga Bałaban with a certificate under the name of Jadwiga Kowalczyk. Bałaban also states, in her testimony, that Rev. Gielarowski sheltered a Jewish woman and her nine-month-old child. The Germans arrested Rev. Gielarowski in December 1942, but their interrogation at the prison in nearby Jarosław failed to extract from him any information that would compromise anyone else. He perished in Auschwitz on March 21, 1943.<sup>2189</sup>
- [59] Rev. Paweł Szczygieł, the retired pastor of Jakubkowice, near Nowy Sącz, was arrested on April 14, 1942, on charges of smuggling food into the Nowy Sącz ghetto, which he used to visit under the pretext of caring for his parishioners (i.e., converts). He dies in the Auschwitz concentration on October 31, 1942.<sup>2190</sup>

The memoirs of Jewish survivors include further examples of Polish priests who appear to have been executed for their rescue efforts on behalf of Jews.

According to the memoir of Joseph Riwash,

- [60] Rev. Romuald Dronicz, pastor of Wołkołata, in northeastern Poland, like many other priests in the area, fed and sheltered Jews. However, he missed an opportunity to escape and was executed by the Gestapo in July 1942.<sup>2191</sup>

<sup>2187</sup> Treece, *A Man for Others*, 91–93, and endnote 12.

<sup>2188</sup> Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, 102–4; “Biogramy 108 męczenników,” *Głos Polski* [Toronto], May 18–24, 1999.

<sup>2189</sup> Krętosz and Pawłowiczowa, *Słownik biograficzny duchowieństwa Metropolii Lwowskiej obrządku łacińskiego ofiar II wojny światowej 1939–1945*, 67; Smólski, *Za to groziła śmierć*, 113–19; Jacewicz and Woś, *Martyrologium*, vol. 4, 292; Zygarowicz and Jedynak, *Świadkowie wiary Diecezji Przemyskiej z lat 1939–1964*, 85–86; Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part 2, 213–14; Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945*, 77–78; Straty osobowe i ofiary represji pod okupacją niemiecką, Institute of National Remembrance, Internet: <https://straty.pl>; Testimony of Jadwiga Bałaban, JHI, record group 301, no. 5476.

<sup>2190</sup> Parafia pw. Podwyższenia Krzyża Świętego w Borusowej, Internet: <http://www.borusowa.diecezja.tarnow.pl/szczygiel.html>; Jacewicz and Woś, *Martyrologium*, vol. 4, 389.

<sup>2191</sup> Riwash, *Resistance and Revenge, 1939–1949*, 144. According to Polish sources, Rev. Romuald Dronicz’s death may have been as a result of his patriotic stance. See Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 23, 44; Tadeusz Krahel, “Ks. Romuald Dronicz,” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 123 (July 2000); Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 195.

According to another memoir,

- [61] and [62] Two priests from Ikażń and Prozoroki were shot in a forest outside of Głębokie, in northeastern Poland, in March 1942. They had been arrested for imploring their parishioners to assist Jews and not to take part in the persecutions directed against them.<sup>2192</sup> According to Polish sources, Rev. Władysław Maćkowiak, pastor of Ikażń, and his vicar, Rev. Stanisław Pyrtek, were arrested in December 1941 for their ardent preaching and for giving illegal religious instruction to children. They were detained in the jail in Brasław, and later in Głębokie, along with Rev. Mieczysław Bohatkiewicz, who was arrested in Dryssa in January 1942. The Germans executed all three on March 4, 1942, in Borek forest, near Berezwezc, outside Głębokie.<sup>2193</sup>

Another Jewish survivor, Wili Fink, mentions:

- [63] An unidentified Polish priest in the Wilno area, “who paid with his life for those (birth) certificates given to Jews.”<sup>2194</sup>

A Jewish wartime report includes the following incident in early December 1939:

- [64] A priest was hanged near the synagogue in Gostynin because he traded with the Jews.<sup>2195</sup> According to Polish sources, however, the pastor and dean, Rev. Apolinary Kaczyński, was arrested in October 1939, along with some thirty Polish and Jewish hostages. Three young vicars—Rev. Antoni Dubas, Rev. Stanisław Krystosik, and Rev. Kazimierz Stankiewicz—volunteered to take his place and were executed by the Germans along with the other hostages on December 1, 1939. Rev. Kaczyński was released but was arrested again in April 1941. He died on December 26, 1941, from the severe beatings he endured while in prison.

Survivor Francesca Bram (née Grochowska) recalled:

- [65] The village priest of Grodziec demonstrated tremendous compassion and organized community assistance for the Jews expelled from Konin to surrounding villages in the summer of 1940. According to her testimony, “The Germans sought an opportunity to arrest him and this happened after he helped the Jews in Grodziec. Soon afterwards came news of his death.”<sup>2196</sup> According to Polish sources, Rev. Franciszek Jaworski, pastor of Grodziec, was arrested by the Germans on August 26, 1940.

<sup>2192</sup> Silverman, Smuszkowitz, and Smuszkowicz, *From Victims to Victors*, 246–47, 325. See also the written statements of Peter (Pejsach) Smuszkowicz, November 18–23 and November 20, 1993 (in the author’s possession); Machnes and Klinov, *Darkness and Desolation*, 571, 575.

<sup>2193</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 38–39, 58; Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, 9–18; Tadeusz Krahel, “Nasi Męczennicy,” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, May 1999; Tadeusz Krahel, “Błogosławieni Męczennicy z Berezwezcza,” *Czas Miłosierdzia: Białostocki Biuletyn Kościelny*, no. 131 (March 2001).

<sup>2194</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 397.

<sup>2195</sup> Siek, *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, vol. 9, 26.

<sup>2196</sup> Mendl Gelbart, ed., *Kehilat Konin be-Frihata u-ve Hurbana (The Community of Konin: Its Flowering and Destruction)* (Tel Aviv: Association of Konin Jews in Israel, 1968), 526–27, as cited in Richmond, *Konin*, 163.

He was deported to Sachsenhausen and later transferred to Dachau. He survived the war.<sup>2197</sup>

A survivor from Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, recounts her story:

- [66] An unidentified parish priest from her town assisted Yehudis Pshenitse, a young girl separated from her family, who appealed to him for help. The priest did much more than shelter her. After being reported to the Germans, he refused to surrender her. Beaten mercilessly and left to die, the priest had the young girl brought to him, blessed her, and implored his housekeeper to find a safe hiding place for her. He died in her presence. "His body was pierced in several places, and his face was unrecognizable."<sup>2198</sup>

The Grajewo Memorial Book pays tribute to a Polish priest who defied the Germans:

- [67] Rev. Aleksander Pęza of Grajewo called "tirelessly" on the Christian population, at the daily masses, not to cooperate with the Germans' mistreatment of Jews. When word of this reached the Germans, he was shot. Various dates are given for Rev. Pęza's death. The most authoritative—on his tombstone—is July 15, 1943.<sup>2199</sup>
- [68] When the Gestapo took a group of Jews from Kolno through the village of Borkowo, near Łomża, on July 9, 1941, the housekeeper rang the church bell to announce the morning mass. Believing this to have been done as a sign of solidarity with the Jewish prisoners passing near the church, they arrested the pastor, Rev. Stanisław Rejmentowski, and his housekeeper. Both disappeared without a trace, probably executed and buried in the nearby forest.<sup>2200</sup>

Relying on Soviet and Jewish sources, Israeli historian Leonid Smilovitskii (Smilovitsky) states that the Germans executed priests for helping Jews in a number of towns across northeastern Poland: Brasław, Brześć, Grodno, Wilejka, Mołodeczno, and Pińsk. He identifies some of these priests by name:

- [69] Rev. Mieczysław Kubik, dean and pastor of Nieśwież (formerly rector of the Church of the Transfiguration of Our Lord in Nowogródek),
- [70] Rev. Michał Dalecki, dean and pastor of Nowogródek,
- [71] Rev. Tadeusz Grzesiak, pastor of Kleck.

<sup>2197</sup> Jacewicz and Woś, *Martyrologium*, vol. 4, 460.

<sup>2198</sup> Kugelmass and Boyarin, *From A Ruined Garden*, 2nd expanded ed., 177–78.

<sup>2199</sup> George Gorin, ed., *Grayever yizker-bukh (Grayewo Memorial Book)* (New York: United Brayever Relief Committee, 1950), xxxii–xxxiii. Witold Jemielity gives the date of Rev. Aleksander Pęza's execution as July 15, 1941—see Witold Jemielity, "Martyrologia księży diecezji łomżyńskiej 1939–1945," *Rozporządzenia Urzędowe Łomżyńskiej Kurii Diecezjalnej*, nos. 8–9 (1974): 53; whereas Jacewicz and Woś, *Martyrologium*, vol. 2, 184 gives the date as August 15, 1943.

<sup>2200</sup> Stanisław Łukomski, "Wspomnienia," *Rozporządzenia Urzędowe Łomżyńskiej Kurii Diecezjalnej*, nos. 5–7 (May–July 1974): 62; Witold Jemielity, "Martyrologium księży diecezji łomżyńskiej 1939–1945," *Rozporządzenia Urzędowe Łomżyńskiej Kurii Diecezjalnej*, nos. 8–9 (August–September 1974): 55; Jan Żaryn, "Przez pomyłkę: Ziemia łomżyńska w latach 1939–1945: Rozmowa z ks. Kazimierzem Łupińskim z parafii Szumowo," *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, nos. 8–9 (September–October 2002): 112–17.

According to Polish sources, the aforementioned Rev. Kubik of Nieśwież was executed in Baranowicze on July 13, 1942 for contacts with partisans and for assisting Jews.<sup>2201</sup> This is confirmed by Józef Halperin, who was imprisoned with Rev. Kubik in Baranowicze.<sup>2202</sup>

Other priests identified by Smilovitskii include the aforementioned Rev. Władysław Grobelny (of Kobryń) [*supra* 10], Rev. Józef Kuczyński (of Wsielub) [*supra* 37], Rev. Fabian Poczobutt-Odlanicki (of Łunin) [*supra* 16], and Rev. Jan Urbanowicz (of Brześć) [*supra* 5].<sup>2203</sup>

- [72] Rev. Aleksander Ciszkiwicz, rector of an auxiliary church in Pleszewicze, in the parish of Niedźwiedzica (Pińsk diocese), was arrested by the Belorussian police during a hunt for Jews and handed over to the Gestapo. He was executed in August 1942, near Nieśwież.<sup>2204</sup>
- [73] Rev. Zygmunt Miłkowski, pastor of Wiszniew, was arrested in August 1943 for helping Jews and executed later that year in Wilejka.<sup>2205</sup>
- [74] Rev. Antoni Udalski, a former pastor of Wołożyn, was transferred to the parish in Soleczniki Wielkie, near Wilno, in November 1941. He was arrested by Lithuanian police in mid-1942 for helping Jews. He was imprisoned in Wołożyn, and put to death the following year.<sup>2206</sup>
- [75] Rev. Wincenty Kuras directed the institution for orphans and poor children run by the Michaelite Fathers in Działkowicze, near Kobryń, in Polesie (Polesia). Sheltered there were six Jews—three children (two boys and a girl), a tailor and his wife, and a cobbler—and three escaped Soviet prisoners of war. Rev. Kuras was one of some 400 Poles, among them 17 Catholic priests, arrested in a Polenaktion at the end of

<sup>2201</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 84; Laryssa Michajlik, “‘Sąsiedzi’ obok ‘sąsiadów’? Ratowanie Żydów przez chrześcijan na terytorium Białorusi w latach 1941–1944,” in Jasiewicz, *Świat niepożegnany*, 737.

<sup>2202</sup> Halperin, *Ludzie są wszędzie*, 173.

<sup>2203</sup> Smilovitskii, *Katastrofa evreev v Belorussii 1941–1944 gg.*, 132.

<sup>2204</sup> Jasiewicz, *Świat niepożegnany*, 735.

<sup>2205</sup> Jasiewicz, *Świat niepożegnany*, 736–77; Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 126, 168, 195; Tadeusz Krahel, “Il salvataggio degli ebrei da parte del clero dell’arcidiocesi di Vilnius nel 1941–1944,” in Mikrut, *Perseguitati per la fede*, 643–61, at p. 656; Krahel, *Martyrologia duchowieństwa archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945*, 292–93.

<sup>2206</sup> Threatened with execution under the Soviet occupation, Rev. Antoni Udalski was defended by Jews whom he had helped before the war. He assisted Jews on the entry of the Germans in June 1941 and provided them with false birth and baptismal certificates. He baptized a child born to a Jewish mother and Polish father named Dratwicki, which is what led to his arrest and the arrest of the child’s godparents. See Jasiewicz, *Świat niepożegnany*, 737; Tadeusz Krahel, “Ksiądz Antoni Udalski: Zginął za ratowanie Żydów,” *W Służbie Miłosierdzia* [Białystok], no. 4 (April 2007); Krahel, *Archidiecezja wileńska w latach II wojny światowej*, 126, 166–67, 195; Tadeusz Krahel, “Il salvataggio degli ebrei da parte del clero dell’arcidiocesi di Vilnius nel 1941–1944,” in Mikrut, *Perseguitati per la fede*, 643–61, at pp. 655–56; Krahel, *Martyrologia duchowieństwa archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945*, 437–39.

June 1942 and imprisoned in Baranowicze. They were executed on July 13, 1942, by the SS and Belorussian police. The three adult Jews at the institution, however, were executed on the spot in Działkowicze when Rev. Kuras was arrested. On the intervention of Countess Helena Jelska, the institution's benefactor, the Jewish children were given to Jewish families in Połonka. However, the Jews of Połonka were soon annihilated as well, also in July 1942.<sup>2207</sup>

- [76] Rev. Ludwik Peciak, dean and pastor of the parish in Kołomyja, provided birth and baptismal certificates to many Jews, among them Mila Sandberg Mesner, Lola Sandberg, Jasia Elberger, and Iser and Toni Reisman. The Reismans were caught by the SS and murdered, and Rev. Peciak's signature on their documents may have led to his arrest by Ukrainian police in November 1942. Delivered to the Gestapo, he was imprisoned in the Majdanek and Flossenbürg concentration camps. He died on April 16, 1943.<sup>2208</sup>

Many similar cases are recorded elsewhere but have still not been confirmed independently (as of this writing).<sup>2209</sup> Some of the repressions of clergymen attributed to assisting Jews have been disproved or are doubtful. For example, there is the case of the Salesian Fathers from the Ks. Siemca Institute in Warsaw.<sup>2210</sup> According to Adina Blady Sz wajger, a Jewish woman who worked in the child welfare section of the Central Relief Council housed in the Salesian Fathers' residence, some priests and lay staff suspected of involvement in underground activities were taken away by the Germans in the spring of 1944 without any explanation and hanged in the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto.<sup>2211</sup> It appears much more likely, however, that they were taken to the Pawiak prison and that some of them, like Rev. Stanisław Janik, were subsequently sent to concentration camps.<sup>2212</sup>

Prior to October 15, 1941, when the death penalty was officially decreed in the General Government for any assistance rendered to Jews, members of the clergy could face deportation to concentration camps for their activities on behalf of Jews. Prominent examples include Fr. Maximilian Kolbe [*supra* 56] and Fr. Anicet (Wojciech Koplński) [*supra* 28], both of whom perished.

<sup>2207</sup> Marcin A. Różański, "Ks. Wincenty Kuras zapomniany bohater," *Niedziela* [Sosnowiec], August 11, 2015; Dymitr Zagacki, "Szlachetne serce księdza Wincentego Kurasa," *Echa Polesia*, August 28, 2016; "Rev. Wincenty Kuras—murdered for helping Jews," Memory and Identity, Internet: <http://pamiecitozsamosc.pl/en/rev-wincenty-kuras-murdered-for-helping-jews>.

<sup>2208</sup> Sandberg-Mesner, *Light from the Shadows*, 81, 104–5; Lindeman, *Shards of Memory*, 10.

<sup>2209</sup> See, especially, Kącki, *Udział księży i zakonnic w holokauście Żydów*, 2nd rev. and expanded ed.

<sup>2210</sup> Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, 352.

<sup>2211</sup> Sz wajger, *I Remember Nothing More*, 122–24.

<sup>2212</sup> Jarosław Wąsowicz, "Cierpiący świadek Chrystusa: Ks. Stanisław Janik (1909–2006), więzień obozów hitlerowskich i komunistycznych," *Nasz Dziennik*, July 7–8, 2007; Jarosław Wąsowicz, "Wychowawca, nauczyciel, więzień PRL—ks. Stanisław Janik SDB (1909–2006), in Romanowski, *Bohaterowie trudnych czasów*, vol. 2, 30–45.

A number of other priests arrested for assisting Jews after the implementation of the death penalty either survived incarceration in prisons and camps or managed to escape and hide. Here are some examples.

- Rev. Franciszek J. Gabryl of Kraków was arrested towards the end of 1941 for baptizing a Jew who had expressed an intention to convert several years before the war. After his detention and repeated beatings in the Montelupich prison in Kraków, Rev. Gabryl was sent to Auschwitz, and then to Dachau;<sup>2213</sup>
- Monsignor Witold Dzieciół of Kielce was arrested by the Gestapo on May 20, 1942, for helping a Jew. He was imprisoned in several concentration camps for the duration of the war;<sup>2214</sup>
- Rev. Julian Chrościcki, pastor of Włochy (a Warsaw suburb), who was active in the Central Relief Council (RGO), was arrested on September 18, 1942, imprisoned in Pawiak prison and the Majdanek concentration camp. He was (miraculously) released from Majdanek on May 15, 1944;<sup>2215</sup>
- Rev. Władysław Miś, pastor of All Saints parish in Kraków, was arrested on September 1, 1942, for issuing a false birth and baptismal certificate to a Jewish woman and was sent to Auschwitz. He survived three concentration camps;<sup>2216</sup>
- Rev. Stanisław Szwaaja, a catechist, was arrested in Kraków on November 12, 1942, for aiding Jews. He survived four concentration camps (Auschwitz, Gross-Rosen, Sachsenhausen, and Dachau);<sup>2217</sup>
- Rev. Ignacy Świrski, professor at the Stefan Batory University in Wilno, had to hide from the Germans near the village of Turgiele for two and a half years;<sup>2218</sup>
- Rev. Władysław Świder, a vicar at the parish in Mościce, on the outskirts of Tarnów, was arrested on March 5, 1943, for providing a birth and baptismal certificate to a Jewish woman named Jersawitz. The woman was executed. Rev. Świder was sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp on May 26, 1943, and then to the Dachau concentration camp. Fortunately, he lived to see the liberation of Dachau on April 29, 1945;<sup>2219</sup>

<sup>2213</sup> Gładysz and Szymerski, *Biografia byłych więźniów politycznych niemieckich obozów koncentracyjnych*, vol. 1, 70–71.

<sup>2214</sup> Chciuk, *Saving Jews in War-Torn Poland, 1939–1945*, 33.

<sup>2215</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, lxxxiv; Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945*, 43; Iranek-Osmecki, *He Who Saves One Life*, 269.

<sup>2216</sup> Jacewicz and Woś, *Martyrologium*, vol. 3, 106.

<sup>2217</sup> Namysło and Berendt, *Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej*, 283; Grądzka-Rejak and Namysło, *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, vol. 1, 310.

<sup>2218</sup> Zieliński, *Życie religijne w Polsce pod okupacją 1939–1945*, 52; Szymon Datner, “Materiały z dziedziny ratownictwa Żydów w Polsce w okresie okupacji hitlerowskiej,” *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, no. 73 (January–March 1970): 133–38, at p. 133.

<sup>2219</sup> Stanisław Sojka, “Śp. Ks. Rektor Władysław Świder (1907–1995),” *Currenda: Pismo Urzędowe Diecezji Tarnowskiej*, no. 4 (1995).

- Rev. Mieczysław Kmita, curate of a parish church in Białystok, was warned of his impending arrest and fled to Śliwna, where he hid until the end of the war;<sup>2220</sup>
- Rev. Stanisław Próchniewicz, pastor of Rozbity Kamień, near Sokołów Podlaski, was arrested on September 13, 1943, along with the organist and several parishioners, on suspicion of sheltering and helping escaped Soviet prisoners of war and Jews. He was taken to Pawiak prison in Warsaw but released on October 6, 1943, probably for lack of hard evidence.<sup>2221</sup>

Catholic nuns were also targeted for coming to the aid of Jews. Eight Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul were executed in Warsaw's Wola district in August 1944, during the Warsaw Uprising, when they refused to surrender the Jewish children housed in their children's shelter on Dzielna Street.<sup>2222</sup>

- [1] Zofia Dziewanowska,
- [2] Helena Jezierska,
- [3] Zofia Kowalczyk,
- [4] Anna Apolonia Motz,
- [5] Maria (Marianna) Nadolska,
- [6] Józefa Ogrodowicz,
- [7] Aurelia Pomierny, the superior, and
- [8] Maria Florentyna Wilman.

According to other sources, the nuns refused to leave the shelter and abandon their charges, who included both Christian and Jewish children.<sup>2223</sup>

[9] and [10] Two Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary—Kazimiera Wołowska (Sister Maria Marta of Jesus), the superior of the convent; and Bogumiła Noiszewska (Sister Maria Ewa of Providence), a medical doctor—were arrested in Słonim (voivodship of Nowogródek) on December 18, 1942, for sheltering Jews. They were executed the following day in a mass execution of several hundred Poles—including the Jesuit

<sup>2220</sup> Kazimierz Litwiejko, "Działalność społeczno-oświatowa Kościoła w południowo-zachodniej części archidiecezji wileńskiej 1939–1945," *Nasza Przeszłość: Studia z Dziejów Kościoła i Kultury Katolickiej w Polsce* [Kraków], no. 81 (1994): 303.

<sup>2221</sup> Engelking, Leociak, and Libionka, *Prowincja noc*, 498, n.215; Engelking and Grabowski, *Zarys krajobrazu*, 174, based on information published in *Agencja Informacyjna Wiś*, no. 36 (September 28, 1943): 4; Zbigniew Wąsowski, Tomasz Jaszczółt, and Grzegorz Wierzbicki, *Monografia parafii Rozbity Kamień* (Rozbity Kamień: Parafia Rzymskokatolicka pod wezwaniem św. Trójcy, 2004), 38.

<sup>2222</sup> Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, 257 (Entry 591), based on Datner, *Las sprawiedliwych*, 103; Jacewicz and Woś, *Martyrologium*, vol. 5, 580–82, 585–87, 590.

<sup>2223</sup> Jadwiga Kisiulewska, "Heroiczne zaangażowanie Sióstr Miłosierdzia św. Wincentego a Paulo prowincji warszawskiej w dzieło ratowania ludności żydowskiej w czasie II wojny światowej," *Życie Konsekwane*, nos. 3–4 (131–32) (2018): 78–85, at p. 80.

priest Fr. Adam Sztark, who was the chaplain at the Sisters' convent, where he had placed Jewish children.<sup>2224</sup> Their story is detailed earlier.

[11] Sister Maria Klemensa (Helena Staszewska), superior of a convent of the Ursulines of the Roman Union in Rokiciny Podhalańskie, near Rabka, was arrested by the Gestapo on January 26, 1943, for sheltering Poles and Jews escaping to Hungary across the nearby border with Slovakia. She perished in Auschwitz on July 27, 1943.<sup>2225</sup>

[12] Sister Maria Julia, born Stanisława Rodzińska, superior of a Dominican convent and director of an orphanage in Wilno, was arrested on July 12, 1943. She was imprisoned in Praveniškės, a labour camp outside Kaunas, and then in the Stutthof concentration camp. She died of typhus there on February 20, 1945. According to a Jewish inmate, she shared her meagre food rations with fellow prisoners in the Jewish barracks and lifted their spirits by her inner strength.<sup>2226</sup>

The claim that Sister Jadwiga Assadowska, superior of the convent of the Franciscan Sisters of the Family of Mary in Wołkowysk, in eastern Poland, lost her life during the war is not true. Working as a nurse at the local hospital, after the entry of the Germans in the summer of 1941, she was accused of caring for Soviets and Jews and arrested. She was released from jail after two weeks and survived the war.<sup>2227</sup>

<sup>2224</sup> Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, 223 (Entry 463). See also Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, 385–86, 390–91; Grądzka-Rejak and Namysło, *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, vol. 1, 247–49.

<sup>2225</sup> Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, 445–51; Klemensa Misiurewicz, "Postawa Sióstr Urszulanek Unii Rzymskiej w czasie II wojny światowej wobec osób potrzebujących pomocy," *Życie Konsekrowane*, nos. 3–4 (131–32) (2018): 131–39, at pp. 136–38. The nuns also operated a shelter for children from Warsaw with tuberculosis, among them Jewish children, which was shut down in July 1942. The transit point from the smuggling operation was located in Raba Wyżna, a village near the Slovak border, and was overseen by Rev. Stanisław Kądziołka, the local vicar, who acted as a liaison between the escapees and the smugglers. Rev. Kądziołka was arrested in September 1942, in a sweep of those involved in the transborder smuggling operation. He was imprisoned in Auschwitz and other camps, but survived. See Aleksander Marczyński, "Udział duchowieństwa w walce z okupantem w Gorcach i Beskidach w latach 1939 do 1945," *Nasza Przeszłość: Studia z Dziejów Kościoła i Kultury Katolickiej w Polsce* [Kraków], no. 67 (1987): 197–236, at pp. 202, 223–24.

<sup>2226</sup> Moroz and Datko, *Męczennicy za wiarę 1939–1945*, 282–85. See also Dombek, *Moc w słabości*.

<sup>2227</sup> Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, 275 (Entry 663); Frącek, *Zgromadzenie Sióstr Franciszkanek Rodziny Marii w latach 1939–1945*, 144.

## The Price of Rescue

Despite repeated warnings, incessant anti-Semitic propaganda, and threats of sanctions, so many Poles were interacting with and assisting Jews that, in the fall of 1941, the Germans announced that henceforth providing any form of help to Jews would be a capital offence.<sup>2228</sup>

On October 15, 1941, Hans Frank, the Governor General of the Generalgouvernement, issued an ordinance that provided for the death penalty for Jews found outside the ghettos without permission, and for persons offering them shelter.<sup>2229</sup> On November 10, 1941, Governor Ludwig Fischer expanded the activities for which Poles faced the death penalty (in the Warsaw District) to include providing even a night's lodging, food or transportation to a Jew.<sup>2230</sup> Even selling food to Jews was covered by this prohibition.

Yet many Poles continued to trade with and shelter Jews, thereby frustrating German attempts to isolate the Jews, a necessary precondition for their annihilation. *Gazeta Lwowska*, an official German daily published in the Polish language, stated on April 11, 1942:

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

The rural population must be cut off and separated from the Jews, once and for all, must be weaned from the extremely anti-social habit of assisting the Jews.<sup>2231</sup>

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<sup>2228</sup> For the relevant German ordinances and public announcements, including offering rewards for those providing information about Jewish fugitives and Polish helpers, see Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 634, 639–44. For an in-depth analysis of the laws and measures implemented in the Generalgouvernement against Poles who came to the aid of Jews, see Bogdan Musiał, *Kto dopomoże Żydowi...* (Poznań: Zysk, 2019).

<sup>2229</sup> Governor General Frank's ordinance is reproduced in Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, at p. 632. The ordinance was subject to the following qualification: "In less serious cases the punishment may be imprisonment with hard labour or imprisonment." On November 10, 1941, in the Warsaw District, Governor Ludwig Fischer eliminated the possibility of a lesser sentence in less serious cases. *Ibid.*, 633.

<sup>2230</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 633.

<sup>2231</sup> Bartoszewski, *The Blood Shed Unites Us*, 40.

A circular issued on September 21, 1942, by the SS and Police Chief in the District of Radom, outlined and justified the draconian measures that were being undertaken to put an end to this “problem.”

The experience of the last few weeks has shown that Jews, in order to evade evacuation, tend to flee from the small Jewish residential districts [i.e., ghettos] in the communities above all.

These Jews must have been taken in by Poles. I am requesting you to order all mayors and village heads as soon as possible that every Pole who takes in a Jew makes himself guilty under the Third Ordinance on restrictions on residence in the Government General of October 15, 1941 (GG Official Gazette, p. 595).

As accomplices are also considered those Poles who feed run-away Jews or sell them food-stuffs, even if they do not offer them shelter. Whatever the case, these Poles are liable to the death penalty.<sup>2232</sup>

The Germans felt compelled to introduce still harsher measures, in order to curtail contacts between Poles and Jews to the fullest extent possible. German law extended the threat of death not only to those who sheltered or assisted Jews in any way, but also to those who knew about a hidden Jew and did not report it to the authorities.<sup>2233</sup> Collective punishment was also imposed on villagers who tolerated rescue in their midst.<sup>2234</sup>

When the Germans started killing Polish “transgressors” more and more frequently, by hanging or executing them or by burning entire families alive in their homes, the population became increasingly fearful of helping Jewish fugitives. Sometimes, Jewish charges were told to leave.

How this played out can be illustrated by the following example from Siedliska, near Miechów, north of Kraków. In the early hours of the morning of March 15, 1943, armed Germans surrounded the house of Wincenty and Lucja Baranek, who were suspected of sheltering Jews. In addition to their two sons, 9-year-old Tadeusz and 12-year-old Henryk, Wincenty Baranek’s stepmother, Katarzyna also lived with them. The Germans summoned the head of the village, told him to gather local farmers, and ordered them to empty the hayloft and other storage areas around the farm, hoping to find hiding Jews. Four Jews were discovered in a hideout, taken behind

<sup>2232</sup> Bartoszewski, *The Blood Shed Unites Us*, 40.

<sup>2233</sup> For example, the announcement issued by the Kreishauptmann of Dębica county on November 19, 1942, stated: “The Security Police will take measures against anyone who learns of a Jew staying outside a camp without authorization and fails to notify the police.” The measures for failing to notify the police of any Jew in hiding entailed deportation to a concentration camp. See Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 643–44.

<sup>2234</sup> In addition to executing on the spot individual Poles suspected of helping Jews, or arresting and sentencing them to prison terms, or sending them to concentration camps, the Germans sometimes imposed collective punishment on the helper’s family or village. A fine of 400,000 złotych, as well as food requisitions, was imposed on the village of Daleszyce near Kielce, where several Poles were seized for helping Jews. See Grądzka-Rejak and Namysło, *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, vol. 1, 227–28.

the barn, and shot. The Germans entered the house and proceeded to question the family, beating them severely in the process. Immediately after, Wincenty and Lucja were shot, as were their sons after that. The Germans knew that Katarzyna also lived in the house, but they could not find her. They ordered the local farmers to have her brought to them; otherwise, they would shoot several dozen villagers. The terrorized farmers were faced with a diabolical “choice.” The next day, 58-year-old Katarzyna was delivered to the Germans. They murdered her as well.<sup>2235</sup>

Understandably, these draconian measures instilled tremendous fear in Poles and discouraged many from helping Jews. Some rescuers simply could not cope. A Jewish boy who was hidden by a Polish couple in Warsaw recalled the toll that the stress took on his host’s wife. She would leave home and sit in a field crying bitterly; her husband would follow her to make sure she was safe. Nonetheless, they continued to shelter the boy.<sup>2236</sup>

Sacrificing one’s life—or exposing oneself knowingly to that risk—is much more than a routine act of human kindness. Minor acts of service and sacrifice—even, or perhaps especially, when the recipient is a stranger—are generally regarded everywhere as a mark of character and decency. Hence, a degree of expectation exists regarding considerate behaviour on this level in almost any social context. But risking or losing *one’s very life* for another constitutes behaviour on an entirely different order of magnitude. No expectation, duty or requirement can be reasonably asserted in relation to such a sacrifice.

No one has the right to demand of others that they should help someone if it means laying down their lives. No moral or religious code imposes such an imperative or condemns those who are not willing to put their lives on the line for others. Otherwise, except for a handful of people, we would all fail this test.

For Christians, the gift of life itself is God’s most precious endowment. Indeed, the instinct of self-preservation is so strong that the apostle Peter denied his association with Christ three times on the day before Jesus died. Yet Jesus declared Peter to be the “rock” on which He would build His Church. Jesus Christ Himself pleaded with His Father to spare Him from imminent death on the cross, if at all possible.

“Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13) is not a command; at the very most, it is an exhortation.

<sup>2235</sup> “Rodzina Baranków—zamordowana za pomoc Żydom,” Internet: <http://pamiecitozsamosc.pl/rodzina-barankow-zamordowana-za-pomoc-zydom>; Namysło and Berendt, *Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej*, 352–53.

<sup>2236</sup> Alexander and Amelia Rosłan, RD.

Jewish religious law imposes no duty to risk one's own life in order to save the life of another.<sup>2237</sup> In fact, Jewish teaching fails anywhere to condone the sacrifice of one's own life.<sup>2238</sup> The Torah instructs that a person is obliged to help, and to share, but noting in the Torah supports endangering one's own life. Moreover, the Talmud looks askance on Jews who go out of their way to help non-Jews.<sup>2239</sup>

Honest Jewish survivors who were rescued by Poles have admitted that might have been reluctant or unwilling to rescue Poles under similar circumstances, if the roles were reversed. Some have said emphatically that they would not have undertaken such a risk. (A number of such testimonies can be found the final appendix.)

While Polish Catholic bishops encouraged and approved of rescue activities by the clergy, they did not compel their clergy to perform such deeds of heroism. They understood perfectly well that they had no moral authority to issue such commands.

It is in this light that we must view the actions of Poles who wondered, and often enquired of their priests, whether they should be risking their own lives and those of their family members to rescue a Jew. It is in this light also that we must view a conspicuous tenet of the dominant Holocaust narrative, namely, "too few" Poles risked their lives to save Jews. On January 27, 2020—at ceremonies commemorating the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz—Israeli President Reuven Rivlin delivered precisely that reproach, while neglecting to mention that

<sup>2237</sup> Aaron Kirschenbaum, "The Bystander's Duty to Rescue in Jewish Law," *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 8 (1980): 204–26: "In Judaism, the bystander's duty to come to the rescue of his fellow man who is in peril is religious, ethical and legal. A citizen is expected to engage in the act of rescue both personally and with his financial resources. He is required, however, neither to give his life nor to place his life in substantial jeopardy to save his fellow." According to the Babylonian Talmud, there is no duty to self-risk for the sake of saving another person's life. See Yechiel Michael Barilan, *Jewish Bioethics: Rabbinic Law and Theology in Their Social and Historical Contexts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 120. For a fuller—but far from definitive—discussion, see Melech Westreich, "One Life for Another Life in the Holocaust: A Singularity for Jewish Law?," *Theoretical Inquiries in Law*, vol. 1, no. 2 (2000): 341–67. The sources in these publications address the obligations of Jews with respect to other Jews, and not to non-Jews.

<sup>2238</sup> This comment was made by Dr. David Novak of the Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto in March 2013, at a screening of *The Labyrinth: The Testimony of Marian Kolodziej*, an award-winning film by Ron Schmidt, SJ. *The Labyrinth* is widely regarded as one of the most compelling and evocative artistic portrayals of the fate of prisoners in Auschwitz. See Internet: <https://thelabyrinthdocumentary.com>.

<sup>2239</sup> In her study *Jews, Gentiles, and Other Animals: The Talmud After the Humanities* (Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), Rabbi Mira Beth Wasserman points out at p. 132 that, "According to the baraita [*Avodah Zarah* 26a-b] Gentiles and Jewish shepherds (generally reputed to be thieves) are two groups whom a Jew need not trouble himself to save from a pit, while *minim* [heretics] along with informers and apostates are not only not to be raised from the pit, they may actually be cast into it." See also p. 260. The baraita also appears in b. *Sanhedrin* 57a (p. 271).

Poles, uniquely in all of German-occupied Europe, faced a death penalty for any degree of assistance rendered to a Jew. Nor did he acknowledge the hundreds of Poles who paid the ultimate price for their altruism.

Yet despite the harshness and extent of German terror in occupied Poland, it is an indisputable fact that no other people made more extraordinary efforts or greater sacrifices on behalf of Jews in the Holocaust than did countless members of the Polish nation. All told, at least one thousand Polish women, men and children—often entire families, and sometimes even whole communities—were tortured to death, summarily executed, or burned alive for coming to the assistance to Jews. Hundreds more were imprisoned and sent to concentration camps.<sup>2240</sup> And no such list of victims, which includes dozens of members of the Catholic clergy, will ever be complete; it is all but certain that cases occurred which will never come to light.

While the absolute number of priests and other religious who were lost in this genocide may appear small in relation to the much larger number of total victims, it must be remembered that this group constituted a very small, spiritual elite; hence, their losses were in fact relatively large, while as a group their response to this immense collective ordeal was a genuine beacon of Christian love in those dreadful times.

It is necessary at some point to step back and make a broad comparison. There was no mandated death penalty for helping Jews in western Europe, and capital punishment was rarely imposed for helping Jews in eastern Europe outside of the German-occupied Polish territories.

<sup>2240</sup> See the following publications on this topic: Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers*, 184–85; Zajęczkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*; Bielawski, *Zbrodnie na Polakach dokonane przez hitlerowców za pomoc udzielaną Żydom*; Maria Pilarska, ed., *Those Who Helped: Polish Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (Warsaw: The Main Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against the Polish Nation–The Institute of National Memory and The Polish Society For the Righteous Among Nations, Part 1 (1993), Part 2 (1996), and Part 3 (1997)). A portion of the last of the above publications is reproduced in Appendix B of Richard C. Lukas, *The Forgotten Holocaust: The Poles Under German Occupation, 1939–1944*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Hippocrene, 1997), and an extensive list of Polish victims also appears in Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust*, 119–23. See also Poray, *Those Who Risked Their Lives*, posted online as *Polish Righteous: Those Who Risked Their Lives*, Internet: <https://www.savingjews.org>. For more recent efforts to document the extent of this phenomenon by Poland's Institute of National Remembrance, see Namysło and Berendt, *Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej*, Internet: <https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/dla-mediow/komunikaty/9879,Index-Polakow-zamordowanych-i-represjonowanych-przez-hitlerowcow-za-pomoc-Zydom-.html>; Grądzka-Rejak and Namysło, *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, vol. 1. The latter publication, which is the first volume of a series of such publications, chronicles the fate of 654 persons subjected to repressions for helping Jews.

Western Europeans under German occupation ran almost no risk of losing their lives for giving aid to persecuted Jews. Public executions of individuals caught helping Jews were unheard of. On very rare occasions, rescuers were deported to concentration camps. In most cases, however, if any punishment was meted out, it was a fine or a short term of incarceration.

Helping Jews was never outlawed in Denmark, and virtually no Dane ever faced punishment on that account. Contrary to the way a certain well-known myth has been spun, Danish rescuers did not risk their lives to save Jews, neither did they risk being deported to a German concentration camp. According to a Danish historian, not one of the 600–700 illegal transports carrying Jewish refugees to Sweden was seized by German police at sea. Any would-be rescuers the Gestapo caught after that exodus were handed over to the Danish police, who treated them with leniency.<sup>2241</sup>

Nor was helping Jews outlawed in Italy.<sup>2242</sup> Likewise, there were no specific ordinances or legislation against the hiding of Jews in France. Since arbitrary acts carried out by the Germans beyond legislative norms for such activities were rare, the risk of punishment in these reaches of German-occupied Europe was negligible. However, laws of general application could be invoked to prosecute those involved in activities such as providing or using false papers, or illegally crossing the demarcation line. In practice, those caught helping Jews could face three months' internment.<sup>2243</sup>

In the Netherlands, where conditions were the harshest of all in western Europe, short-term (up to six- months') "protective custody" was the standard punishment for sheltering Jews. Often, however, those who were caught, even repeatedly, went free. Only the most serious offenders wound up in a concentration camp.<sup>2244</sup>

In Belgium, on June 1, 1942, the local population was warned by decree against sheltering Jews, with "imprisonment and a fine" as the specified consequences.<sup>2245</sup> While many non-Jewish Dutch were imprisoned for helping Jews, few Belgians were.

In Germany proper, no death penalty was ever instituted for helping Jews. According to a German historian, "German law did not specifically prohibit helping Jews. ... In cases of violation, the non-Jewish German party was threatened with protective custody or three months in a concentration camp."<sup>2246</sup> Likewise,

<sup>2241</sup> Sofie Lene Bak, "Between Tradition and New Departure: The Dilemmas of Collaboration in Denmark," in Roni Stauber, ed., *Collaboration with the Nazis: Public Discourse After the Holocaust* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 110–24, at p. 116; Sofie Lene Bak, "From Rescue to Escape in 1943: On a Path to De-victimizing Danish Jews," in Marie Louise Seeberg, Irene Levin, and Claudia Lenz, eds., *The Holocaust as Active Memory: The Past in the Present* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), 139–52, at p. 143.

<sup>2242</sup> Silvano Longhi, *Die Juden und der Widerstand gegen den Faschismus in Italien (1943–1945)* (Berlin and Münster: Lit, 2010), 97.

<sup>2243</sup> Moore, *Survivors*, 121.

<sup>2244</sup> Marnix Croes, "The Holocaust in the Netherlands and the Rate of Jewish Survival," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 20, no. 3 (Winter 2006): 474–99.

<sup>2245</sup> Paldiel, *Churches and the Holocaust*, 131–32.

<sup>2246</sup> Beate Kosmala, "Facing Deportation in Germany, 1941–1945: Jewish and Non-Jewish Responses," in Beate Kosmala and Feliks Tych, eds., *Facing the Nazi Genocide: Non-Jews*

in Austria (incorporated into the Third Reich) no specific penalty was established under law for concealing Jews. Yet rescue efforts there, as in Germany proper, were exceedingly rare.<sup>2247</sup>

The death penalty was on the books in several German conquests such as Serbia,<sup>2248</sup> Greece,<sup>2249</sup> Norway,<sup>2250</sup> and the Czech Protectorate<sup>2251</sup>—though not specifically for helping Jews (except in Serbia), but for other crimes, like using illegal documents and illegal border crossing (regardless of who was being helped). But the death penalty in such cases was rarely enforced.

Several Norwegian resistance fighters were executed for helping Jews escape to Sweden, and a number of persons were imprisoned.<sup>2252</sup> Several dozen individuals in the Czech Protectorate engaged in concealing Jews were charged by Nazi

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*and Jews in Europe* (Berlin: Metropol, 2004), 35. According to another source, although there was no specific crime in Germany for hiding Jews, one could be punished for the broader crime of *Judenbegünstigung* (privileged treatment of Jews). The punishment for helping Jews varied considerably, ranging from incarceration in a concentration camp, to shorter prison sentences, to fines, to sometimes nothing at all. See Richard J. Lutjens, Jr., *Submerged on the Surface: The Not-So-Hidden Jews of Nazi Berlin, 1941–1945* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2019), 19, 69.

<sup>2247</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 8, xxix, liii.

<sup>2248</sup> The military commander in Serbia issued an order on December 22, 1941 imposing the death penalty for sheltering or hiding Jews or for accepting or buying from them objects of value. Little is known about the enforcement of this decree. See Raphaël Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944; Clark, New Jersey: The Law Book Exchange, 2005), 77, 250, 601.

<sup>2249</sup> Jason Chandrinou and Anna Maria Droumpouki, “The German Occupation and the Holocaust in Greece: A Survey,” in Giorgos Antoniou and A. Dirk Moses, eds., *The Holocaust in Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 15–35, at p. 27. Little is known about this decree and its enforcement.

<sup>2250</sup> The Norwegian decree penalized entering or leaving Norway without permission. It did not mention Jews specifically. See Samuel Abrahamsen, *Norway’s Response to the Holocaust* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1991), 20.

<sup>2251</sup> After the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, on Adolf Hitler’s orders Kurt Daluege issued a decree on July 3, 1942, directed primarily against the anti-German underground, to punish by death those who harboured elements hostile to the Reich. Those sentenced by Special Courts in Prague and Brno were cited in the press and over the radio. More than a dozen of those executed in Prague’s Pankrác prison, described as destructive elements (*Volkschädlinge*), were killed for helping Jews and thus “sabotaging the German order for the solution of the Jewish question.” See Livia Rothkirchen, “The Protectorate Government and the ‘Jewish Question’ 1939–1941,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 27 (1999): 331–62. According to an earlier article, the ordinance established “the death penalty for anyone aiding or failing to report persons engaged in activities hostile to the Reich, including sheltering Jews.” See Livia Rothkirchen, “Czech Attitudes towards the Jews during the Nazi Regime,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 13 (1979): 287–320, at p. 314.

<sup>2252</sup> Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous*, 365–66.

special courts and sentenced to death.<sup>2253</sup> Occasionally, rescuers were put to death summarily in Lithuania (approximately a dozen), Latvia, and in German-occupied lands of the Soviet Union.<sup>2254</sup>

Such laxity was virtually unheard of in occupied Poland, where the death penalty was meted out with utmost rigour.

The fact that Poles faced death at the hands of the German invaders for helping Jews is virtually ignored, or at best downplayed, by many historians. When acknowledged by them at all, it is usually done cursorily or halfheartedly. To their great shame, the Jewish community—and in particular Yad Vashem—has done nothing to identify and commemorate these Polish martyrs and their supreme sacrifice—one that merits profound respect and humility.

Some Holocaust historians who denigrate Polish rescue efforts, like Lucy Dawidowicz, have attempted to argue that, essentially, there was no difference in the risks that Poles and Western Europeans—she mentions the Dutch specifically—faced for helping Jews.<sup>2255</sup> But Dawidowicz’s own preferred sources refute this claim. For example, Holocaust historian Raul Hilberg described the situation that prevailed in the Netherlands as follows: “If caught, they did not have to fear an automatic death penalty. Thousands were arrested for hiding Jews or Jewish belongings, but it was German policy to detain such people only for a relatively short time in a camp within the country, and in serious cases to confiscate their property.”<sup>2256</sup>

By contrast, under German law in occupied Poland, people were subject to the death penalty not only for sheltering or helping Jews in any way, but also for neglecting to report to the authorities on Jews in hiding that they knew about. (The relevant German ordinances were set out earlier.)

American historian Jan Tomasz Gross argues that the Poles’ fear of punishment for helping Jews was exaggerated. He points out that the number of Poles put to death for helping Jews numbered *only* in the hundreds, though it actually ran higher, and that this punishment was not meted out in every case. Thus latching on to the death penalty is but a flimsy alibi. In Gross’s opinion, “hundreds of thousands” of Jews could easily have been saved had Poles wanted to help. Yet, at the same time,

<sup>2253</sup> Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 218–27, 303–4. For a list of persons executed on charges of harbouring Jews, see *Heroes and Victims* (London: Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Information Service, 1945).

<sup>2254</sup> Alfonsas Eidintas, *Jews, Lithuanians and the Holocaust* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2003), 326–27 (Lithuania); Mikrut, *Perseguitati per la fede*, 530 (Latvia); Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press; Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2009), 428, 438. See also Zajaczkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, 111–18, 284–86, 294, 295, for some other examples.

<sup>2255</sup> Lucy C. Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the Historians* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981), 166.

<sup>2256</sup> Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933–1945* (New York: Aaron Asher Books/Harper Collins, 1992), 210–11.

he is unconcerned with the fact that hiding more Jews would have doubtless resulted in considerably more loss of Polish lives.<sup>2257</sup> Apparently, for some historians, Polish lives are expendable.

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<sup>2257</sup> Gross, *Fear*, 179.



## Rescue Efforts of Christian Poles

There appears to be little if any correlation—however that might be measured—between the degree to which members of a host population were willing to put themselves on the line for persecuted Jews and the survival rate of Jews in that German-occupied country. Survival often came about through means other than being passively taken in, concealed and provided for by one or more rescuers.

Forced emigration of Jews from Germany and Austria continued until 1941, allowing tens of thousands to find refuge in safer parts of the world. From 1939 to 1941, an impressive 26,000 Jews left the Czech Protectorate legally.<sup>2258</sup> Many Jews from other countries were also able to flee in time.

Among the large Jewish population of Poland's eastern borderlands which were seized by the Soviet Union in 1939, tens of thousands were "saved" by being deported to the Gulag, or escaping into the Soviet interior ahead of the advancing German armies.

Once the Germans arrived in a particular country, flight was more problematic, though not impossible, especially if there was a safe haven nearby. Tens of thousands of Jews were smuggled out of danger zones, normally for considerable payment. However, countries of destination, like neutral Switzerland, often turned Jews away.

In Germany itself, certain categories of Jews were protected from German genocidal measures.<sup>2259</sup> A significant group of German citizens, defined as "mixed race" (*Mischlinge*)—as well as Jews in mixed marriages—could escape most of the Nazi regime's anti-Semitic policies, provided they and their children did not practice the Jewish faith.<sup>2260</sup> Some 4,700 Jews, married to non-Jews, lived legally in Berlin

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<sup>2258</sup> Legal emigration from the Czech Protectorate counted 19,016 in 1939, 6,176 in 1940, 535 in 1941, and 93 the following two years. Jews also fled the Protectorate illegally, above all to Poland and, after Poland was occupied, to Slovakia. It is estimated that a total of 30,000 Jews fled the Protectorate in all. See Rothkirchen, "The Protectorate Government and the 'Jewish Question' 1939–1941," *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 27 (1999): 331–62.

<sup>2259</sup> Christian Gerlach, *The Extermination of the European Jews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 103, 111–13, 118, 165, 168, 236, 384, 388, 389, 409–10, 448.

<sup>2260</sup> Evans, *The Third Reich at War, 1939–1945*, 70–71, 251, 272–73.

throughout the war.<sup>2261</sup> A similar situation prevailed in other German-occupied countries, though not in occupied Poland. For example, several thousand half-Jews and quarter-Jews in the Netherlands were exempt from deportation.

Compensating helpers was a widespread practice, as the case of Denmark (described below) amply illustrates. A substantial portion of the rescue activities in France and Belgium was self help, in other words, the Jews themselves had to organize and absorb the costs of the rescue services.<sup>2262</sup>

Unfortunately, myth-building has been a staple of how countries are perceived in the Holocaust spectrum, to the detriment of those populations that allegedly did not live up to these high standards. Denmark has traditionally been held out as a country where virtually the entire population rushed to protect its Jews in defiance of harsh German measures against such activities.

In fact, the rescue was orchestrated by the German authorities (*not* in defiance of them), largely financed by the Jews themselves, and carried out by well-compensated Danish fishermen without no significant risk to their safety or anyone else's. Because of German collusion, neither rescuers nor the Jewish fugitives were threatened with any meaningful retribution.

Danish Jews were transferred to Sweden under a special agreement the Germans made with that country. Danish fishermen were mobilized by the underground, who had been given a signal by the German authorities to start transporting Jews by boat to Sweden. Virtually no German boats were actively policing the strait between Denmark and Sweden during October 1943. Consequently, not a single craft taking Jewish refugees to Sweden was interfered.<sup>2263</sup>

<sup>2261</sup> Richard N. Lutjens, Jr., "Jews in Hiding in Nazi Berlin, 1941–1945: A Demographic Survey," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 31, no. 2 (August 2017): 268–97.

<sup>2262</sup> Bob Moore, "Integrating Self-Help into the History of Jewish Survival in Western Europe," in Goda, *Jewish Histories of the Holocaust*, 193–208, at pp. 196–97.

<sup>2263</sup> Until the fall of 1943, Danish Jews were unmolested. SS general Dr. Werner Best, the German who ran Denmark, gave a free hand to Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, maritime attaché at the German embassy in Copenhagen, to do whatever was necessary to derail the planned deportation of Jews. Duckwitz flew to Sweden, where he secretly met with President Per Albin Hansson. The Swedish president assured him that should the operation against the Danish Jews take place, Sweden would in principle be ready to admit them.

When the round-up of Danish Jews was about to begin, Duckwitz made his way back to Sweden to alert the Swedish government to be ready to admit them. The local German naval command warned the Danish underground of the impending fate of the Jews, disabled the German harbour patrol, and turned a blind eye to the rescue operation. The Jews transported to Sweden by Danish boatmen were allowed entry. Since the rescue operation took place with the connivance of the local German naval command, there were no casualties among either Jews or boatmen. See Paldiel, *The Righteous Among the Nations*, 105–9; Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 3rd ed., vol. 2 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 589–99.

This was not charity work; the fishermen were handsomely rewarded. As one authority has stated, “it can no longer be ignored that money was the hinge on which the whole escape apparatus turned.” Money was needed to organize the fishermen and their boats and to ensure that there would be enough of them. In keeping with the law of supply and demand, some Danish fishermen made a killing off of the Jews’ predicament. Payments ranged from one to fifty thousand kroner per person, with ten thousand kroner for a family of four being about average.

These were windfall earnings. The average monthly wage for a skilled worker in 1943 was 414 kroner. But it has been argued—contrary to the hard evidence of actual risk—that exorbitant rates were fair and justified, considering the possibility of arrest, and that exposing the fishermen’s boats to harm would put their livelihood and families’ well-being in jeopardy.<sup>2264</sup>

Despite this, a whole mythos of heroism envelops the Danish rescue operation.

The purpose of this discussion is not to denigrate the Danish—or any other—rescue effort, but to put them in their proper perspective. The Danish rescue is universally extolled without reference to the minimal risk it entailed for the rescuers and the hefty compensation they took.<sup>2265</sup> (Holocaust historians usually suppress information about these matters, though not about demands for payment made by some impoverished Polish rescuers.)

To the contrary, and far too often, the Polish rescue effort is deprecated without reference to the death penalty the Germans imposed on Poles for providing any form of assistance to Jews and the fact that hundreds of Poles paid with their lives for helping Jews.<sup>2266</sup>

Pointedly, a Danish authority rejects those who, using Denmark as a benchmark, would hold other European nations in opprobrium for not saving their Jews:

<sup>2264</sup> Bak, *Nothing to Speak of*; Sofie Lene Bak, “From Rescue to Escape in 1943: On a Path to De-victimizing Danish Jews,” in Seeberg, Levin, and Lenz, *The Holocaust as Active Memory*, 139–52.

According to another source, during initial stages of the rescue operation, only well-to-do Danish Jews could afford the short passage to Sweden. Private boatmen set their own rates, prohibitive for many, as they ranged from 1,000 to 10,000 kroner per person (\$160 to \$1600 U.S., in the currency of that period). Later, when organized Danish rescue groups stepped in to coordinate the flight and to collect funds, the average price per person fell to 2,000, and eventually 500 kroner. The total cost of the rescue operation was about 12 million kroner, of which the Jews who benefited paid about 7 million, including a 750,000 kroner loan which they had to repay after the war. See Yahil, *The Rescue of Danish Jewry*, 261–65, 269.

<sup>2265</sup> Peter Hayes, *Why?: Explaining the Holocaust* (New York and London: Norton, 2017), 237–38; Rees, *The Holocaust*, 338–41.

<sup>2266</sup> See, e.g., Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2009), 64, 390–91. At the same time, Evans downplays German guilt. *Ibid.*, 555, 560.

The history of the Holocaust tells a different story, and the terms of occupation, local conditions, and much else differed radically from place to place and over time, making the situation unique in each case. The special Danish example cannot be used to reproach others who experienced the German occupation under far worse conditions than Denmark.<sup>2267</sup>

Similarly, in his comparative study of rescue in Western Europe, historian Bob Moore concluded: “The circumstances pertaining in Denmark in October 1943 were very different from those elsewhere in Western Europe fifteen months earlier when the deportations had begun, and comparisons using the Danes as an example to castigate the behaviour of bystanders in other countries cannot really be sustained.”<sup>2268</sup>

Columbia University historian István Deák is equally blunt:

The penalty for assisting or even trading with a Jew in German-occupied Poland was death, a fact that makes all comparisons between wartime Polish-Jewish relations and, say, Danish-Jewish relations blatantly unfair. Yet such comparisons are made again and again in Western histories—and virtually always to the detriment of the Poles, with scarce notice taken of the 50,000 to 100,000 Jews said to have been saved by the efforts of Poles to hide or otherwise help them ... one must not ignore the crucial differences between wartime conditions in Eastern and Western Europe.

No issue in Holocaust literature is more burdened by misunderstanding, mendacity, and sheer racial prejudice than that of Polish-Jewish relations during World War II.<sup>2269</sup>

The Polish lands experienced the longest and harshest of all German occupations; hence, any Jews trapped there would have faced long odds regardless of whatever other factors may have been at work. The existence of a national government (even a collaborationist one), or the lack of one, did make a big difference in survival rates. Poland ceased to exist as a country; what was not incorporated directly into the Reich, became a police state run by the Germans. No semblance of a national government existed. Thus Jews were bereft of even this nominal protection.<sup>2270</sup>

According to historian Laurence Rees,

it is a serious mistake to assume that the amount of pre-existing anti-Semitism in any country is a guide to the level of subsequent Jewish suffering under the Nazis. Other factors, such as the type of Nazi governance, the continuing presence of a functioning system of administration and the degree to which the Nazis desired to undertake anti-Semitic persecution within that specific territory all played an important role.<sup>2271</sup>

This was particularly evident in the case of Denmark, where the Germans orchestrated the exodus of the country’s Jews to Sweden. In occupied Poland, on the contrary, the Germans persecuted Jews relentlessly from day one until the bitter end, and punished ruthlessly anyone who dared to help Jews in any way.

<sup>2267</sup> Bo Lidegaard, *Countrymen* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 348.

<sup>2268</sup> Moore, *Survivors*, 97.

<sup>2269</sup> István Deák, “Memories of Hell,” *The New York Review of Books*, June 26, 1997.

<sup>2270</sup> Gerlach, *The Extermination of the European Jews*, 386.

<sup>2271</sup> Rees, *The Holocaust*, 186.

Widespread poverty and poor living conditions also impacted the capacity of locals to shelter and feed destitute, fugitive Jews. Poland entered the war as one of the poorest countries in Europe, and conditions there deteriorated greatly under German rule. In Warsaw, 75 per cent of all abodes consisted of just one room. (A large part of the city was destroyed as a result of German bombing in September 1939.) In the countryside, half of the houses had but one room, usually with an earthen floor, no running water or electricity, and an average occupancy of five people per room. (While almost 70 per cent of abodes in German-Poland consisted of one or two rooms, in Germany itself, 80 per cent of abodes had three or four rooms.)<sup>2272</sup>

Affluent Denmark experienced a tranquil occupation, with extremely few civilian losses—far fewer, say, than London, which the Germans bombed repeatedly but never occupied. The only occupied country permitted to retain its government, Denmark was Germany’s “model protectorate.” It provided large numbers of recruits to support the German war effort and cooperated to the fullest economically. German soldiers went to Denmark for rest and recreation. British and American airmen shot down over Denmark were routinely handed over by the Danes, at least until the tide of war turned against Germany.<sup>2273</sup>

The Germans interfered very little in its internal affairs, and remarkably, the standard of living there actually improved during the war.<sup>2274</sup> As historian István Deák points out, “in general, Denmark remained serene and peaceful to the end, to the great benefit of the civilian population—and of the German war industry. ... if everybody in German-occupied Europe had behaved the way the Danes did, the war would have lasted much longer.”<sup>2275</sup> As another astute observer has pointed out, there is no telling how the Danes would have responded under an occupation as brutal as that experienced by the Poles.<sup>2276</sup>

While food, funding, false identity documents and a kaleidoscope of favourable circumstances were all essential to survival, long-term clandestine shelter was undoubtedly the most demanding and precarious form of rescue. In most coun-

<sup>2272</sup> Józef Kобрzyński, “Materiały I Kongresu Mieszkaniowego,” *Opiekun Społeczny*, no. 2 (1938): 16–18.

<sup>2273</sup> Anders Bjørnqvad, *De fandt en vej: Den allierede overflyvning af Danmark under besættelsen og hjælpen til nedstyrtede britiske og amerikanske flyvere* [*They Found a Way: Allied Flights over Occupied Denmark and Assistance to Downed British and American Airmen*] (Odense: Odense University Press, 1970).

<sup>2274</sup> Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Holocaust: A History* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), 153.

<sup>2275</sup> István Deák, *Europe on Trial: The Story of Collaboration, Resistance, and Retribution During World War II* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2015), 134.

<sup>2276</sup> Laurence Rees, *Auschwitz: A New History* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), 217.

tries, it was exceedingly rare. Historians have even identified a “saturation point” for Jews in hiding.<sup>2277</sup>

In Norway, with a population of three million, only about 40 Jews survived by hiding in this manner. Almost 95 per cent of those who did not manage to flee the country were caught by the Norwegian police and handed over to the German authorities for deportation. Fewer than a hundred Jews survived by hiding inside Denmark, a nation of almost four million people, while at least 130 Jews who remained there after the evacuation to Sweden were betrayed. They were then handed over to the Germans by the Danish police and deported to concentration camps.<sup>2278</sup>

Among a population of some seven million Czechs, “At the end of the war, it is estimated that about 424 persons survived ‘underground’ in Bohemia and Moravia, some hiding with Czech friends and acquaintances, and others living under assumed names or with forged Christian papers.”<sup>2279</sup>

The Poles who put themselves on the line to shelter Jews made up, as in all countries under German control, a small minority. Those who extended help in other ways were far more numerous. Given that all the odds, all the institutions of power, were stacked on the side of the persecutors, there was a certain logic in the strategy of helping Jews to prolong their lives by providing food, identity documents, assisting them to pass as Poles, if possible, rather than actually hiding them (in one’s cramped lodgings) and risking the fatal consequences of their discovery.

Leading Holocaust historians have argued that the most effective form of resistance for the masses of impoverished Jews in ghettos was food smuggling.<sup>2280</sup> Given that the widespread participation of Poles in illegal trade with Jews put their very lives in danger under German rule, surely that activity is no less commendable than the safe-passage removal of Jews to Sweden by Danish boatmen (for substantial payment).

It must also be stressed that, next to the Jews and Roma, ethnic Poles were arguably the most persecuted and certainly among the most impoverished groups under German occupation. The resources they disposed of which might be shared with anyone else were, therefore, extremely limited, precious, and maybe even critical to their own survival.

Yet the hard evidence attests that Poles, both numerically and in proportion to their ranking in size among the nations of Europe, were no less likely to help a Jew in distress than the members of any other ethnic group.

<sup>2277</sup> Gerlach, *The Extermination of the European Jews*, 441.

<sup>2278</sup> Moore, *Survivors*, 81, 96.

<sup>2279</sup> Rothkirchen, “Czech Attitudes towards the Jews during the Nazi Regime,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 13 (1979): 287–320, at p. 314. Of the 119 Czechs recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Gentiles (as of January 1, 2020), 30 (i.e., about one quarter) were citizens of interwar Poland who resided in Volhynia.

<sup>2280</sup> Hayes, *Why?*, 193.

Poles form the single largest national group honoured by Yad Vashem. Of the 27,921 “Righteous Gentiles” officially recognized by Yad Vashem—as of January 1, 2021—7,177, a little more than one fourth, are Polish.<sup>2281</sup> But that is just the tip of the iceberg.

The vast majority of Poles who—through some compassionate act, put their lives at risk, if only for a moment—has never been acknowledged, let alone “recognized,” by Yad Vashem. Most of those altruistic Poles have long since died, often in poverty; many were never contacted or remembered by the people whose lives they had saved.<sup>2282</sup> In some cases, the Jews they saved did not support the rescuers’ request for recognition.<sup>2283</sup>

Polish historians Władysław Bartoszewski and Teresa Preker (Prekerowa)—both of whom were recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Gentiles—have credibly estimated that several hundred thousand Poles were at one time or another involved in administering various forms of assistance to Jews through a variety of means.<sup>2284</sup> According to historian Marcin Urynowicz, the most likely number of Polish rescuers is around 300,000.<sup>2285</sup>

<sup>2281</sup> For a list of Poles awarded by Yad Vashem as of January 1, 2021, see Internet: <https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/pdf-drupal/poland.pdf>. With few exceptions, this list includes only ethnic Poles, as persons from other ethnic groups who rescued Jews on the territory of interwar Poland are listed under various other countries such as Belarus, Lithuania, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia (e.g., Czechs from Volhynia), Germany, and Austria, as the case may be. Additionally, some 200 ethnic Poles are listed under Belarus, Lithuania, Ukraine, Latvia, Germany, Austria (e.g., Danuta Czaplińska Kleisinger, Wanda Semrad), and France, even though in many cases their rescue activities took place on interwar Polish territory. For information about Polish rescuers from countries other than Poland, see Israel Gutman, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust*, vol. 7: *Europe, Part 1, and Other Countries* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2007), 31–32, 70–71, 86–87, 115–16; vol. 8.—Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine; vol. 9 and vol. 10: *Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2010).

<sup>2282</sup> See, e.g., Tammeus and Cukierkorn, *They Were Just People*, 21, 69–70; Stanisława Serafin, “List otwarty do Pana Weissa,” *Przegląd Kolbuszowski*, no. 69 (April 1998) (regarding the recognition of the Kosiorwski family from Kolbuszowa).

<sup>2283</sup> Marcin Urynowicz, “Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej eksterminowanej przez okupanta niemieckiego w okresie drugiej wojny światowej,” in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 262–63; Marcin Urynowicz, “Organized and Individual Assistance of Poles for Jewish People Exterminated by the German Occupants in the Second World War,” in Martyna Grądzka-Rejak and Adam Sitarek, eds., *The Holocaust and Polish-Jewish Relations: Selected Issues* (Warsaw: The Institute of National Remembrance–Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes Against the Polish Nation, 2018), 332.

<sup>2284</sup> Bartoszewski, *The Blood Shed Unites Us*, 222; Lukas, *The Forgotten Holocaust*, 150.

<sup>2285</sup> Marcin Urynowicz, “Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej eksterminowanej przez okupanta niemieckiego w okresie drugiej wojny światowej,” in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 209–79, at pp. 254–56,

Because of its place in the limelight, Yad Vashem's recognition of some 7,200 Poles as "Righteous" stands naturally as an absolute number—and therefore a reliable measure—in the minds of many. This number makes a small impression, however, in its context of the immense suffering and losses at issue here; hence, giving it prominence or authority works implicitly to diminish the public's awareness and recognition of a much more general and broad-based (yet no less real or essential) "righteousness."

Attempts to reduce Polish rescue efforts simply to the 7,177 Poles recognized by Yad Vashem (as of January 1, 2021), therefore, must be dismissed as ill-informed. As Urynowicz has pointed out, only a very small percentage of Poles identified as genuine, critical helpers in Jewish testimonies have been recognized by Yad Vashem.<sup>2286</sup>

One should also bear in mind that, out of approximately 23 million ethnic Poles in 1939, at least two million perished during the war. Some three million ethnic Poles languished in German camps and prisons or were deported to Germany as forced labour. At least 400,000 Poles were deported by the Soviets to the Gulag. Thus, the remaining population was about 18 million, twice that of the Netherlands.

The most comprehensive research findings available on the rescue of Jews in Warsaw were summarized two decades ago by their author, historian Gunnar Paulsson.

In the league of people who are known to have risked their lives to rescue Jews, Poland stands at the very top, accounting for more than a third of all the "Righteous Gentiles." ...

Of the 27,000 Jewish fugitives in Warsaw, 17,000 were still alive 15 months after the destruction of the ghetto, on the eve of the Polish uprising in 1944. Of the 23,500 who were not drawn in by the Hotel Polski scheme, 17,000 survived until then. Of these 17,000, 5,000 died in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, and about 10,500 were still alive at liberation. ...

As it happens, there is an excellent standard of comparison, because it is estimated that in the Netherlands, 20–25,000 Jews went into hiding—about the same number as in Warsaw—of whom 10–15,000 survived—again, about the same number. ... The conclusion, then, is quite startling: leaving aside acts of war and Nazi perfidy, a Jew's chances of survival in hiding were no worse in Warsaw, at any rate, than in the Netherlands. ...

The small number of survivors, therefore, is not a direct result of Polish hostility to the Jews ... The Jews were deported from the ghettos to the death camps, not by Poles, but by German gendarmes, reinforced by Ukrainian and Baltic auxiliaries, and with the enforced co-operation of the ghetto police. Neither the Polish police nor any group of Polish civilians was involved in the deportations to any significant degree, nor did they staff the death camps. Nor did the fate of the Jews who were taken to their deaths depend to any significant degree on the attitudes and actions of a people from whom they were isolated by brick walls and barbed wire. ...

The 27,000 Jews in hiding in Warsaw relied on about 50–60,000 people who provided hiding-places and another 20–30,000 who provided other forms of help; on the other hand, black-

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278; Marcin Urynowicz, "Organized and Individual Assistance of Poles for Jewish People Exterminated by the German Occupants in the Second World War," in Grądzka-Rejak and Sitarek, *The Holocaust and Polish-Jewish Relations*, 245–58, at pp. 319–21, 357.

<sup>2286</sup> Marcin Urynowicz, "Organized and Individual Assistance of Poles for Jewish People Exterminated by the German Occupants in the Second World War," in Grądzka-Rejak and Sitarek, *The Holocaust and Polish-Jewish Relations*, 245–58, at pp. 319–21, 357.

mailers, police agents, and other actively anti-Jewish elements numbered perhaps 2–3,000, each striking at two or three victims a month. In other words, helpers outnumbered hunters by about 20 or 30 to one. The active helpers of Jews thus made up seven to nine per cent of the population of Warsaw; the Jews themselves, 2.7 per cent; the hunters, perhaps 0.3 per cent; and the whole network—Jews, helpers and hunters—constituted a secret city of at least 100,000: one tenth of the people of Warsaw; more than twice as many as the 40,000 members of the vaunted Polish military underground, the AK [Armia Krajowa or Home Army]. ...

How many people in Poland rescued Jews? Of those that meet Yad Vashem's criteria—perhaps 100,000. Of those that offered minor forms of help—perhaps two or three times as many. Of those who were passively protective—undoubtedly the majority of the population. All these acts, great and small, were necessary to rescue Jews in Poland.<sup>2287</sup>

A further study by the same author is even more emphatic.

For the sake of comparison, the case of the Netherlands might be examined. There, 20,000–25,000 Jews are estimated to have gone into hiding, mainly in Amsterdam, of whom 10,000–15,000 survived the war. The overall survival rate in Holland was thus 40–60 percent, and in Warsaw, after levelling the playing field, notionally 55–75 percent. Thus the attrition rate among Jews in hiding in Warsaw was relatively low, contrary to expectation and contemporary perceptions. The main obstacles to Jewish survival in Warsaw are seen to have been the Hotel Polski trap and the 1944 uprising and its aftermath, rather than the possibility of discovery or betrayal.

Despite frequent house searches and the prevailing Nazi terror in Warsaw (conditions absent in the Netherlands), and despite extortionists, blackmailers, and antisemitic traditions (much less widespread in the Netherlands), the chance that a Jew in hiding would be betrayed seems to have been lower in Warsaw than in the Netherlands.

... it is clear that Warsaw was the most important centre of rescue activity, certainly in Poland and probably in the whole of occupied Europe. The city accounted for perhaps a quarter of all Jews in hiding in Poland ... The 27,000 Jews in hiding there also constituted undoubtedly the largest group of its kind in Europe ...<sup>2288</sup>

Most Jews who survived the German occupation in hiding received assistance of various kinds from at least several and often an even larger number of sympathetic Poles. Most of that help was short term, and it came almost routinely at the hands of total strangers. That type of anonymous assistance is least likely to be acknowledged formally, since the benefactors are rarely known by name, and no effort has been made by Holocaust commemoration and research institutions

<sup>2287</sup> Gunnar S. Paulsson, "The Rescue of Jews by Non-Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland," *The Journal of Holocaust Education*, vol. 7, nos. 1–2 (Summer–Autumn 1998): 19–44.

<sup>2288</sup> Gunnar S. Paulsson, "The Demography of Jews in Hiding in Warsaw, 1943–1945," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 13 (2000): 78–103, at pp. 96, 99.

Other notable studies by Gunnar S. Paulsson are: "Evading the Holocaust: The Unexplored Continent of Holocaust Historiography," in John K. Roth and Elisabeth Maxwell, eds., *Remembering for the Future: The Holocaust in an Age of Genocide*, vol. 1 (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2001), 302–18; "Ringelblum Revisited: Polish-Jewish Relations in Occupied Warsaw, 1940–1945," in Joshua D. Zimmerman, ed., *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews During the Holocaust and Its Aftermath* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 173–92; *Secret City: The Hidden Jews of Warsaw, 1940–1945* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002).

to identify them. Yet this type of help was just as critical and just as necessary for survival as that which came from old and trusted friends. The following survivors attest to their experiences in this regard:

- Leonia Jabłonka (Maria Leonia Jabłonkówna), a stage director and theatre critic, credited some fifty Poles with saving her life.<sup>2289</sup> She wrote: “I am one of those persons who has a particular reason for making a declaration because my survival and health during the ‘days of contempt’ I owe not only to a single individual from among my closest friends but to a whole phalanx representing the most diverse social circles—people, often complete strangers, who, by exposing their own lives rendered me help and offered refuge during the entire occupation. Many of them remained anonymous; their behaviour was not guided by any personal friendliness to me—they were quite unknown to me—or even less by any prospects of return in the future. They followed the impulses of their heart and the dictate of their consciences in the name of fraternal solidarity, inflexible resistance to force and barbarity, in the name of mankind. The help I had was so general, it was manifested so invariably through every stage of the growing terror, that it must be acknowledged as a reflection of the general attitude of the entire Polish society.”<sup>2290</sup>
- In an open letter to B’nai B’rith, Joseph F. Kutrzeba wrote: “This may still be a very conservative view, for it is generally ascertained that it was impossible for anyone to singly save a Jew during World War II in Poland; rather, it had taken the cooperation of a number of persons to achieve this—Poland being the only country in Nazi-occupied Europe where a death penalty was mandated for assisting a Jew in any way. In my own case, it had taken the cooperation of nine persons to save my life, not including some 20 who’d aided me along the way. Only one (Rev. Stanisław Falkowski) has been recognized by Yad Vashem.”<sup>2291</sup>
- Hanna Krall, a well-known journalist and author, counted 45 Poles who risked their lives to rescue her.<sup>2292</sup> Franciszka Tusk-Scheinwechsler reported a similar number of Polish benefactors.<sup>2293</sup>
- Rose Gelbart (née Grosman), who passed through at least a dozen different hiding places, recalled, “There were so many places and so many people who did know I was Jewish but who didn’t give me away. It had to be at least fifty, even more than fifty.”<sup>2294</sup>

<sup>2289</sup> “Świadectwo prawdy,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* [Kraków], September 1, 1946, as cited in Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 293–94.

<sup>2290</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 255.

<sup>2291</sup> Letter dated February 7, 1996 (in the author’s possession).

<sup>2292</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 410–13. Two of her rescuers, Maria Ostrowska-Ruszczyńska and Tadeusz Stepniewski, were honoured by Yad Vashem.

<sup>2293</sup> Franciszka Tusk-Scheinwechsler, “The Price of a Single Life,” in Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 309–17. The following Poles were honoured by Yad Vashem: Janina Ojrzanowska, Maria Ojrzanowska, Klementyna Porowska, and Maria Winnicka.

<sup>2294</sup> Tammeus and Cukierkorn, *They Were Just People*, 79. Yad Vashem recognized Hanna Janczak-Żak and Adam Żak.

- Anna Forkasiewicz identified three Polish families (consisting of 11 people), three individual Poles, four priests, and a boarding school run by nuns.<sup>2295</sup>
- After her escape from the ghetto in Łosice, Stella Zylbersztajn took shelter in several villages in the vicinity of Łosice. In total, 25 Polish families helped her survive the war.<sup>2296</sup>
- Sonia and Abram Hurman, who moved about in the area southwest of Łuków, received help from dozens of Poles.<sup>2297</sup>
- Regina Kempieńska was sheltered by and received other forms of help from 40 individuals and families in and near her native village of Wojakowa, near Czchów.<sup>2298</sup>
- Halina Robinson, born Lina Trachtenberg, estimates that, over a two-year period, more than 100 persons helped her to hide in 13 separate locations.<sup>2299</sup>
- Henryk Szaniawski (Chaim Środa) mentions by name 15 individuals and families who helped him survive, he adds that there were many other Polish helpers whose names he cannot remember.<sup>2300</sup>
- One Jewish woman had to change hiding places 25 times, another woman 17 times.<sup>2301</sup> The renowned immunologist Ludwik Hirszfild moved eleven times.<sup>2302</sup>
- When asked, “What help did the residents of Warsaw provide to people of Jewish origin who hid?” Władysław Szpilman replied, “A great deal. Poland is not an anti-Semitic country. Those who state the opposite don’t speak the truth and perform a bad service that is hostile to Poland. Let us remember that for taking part in rescue activities on behalf of Jews one was threatened with death. Not everyone

<sup>2295</sup> See her testimony in Chciuk, *Saving Jews in War-Torn Poland 1939–1945*, 26–27.

<sup>2296</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 287–96; Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 685–92; Zylbersztajn, *A gdyby to było Wasze dziecko?*. Remarkably, in this case, Yad Vashem recognized 26 rescuers at the insistence of the rescued person: Kazimierz and Anna Gałęcki, Józef Izdebski, Wacława Jezierska, Aniela Kalicka, Helena Kaźmierczyk-Gruszka, Zygmunt and Halina Ługowski, Stanisław and Janina Mróz, Marian and Lucyna Piechowicz, Władysława Piotrowska, Wacław and Anna Radzikowski, Ezechiel and Irena Romaniuk, Jan and Józefa Ułasiuk, Franciszek and Rozalia Wielogórski, Józef and Józefa Zbucki, Andrzej, Józefa and Stanisław Zdanowski.

<sup>2297</sup> Abram and Sonia Hurman, as told to Halina Birenbaum, *Pod osłoną nocy: Wspomnienia z lat 1939–1945* (Kraków and Oświęcim: Fundacja Instytut Studiów Strategicznych and Państwowe Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau w Oświęcimiu, 2007). Yad Vashem recognized the following rescuers: Marianna Banasik, Jan and Józefa Kowalczyk, Stanisława Piątek, and Kazimiera Przybyłowicz.

<sup>2298</sup> Testimony of Regina Kempieńska, JHI, record group 301, no. 3733; Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień...*, 59–62. Yad Vashem recognized Franciszek, Józef, Maria and Stanisław Jarosz, and Anna Sokołowska.

<sup>2299</sup> Halina Robinson, “Survivor,” in Schafer, *The Words to Remember It*, 291–304, at p. 298. See also Robinson’s memoir, *A Cork on the Waves*. Yad Vashem recognized Meta Kemblińska, and Zygmunt and Maria Truchanowicz.

<sup>2300</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 390–93. See also the testimony of Henryk Szaniawski, JHI, record group 301, no. 5482.

<sup>2301</sup> Nathan Gross, “Unlucky Clara,” *Yad Vashem Bulletin*, nos. 10–11 (1956): 34; Melchior, *Zagłada a tożsamość*, 129.

<sup>2302</sup> Hirszfild, *Ludwik Hirszfild*.

could muster up the strength to run this risk. Not everyone is born a hero. At least thirty Poles were engaged in rescuing me. At least thirty, at the risk of their lives.”<sup>2303</sup>

- Bernard Traub, his wife, Helena, and their daughter, Krystyna, were helped by numerous Poles in and around Proszowice, a small town outside Kraków, where Bernard was known as Władysław Józef Kulpa.<sup>2304</sup>
- After fleeing from the Kraków ghetto in December 1942, Sara Gross, her daughter, Klara, and her sons, Natan and Jerzy (Yoram), hid for four months, together or separately, in the homes of Polish acquaintances in Kraków. Afterwards, they moved to Warsaw, where they survived the war with the help of many Poles. All told, they stayed in 72 hiding places. Of their many rescuers, Yad Vashem recognized just four: Janina Kapias, Franciszek Turek (who also protected his Jewish-born wife, Maria Grünwald), Maria Kukulska, and her daughter, Anna Krzyżowska.<sup>2305</sup>

Of the approximately 700 Poles (alluded to in the list above) who came to the assistance of these 23 Jews specifically, the great majority remain nameless. About fifty of these Polish rescuers, that is, less than 10 per cent, have been honoured by Yad Vashem for risking their lives and the lives of their family members in the interest of rescuing Jews.

Nor has Yad Vashem acknowledged most of the rescuers identified in the testimonies gathered by the Central Jewish Historical Commission in the immediate postwar years.

For example, after escaping from the ghetto in Czyżew, Etką Żółtak made her way to the village of Helenów, where she was taken in by a farmer named Franciszek Świątkiewicz for two weeks, and then by another farmer, Jan Bogucki, for some ten days, before she moved on to Warsaw. The farmers were afraid to keep her longer. Their names are preserved only because Żółtak recalled them when her testimony was recorded.<sup>2306</sup> The vast majority of such ad hoc interventions—many of them doubtless vital to a fugitive’s survival—will remain forever hidden in the mists of time.

<sup>2303</sup> Tadeusz Knade, “Władysław Szpilman ostatni wywiad,” *Rzeczpospolita* [Warsaw], October 12, 2002. Yad Vashem recognized Andrzej Bogucki, Janina Godlewska, and Czesław Lewicki.

<sup>2304</sup> Bernard Trawiński, *Przebłąski czarnej nocy: Wspomnienia 1939–1945: Kraków, Kościelniki, Proszowice* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka; Proszowice: Gmina i Miasto Proszowice, 2011).

<sup>2305</sup> Natan Gross, *Who Are You, Mr Grymek?* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2001); Yoram Gross, *My Animated Life: The Story of How I Survived the German Occupation to Become Australia’s Legendary Animation Filmmaker* (Blackheath, New South Wales: Brindl & Schlesinger, 2011).

<sup>2306</sup> Marta Cobel-Tokarska, *Bezładna wyspa, nora, grób: Wojenne kryjówki Żydów w okupowanej Polsce* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2012), 97, based on the testimony of Etką Żółtak, JHI, record group 301, no. 545.

Some Jews, of course, remained with the same protector long periods of hiding, and occasionally one rescuer (usually a family) sheltered several Jews. But even in such cases, critical assistance from several other persons was usually involved along the way.

Moving frequently from one hiding place to another was not unique to Poland. Each of the 250 children hidden by a rescue organization in the Netherlands required, on average, five hosts.<sup>2307</sup>

The fate of many Jewish fugitives was to wander the countryside, begging food and temporary lodging from terrorized, poverty-stricken Polish villagers. The fortunate ones eventually secured long-term shelter. A good number of other stories—elsewhere in the present, voluminous compilation—illustrate this same phenomenon.

In a context where it is impossible to survey, weigh and tabulate every such case, the following are offered to impugn the oft-heard charge that Polish farmers were eager to denounce Jews.

- After escaping from the ghetto in Skierniewice, Jakub and Towa Putermilch sought refuge in local villages. After wandering about in the fields for several days, they encountered Stefan Gawlikowski, who took them to his father's house in the village of Julków.<sup>2308</sup>
- Moshe Kestenbaum's two children, Yaakov and Esther, escaped during the liquidation of the ghetto in Annopol-Rachów and took refuge in the surrounding villages, obtaining help from people who had known their father. Eventually, in the village of Opoka Duża, they turned to the Judziński family, who took them in.<sup>2309</sup>
- Józef Goldberg (later Golan) escaped from the Warsaw ghetto as a 12-year-old boy and made his way to the rural area beyond the city. In the course of his wanderings, he reached the village of Goszczyn, near Grójec, where he happened to meet a farmer named Waclaw Kołacz. Although Kołacz suspected the boy was Jewish, he offered him a job in exchange for room and board. He taught him to speak Polish with a proper accent and instructed him in basic Christian customs.<sup>2310</sup>
- Hana Cytryniarz (later Citrin) and her 12-year-old son fled the ghetto in Adamów at the time of its liquidation. They wandered for months in the surrounding villages until they happened on a certain farm in Wielkie Lendo, near Ryki. Although the woman's accented Polish accent instantly gave away her Jewish identity, the Latoszyński family made a place for her son, and she managed to hide someplace nearby.<sup>2311</sup>
- After fleeing the Otwock ghetto in the summer of 1942, Chana Reizman wandered for some weeks through the nearby towns and villages. When she turned to Józef

<sup>2307</sup> Gerlach, *The Extermination of the European Jews*, 415.

<sup>2308</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 554.

<sup>2309</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 566.

<sup>2310</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 573.

<sup>2311</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 586–87.

Łysik, headman of the village of Wiązowna, he found a place, secured false identity documents, and sheltered her.<sup>2312</sup>

- Rina Eitani (11 years old at the time) and her mother and sister (10 years old) supported themselves by smuggling farm goods from the countryside to Warsaw. They worked separately to lessen the risk of discovery. While the Germans were ruthless toward smugglers, the natives treated them kindly: “One day I was buying something in a store. A little girl came in, warning me, ‘The Gestapo are in the house where you live.’ Right away, the owner of the store, a woman, put me in the cellar. She wouldn’t let me go until the Gestapo left. ... We stayed a lot in the villages where we bought the produce. The peasants were nice to us. They would feed us and sometimes, in exchange, we worked for them.”<sup>2313</sup>
- Chava Grinberg-Brown, from the village of Wiskitki, roamed the countryside near Żyrardów, outside of Warsaw, during the final years of the German occupation: “... at the end of each day, I would beg people to let me come in and sleep. I remember that once someone gave me a place to stay and offered me chicken soup ... In another home, one of the women gave me medication for my skin condition. They knew that I was Jewish ... it was obvious. As I wandered from one little place to another, people fed me and let me sleep in their homes or close to them; in barns, pigstys, etc.” When a Pole who recognized her wanted to turn her in, “Some peasants who realized what he was after threatened to give him a beating he would never forget. That stopped him from bothering me.” Her story continues: “I went to the place I had worked before [the war]. I stayed there for a few days. After that, I kept moving from one place to another. Some refused me work. Then a peasant offered me a more stable job. ... I remained with this peasant for most of the summer. Then I left and went to another village. I went from one village to another. Even during the summer I would change places. When the Poles sent me away, I was not angry. I understood that they were afraid or had not enough food and could not share the little they had. I did not particularly feel their anti-Semitism. ... Most people knew right away when I came in that I was Jewish, but they did not harm me. Only a few times did I have to run away. ... When I entered a village I would go first to the head of the village, and he would send me to a peasant. Usually they were not afraid if they had a note from the head of the village. ... I have no bad feelings toward the Christians. I survived the war thanks to them.”<sup>2314</sup>
- A 31-year-old barber named Zimler wandered with his wife in the vicinity of Wiskitki, near Żyrardów, cutting hair for farmers. He wrote: “[T]he attitude of the farmers to us was extremely good.” Farmers in the villages of Orszew, Wyczółki and Janówka, allowed them to stay in their homes, gave them food, washed their laundry, and even invited them to a wedding.<sup>2315</sup>

<sup>2312</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 590.

<sup>2313</sup> *Tec, Resilience and Courage*, 231–32.

<sup>2314</sup> *Tec, Resilience and Courage*, 225–27.

<sup>2315</sup> Marta Markowska, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Dzień po dniu Zagłady* (Warsaw: Ośrodek Karta, Dom Spotkań z Historią, and Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2008), 100–1.

- After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto, the teenage brothers Zwi and Józef Ditman wandered the villages around their native village of Wiskitki, looking for a place to stay long term. At last they were given refuge by a family in the village of Skrzewlew.<sup>2316</sup>
- Franciszka Aronson, from a village near Mińsk Mazowiecki, wandered both in areas where no one knew her and through villages where she was known, begging for food, before a place was made for her by nuns at a convent in Ignaców.<sup>2317</sup>
- Three brothers—Josek, Pinkas and Hyman Federman—were given food by a series of farmers after leaving Działoszyce and wandering for weeks in fields and villages. They were taken in by the Matuszczyk family in the village of Bronów, where they remained until the war was over.<sup>2318</sup>
- After escaping from their respective ghettos, Mendel Tider and Józef Langdorf roamed the countryside for six months, begging for help, before the Mika family opened their home to them in the village of Zaborów, near Brzesko, where the two survivors remained until it was safe to come out of hiding.<sup>2319</sup>
- After she fled the ghetto in Zakrzówek, near Kraśnik, with her two-year-old daughter, Rachel Griner wandered through the nearby villages, knocking on people's doors to ask for food and shelter. They at last found sanctuary with the Piłat family in Kolonia Góry.<sup>2320</sup>
- The five-member Graudens family wandered near Staszów begging for help. By and by they found sanctuary with the Skuza family in the village of Solec Stary.<sup>2321</sup>
- In early 1943, after a German operation against the Trembowla ghetto, 10-year-old Sofia Kalski and her mother fled far from city. For about two months they wandered through the fields, living off gifts of food provided by kindhearted farmers gave them. Eventually, they were taken in by the Galoński family in the village of Humnisko.<sup>2322</sup>
- After escaping from Grodno in October 1942, 12-year-old Haim Shapiro wandered from village to village, offering his services to farmers or simply begging. At last, he was taken in by an elderly couple, the Litwińczyks, in 1943. He lived with them until 1951.<sup>2323</sup>
- After his escape from Ejszyski, 16-year-old Hirsz Michalowski (later Tzvi Michaeli) received extensive help as he wandered during four months through villages, forests and marshes until the Wojewódzki family gave him protection in the village of Dociszki.<sup>2324</sup>

<sup>2316</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 541–42.

<sup>2317</sup> Kurek, *Dzieci żydowskie w klasztorach*, 116.

<sup>2318</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 595–96.

<sup>2319</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 597–98.

<sup>2320</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 605.

<sup>2321</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 615–16.

<sup>2322</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 551–52.

<sup>2323</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 589–90.

<sup>2324</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 632–33.

- Other fugitives from Ejszyski—Mosze Michałowski and his young daughter—moved from village to village in the same area: Mieżańce, Januszyski, Jurele, Jasna Polanka, Dowgidańce. Mosze paid his way by working as a tailor.<sup>2325</sup>
- Murray Berger attests to receiving extensive help from numerous villagers after he left the ghetto of Wsielub, near Nowogródek, in December 1941. He joined the Bielski partisans in the following year.<sup>2326</sup>
- Sarah Fishkin recounts serial acts of kindness by villagers in the Rubieżewicze area.<sup>2327</sup>

Concerning the make-up and profile of Polish rescuers, Lawrence Powell offers the following astute observations:

There is a burgeoning literature on the sociology and psychology of “righteous gentiles,” but the sociological literature is frankly inconclusive. Rescuers do not cluster on one or two rungs of the social ladder. They derive in almost equal proportions from the working class and the middle class, the peasantry and the intelligentsia, the educated and the unlettered. Nor are they conspicuously religious or unusually politically active. There have been attempts to identify them as social marginals, people who marched to a different drummer and were impervious to the good opinion of friends and neighbors. But, apart from a psychological ability to act independently of social norms, *there is little evidence showing that rescuers were anything but organically embodied in the communities in which they lived.* [emphasis added]<sup>2328</sup>

Moreover, consistent with memoirs from the Warsaw area, Powell notes:

Almost without exception Jewish rescue occurred within networks. Minimally, it required ten rescuers to save one Jew. ... Several of these rescue operations were complex organizations, such as Żegota ... But most underground railroads were informal and ad hoc, carefully woven webs of associates whose involvement started out gradually and then, before they realized what was happening, metamorphosed into major commitments. ...

The challenge of starting a rescue network, however, was knowing whom to trust. Which friends and relatives were reliable, who was discreet? Routine intimacies had to be reevaluated, well-worn social conventions sifted through for clues as to who combined the right mixture of empathy and discretion.<sup>2329</sup>

Nevertheless, unfortunately, despite the circumstances in occupied Poland, where networks of rescuers emerged naturally as the most effective adaptation for helping Jews, almost all of the seven thousand or so Poles selected by Yad Vashem are honoured singly, either ignoring or greatly downplaying the many times more

<sup>2325</sup> Testimony of Mosze Michałowski, YVA, file O.3/2815 (Item 3560227).

<sup>2326</sup> Oral history interview with Murray Berger, USHMM, Accession no. 2017.262.4, RG-50.997.0001.

<sup>2327</sup> Anna Eilenberg-Eibeshitz, *Remember! A Collection of Testimonies* (Haifa: H. Eibeshitz Institute for Holocaust Studies, 1999), 285–306.

<sup>2328</sup> Powell, *Troubled Memory*, 281–82.

<sup>2329</sup> Powell, *Troubled Memory*, 279–80. In addition to its formal members and activists, Żegota, the Council for Aid to Jews, relied on an extensive network of Polish helpers. See the testimony of Stefan Sendłak, JHI, record group 301, no. 3973.

that number of individuals whose participation would have also been essential to almost every successful rescue.

A good case in point is that of Stanisław Jackowski, who saved at least 30 Jews from Stanisławów. According to Yad Vashem,

Some years before the German occupation, Stanislaw [Stanisław] Jackowski (later Jackow) became well-known for his friendship to the Jews of Stanislawow [Stanisławów], his native city, in Eastern Galicia. This friendship found concrete expression in 1942, when the Germans began liquidating the local ghetto and Jackowski hid Jewish fugitives in his farmyard. [Actually, in a special cellar beneath his home; see his testimony below]. Despite his straitened circumstances and the hostile environment in which he lived, Jackowski helped no less than 31 refugees, without expecting anything in return. He provided his Jewish charges with handgrenades and four guns with which to defend themselves in case they were discovered. In saving his Jewish friends, Jackowski was guided by humanitarian motives, which overrode considerations of personal safety or economic hardship. The refugees who hid on his farm were liberated in July 1944 and, after the war, immigrated to Israel and the United States, where they were later followed by Jackowski. In the early 1960s, the World Association of Stanislawow Jews presented him with a gift as a token of their esteem and gratitude.<sup>2330</sup>

Under the best of circumstances, it would stretch credulity to propose that one person, acting alone, could feed and shelter such a multitude, for years, in complete secrecy at that. Eventually, Yad Vashem recognized two other individuals for their contribution to that rescue effort: Franciszek Uciurkiewicz, an employee of Jackowski's, and Bronisława Ogniewska, who worked at the local health clinic.<sup>2331</sup>

Marek Lessing, one of the Jews Stanisław Jackowski rescued, mentions other helpers, without whom the whole operation would have collapsed: an unidentified Pole who hid Jews in his attic before transferring them to one of Jackowski's bunkers; an unidentified mill administrator who provided flour; and the unidentified administrator of an estate that supplied butter and lard.<sup>2332</sup>

In his own testimony, Jackowski credits another Polish rescuer, one Bogdanowicz, and he describes the grim conditions under German terror—not a lack of empathy on the part of other potential rescuers—that inhibited the locals from doing even more.

Characteristic of those whom the performance of some high-minded act has forever distinguished, Jackowski is fierce in his unwillingness to blame or condemn the many others who declined to risk their lives. Who has the right to expect such a sacrifice? What safely-distanced observer can, without hypocrisy, judge anyone else who was put to such a test? Jackowski tells his remarkable story without embellishment:

<sup>2330</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 291–92.

<sup>2331</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 560, 834.

<sup>2332</sup> Testimony of Marek Lessing, JHL, record group 301, no. 4680, translated in Diatłowski and Roszkowski, *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945*, vol. 2, 185–91, at pp. 190–91.

I lived in Stanisławów in eastern Poland, where there were fewer Poles than Jews and Ukrainians. I think there was far less anti-Semitism in central Poland than in eastern Poland. One big reason for this was the fact that thousands of Jews willingly cooperated with the Soviets after their occupation of eastern Poland in 1939. ....

It all started with my attempt to find and rescue an old school friend, Max Saginur. We had been friends for years, a friendship that both his parents and mine tried to discourage. Unless Jews were thoroughly assimilated, few of them wanted to have close personal relationships with Polish Gentiles. ...

Fortunately, I found my friend Max and his wife, Gitya, who along with Gitya's brother and sister-in-law, made their way to my home from the ghetto early in 1943. At first I hid them in a partitioned area behind the kitchen, but that didn't work out because they almost suffocated from lack of air. Besides it was possible to hear every move they made behind the partition. That's when I decided to build a bunker in the cellar.

Before it was all over, I ended up building three bunkers. Little by little, more and more Jews came to me for help. One group of Jews came from another "basket"—the name given to a place where Jews were hidden—that was maintained by another Polish rescuer. This Pole, Bogdanowicz, was afraid to keep his Jews any longer for fear of getting caught by the Gestapo. After all, any Pole caught helping a Jew was automatically executed. I even took in some Jews who had threatened to denounce me and their kinsmen whom I was hiding if I didn't help them.

I had made preparations to receive six Jewish physicians, but shortly before they were supposed to come to my home, the Gestapo arrested them. The unfortunate doctors took poison rather than wait to be shot by the Germans.

It wasn't easy looking after thirty-two people in a place that was a stone's throw from Gestapo headquarters, yet keep a secret of it. The bunkers were well equipped with water, electricity, beds, and stoves for cooking. ... The Jews in the bunker had water downstairs but I had no plumbing at all upstairs!<sup>2333</sup>

Apart from the threat of denunciation, another Pole from Stanisławów, Janina Ciszewska, who was recognized by Yad Vashem for having sheltered ten Jews,<sup>2334</sup> mentions yet another potential source of danger. Quarrelling or bickering among the charges could also attract unwanted attention, and so posed a mortal threat to the lives of everyone concerned.<sup>2335</sup>

The "black legend" of Polish-Jewish relations in the Holocaust is the very antithesis of the present argument. We do not pretend that helping Jews was a universal endeavour or one that most Poles participated in. Far from it. Rather we take issue with the narrative currently in vogue—pushed strenuously by historian Jan Grabowski—that Polish helpers "broke a certain consensus in their own community. Within this consensus there was no place for helping Jews."<sup>2336</sup>

<sup>2333</sup> Lukas, *Out of the Inferno*, 76–78.

<sup>2334</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 151.

<sup>2335</sup> Testimony of Janina Ciszewska, JHI, record group 301, no. 2514.

<sup>2336</sup> Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews*, 166. Historian Omer Bartov goes even further in his condemnation of Poles: "The majority of the non-Jewish population profited from the genocide and either directly or indirectly collaborated with the perpetrators of the Holocaust. Even if at times the non-Jews also resisted the occupation for their own reasons, only a minority was involved in rescue and feared the vengeance of the majority." See Omer Bartov, "Much Forgotten, Little Learned," *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 35, no. 2 (2007): 267–87, at p. 276.

More pointedly, historian Joanna Michlic claims that collective rescue efforts in Poland simply didn't occur.<sup>2337</sup> The root cause of the reluctance to help, one is given to understand, is anti-Semitism pure and simple. (It is instructive to mention here that most Poles did not join underground organizations or participate in armed struggle against the Germans, as those too were very perilous undertakings.)

Building on this narrative as its foundation, a new wave of historians has now linked the very mass murder of the Jews to the agency of the Polish population. Citing Jan Grabowski, historian Mary Fulbrook argues: "The mass murder of the Jews could not have taken place without the involvement of many ordinary Polish people ..."<sup>2338</sup> This narrative has also been embraced by German historians like

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Both Grabowski and Bartov greatly undercount the extent of rescue in their micro-studies. In *Hunt for the Jews*, Grabowski failed to identify 20 out of 34 Polish rescuers from Dąbrowa Tarnowska county recognized by Yad Vashem (i.e., almost 60 per cent); in *Anatomy of a Genocide*, Bartov failed to identify 62 out of 75 rescuers (51 Poles, 20 Ukrainians, 4 mixed Polish-Ukrainian) from the predominantly Ukrainian Buczacz county recognized by Yad Vashem (i.e., more than 80 per cent). Their success rate in identifying non-recognized rescuers is even worse. None of the many examples of communal rescue in their counties mentioned here can be found in those author's monographs. For a critique of the former book, see Mark Paul, *Another Look at Polish-Jewish Relations in Dąbrowa Tarnowska County: A Much Needed Corrective to Jan Grabowski's Hunt for the Jews*, Internet: <http://www.kpk-toronto.org/obrona-dobrego-imienia>.

<sup>2337</sup> For example, Joanna Michlic, a prolific exponent of the "black legend" of Polish-Jewish relations, points to the rescue efforts of the Huguenot village of Le-Chambon-sur-Lignon, in Vichy France, as a means of denigrating Polish rescue efforts and, by insinuation, effectively denying the very existence of collective rescue in occupied Poland. Her juxtaposition of a case that is truly exceptional, by Western European standards, with sweeping generalizations about the Poles, who are condemned as an entire nation for the activities of a few, is typical of the animus that informs this genre of writing: "Therefore, one can argue that in the history of aid to Jews in Poland, we... hardly find an account similar to that of the successful collective rescue efforts in the village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in France. Instead, one finds chilling accounts of solidarity in chasing away and murdering Jewish fugitives, and solidarity in condemning and undermining rescue operations and hurting and betraying the selfless rescuers of Jews." See Joanna B. Michlic, "I will never forget what you did for me during the war": Rescuer-Rescuer Relationships in the Light of Postwar Correspondence in Poland, 1945-1949," *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 39, no. 2 (2011): 169-207, at pp. 189-90. Jews residing in Vichy France feared both the French police and, from November 1942, the German authorities. On the rescue in Le-Chambon-sur-Lignon, with its access to significant foreign funding and incidents of betrayal at the highest level (several rescuers were arrested and some perished), see the entry in the *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, Internet: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/le-chambon-sur-lignon>. It is a pity that Michlic did not apply her keen wit to the question of why Polish Jews produced corrupt and brutal councils and police forces that engaged in widespread abuses of the ghetto population while French Jews did not.

<sup>2338</sup> See Mary Fulbrook, "Bystanders: Catchall Concept, Alluring Alibi, or Crucial Clue?," in Christina Morina and Krijn Thijs, eds., *Probing the Limits of Categorization: The Bystander in Holocaust History* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2019), 15-35, at p. 25.

Katrin Stoll, who are eager to share German blame for the Holocaust with the Poles. According to Stoll, it was the Poles' "attitudes and behavior" that were "decisive" [sic] in the "Nazi scheme to persecute and murder every Jew, without exception." Allegedly, this was rooted in an eliminationist, "anti-Semitic consensus in Polish society." (Interestingly, German historians took issue with Daniel Goldhagen's claim that Germans harboured eliminationist anti-Semitism.) In her worldview, even "passive observers" are raised to the level of agents or perpetrators of "Nazi"—rather than "German"—"crimes"<sup>2339</sup> Building on this momentum, historian Jan Burzlaff has divided Polish society into two camps: a tiny number of rescuers and a large mass of "perpetrators," either active or passive.<sup>2340</sup> Thus, any Pole who chose not to risk their life to help a Jew has now become a "passive perpetrator" of the Holocaust! Presumably this includes those languishing in German camps and prisons and those deported to Germany as forced labourers.

We have thus "progressed" to a level of understanding that would have shocked Yisrael Gutman, a prominent Jewish historian who actually lived through the German occupation of Poland. Gutman did not mince words in dismissing this narrative: "all accusations against the Poles that they were responsible for what is referred to as the 'Final Solution' are not even worth mentioning."<sup>2341</sup>

The historical record is quite different from what we are now being told. There are a great many recorded examples of entire Polish villages and communities sympathizing with Jews, and participating actively or passively in their rescue. Such occurrences would have been unthinkable in Germany and Austria—no Jew would have survived the collective scrutiny of local villagers in either of those countries.<sup>2342</sup>

<sup>2339</sup> Katrin Stoll, "Traces of the Holocaust in Nachman Blumental's Archives: The Murder of Maria and Ariel Blumental in Wielopole Skrzyńskie During the German Occupation," *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 49, no. 2 (2021).

<sup>2340</sup> Jan Burzlaff, "In the Shadow of the Gas Chambers: Social Dynamics and Everyday Life around the Killing Center at Bełżec (1941–1944)," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 35, no. 3 (Winter 2021): 445–63, at p. 454: "[the Polish] interviewees [from Bełżec] were not 'bystanders,' as scholars traditionally classified them, but themselves victims of Nazi violence, and thus either temporary supporters of Jewish escapees or passive perpetrators who refused to help." Not only is the sentence non-sensical on its face, but it also contains an internal non-sequitur. Burzlaff suppresses information about local rescuers who sheltered Jews with the knowledge of the inhabitants of the village of Bełżec. Although he mentions Julia Pepiak, he neglects to mention that her rescue activities were public knowledge. He fails to mention altogether the best documented case, the Brogowskis, who were recognized by Yad Vashem for rescuing Irena Szyncer, a Jewish child with Semitic features who lived with them openly. These examples are referenced elsewhere.

<sup>2341</sup> *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies*, vol. 2 (1987): 341.

<sup>2342</sup> This is quite apart from the earlier-noted leniency applied to mixed marriages, persons of partly-Jewish origin, and a small number of other, curiously favoured Jews. Such "privileged" categories of Jews could also be found in other occupied countries, but not in German-occupied Poland.

According to the “new understanding,” these cases did not—and should not—exist at all. However, there are just too many to ignore or to dismiss. It is also important to note that the vast majority of Poles mentioned in the following examples, which are by no means exhaustive, have not been recognized by Yad Vashem. So we are not talking about the behaviour of just a few thousand individuals, but a much broader, albeit not universal, phenomenon—one that undermines the notion of a societal consensus, allegedly grounded in anti-Semitism, to refuse to extend any help to Jews and to strike at those individuals who defied this consensus.

- Emanuel Ringelblum recorded: “I heard from Jews of Głowno [Głowno] how peasants helped them during the whole of the winter. A Jew who went out to a village in search of food usually returned with a bag of potatoes ... In many villages, the peasants showed open sympathy for the Jews. They threw bread and other food [through the barbed-wire fence] into the camps ... located in their neighborhood.”<sup>2343</sup>
- The Michalak family, who lived in Boczki Domaradzkie, near Głowno, took in the Rajch family, who pretended to be Polish. Although the villagers suspected otherwise, no one betrayed the Jewish family.<sup>2344</sup>
- Tadeusz Kalski was one of several Jewish teenagers and young men who were openly working for Polish farmers in the village of Chruślin, near Głowno. It was only when the police started to come around looking for Jews that the farmers became afraid to keep them any longer.<sup>2345</sup>
- Hercek Cedrowski, Tojwje Drajhorm and Jankiel Borkowski wrote in 1947: “The Jews of Ozorków [near Zgierz] maintained contact with the Poles. The Polish population did not help the Germans in the liquidation of the Jews. They traded with the Jews and brought food to the ghetto. The Jews were afraid of speaking with Poles, and Poles were afraid of helping Jews, but there were no denunciations of Jews.”<sup>2346</sup>
- Isadore Burstyn, as a child of eleven, was able to survive through the kindness of people in the village of Głupianka, near Otwock (outside of Warsaw), where he passed as a local boy and herded cows. He hid in the forest when his presence threatened the family with whom he often stayed, and friends from the village would bring him food. “In my case, he recalled, the entire village sheltered me even though I know there were still about 20 per cent anti-Semites among them.”<sup>2347</sup>
- Abram Jakub Zand, a tailor from the village of Bolimów, near Skierniewice, “stole back to his village; the local peasants welcomed him back, and he was passed from

<sup>2343</sup> Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers*, 116.

<sup>2344</sup> Józef Grabowicz, “Rzykować życie,” *Res Humana*, no. 3 (2004): 39–42. The Michalak family were recognized by Yad Vashem. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 508–9.

<sup>2345</sup> Testimony of Tadeusz Kalski, JHI, record group 301, no. 2987.

<sup>2346</sup> Grynberg and Kotowska, *Życie i zagłada Żydów polskich 1939–1945*, 488.

<sup>2347</sup> “Edmonton survivor returns to Poland,” *The Canadian Jewish News* [Toronto], August 2, 1990, and “Return to Otwock brings back rush of memories,” *The Canadian Jewish News* [Toronto], August 30, 1990; Mary Kaye Ritz, “Holocaust Survivor Sees Own Childhood on Film,” *Honolulu Advertiser*, January 31, 2003. See also *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 927.

house to house, working a week or two in each. ... 'If I were to thank everyone, whole villages would have to visit me.'" Both he and his sister survived in this way.<sup>2348</sup>

- Shmuel Eliraz, then known as Ludwik Poznański, was born in Warsaw in 1935. Confined in the Warsaw ghetto, his parents arranged for their little son to be removed to a safer place, entrusting him to his mother's former nanny. Maria Walewska was unmarried, had no children of her own, and after a long service with this family had moved to the village of Nowy Kawęczyn, near Skierniewice. Shmuel became Wiesiu, Maria's nephew. When Walewska first brought the boy home, her neighbours were distrustful, suspecting that she was hiding a Jewish child. However, they eventually left her in peace. The boy remained in the village under Walewska's care until the end of the war.<sup>2349</sup>
- A Polish Red Cross worker gave over to a Polish couple by the name of Kaczmarek, themselves refugees from western Poland living in the town of Żyrardów, near Warsaw, a young Jewish girl found abandoned in an empty death train: "Many of the neighbours knew that she was Jewish, yet no one informed."<sup>2350</sup>
- Ten-year-old Estera Borensztajn was sheltered by the villagers of Osiny, between Żelechów and Łuków: "the peasants arranged among themselves that each would hide a Jewish girl for a certain period so that 'everyone would be guilty and no one could inform.'"<sup>2351</sup> Since she was well known in the village, Estera eventually moved on, staying with other farmers, among them the Goławski family, until she reached the village of Kłoczew. She was taken in by the Pieniak family and remained with them for two years. Once again, her presence became widely known in the village. During anticipated German raids, she was sheltered by Rev. Stefan Kosmulski, the local pastor, who extended his protection to the child.<sup>2352</sup>
- Sara Bryn took up residence in the village of Adamów with her young child, passing as a Christian by the name of Stefania Romaniuk. Although it was widely suspected that she was Jewish, and she was told as much, no one betrayed her.<sup>2353</sup>
- After running out of money, Hanka Jeleń and her young son, Stanisław, wandered in the countryside near Łuków, begging for food and a place to stay. Usually they were put up in barns. For several months before the Soviet army arrived, Hanka

<sup>2348</sup> Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945*, 27; Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień...*, 105, 123–24.

<sup>2349</sup> Maria Walewska, RD.

<sup>2350</sup> Zbigniew Pakula, *The Jews of Poznań* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003), 51.

<sup>2351</sup> Testimony of Estera Borensztajn, JHI, record group 301, no. 2989, as cited in Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945*, 27.

<sup>2352</sup> Waldemar Piasecki, "Gdzie jesteś Teresko," *Dziennik Związkowy* [Chicago], March 9, 2009; Wojtek Maślanka, "Dlaczego, Teresko... dlaczego nie chcesz się spotkać..." *Nowy Dziennik* [Garfield, New Jersey], August 3, 2015; Wojtek Maślanka, "Szczęśliwy finał 44-letnich poszukiwań: Spotkanie po 44 latach," *Nowy Dziennik* [Garfield, New Jersey], November 26, 2016.

<sup>2353</sup> Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 165; Stefania Romaniuk, "Moja okupacja," *Odra*, no. 5 (1988): 24–32, at pp. 30–31.

worked for a farmer. The farmer's neighbours were aware of this, but no one betrayed them.<sup>2354</sup>

- The Latoszyński family of Lendo Wielkie, near Ryki, took in 12-year-old Artur Cytyniarz (later Citrin) from Warsaw as a farmhand, at the behest of his mother, who hid nearby under a false identity and visited her son from time to time. Although the boy had a good command of Polish, his mother's Jewish accent gave her away. No one at the farm ever stated openly that he was Jewish, but everybody knew it.<sup>2355</sup>
- Henryk Prajs survived the war, passing as a Pole in the village of Podwierzbie, near Magnuszew. It was widely understood that he was Jewish; the village head was personally committed to protecting him.<sup>2356</sup>
- Hana Grynberg, who was just ten years old when she escaped from the ghetto in Koźnice in 1942, lived openly with the Bratos family in the village of Trzebień, near Magnuszew, for some two years. It was widely known that she was Jewish.<sup>2357</sup>
- In the small village of Bokowo Wielkie, near Sierpc, four Jews were rescued by a number of Polish farmers.<sup>2358</sup>
- Mindzia Kirszenbaum (Mindze Kirschenbaum) was taken in by the family of Bolesław Topolewski in the village of Przeradz Mały, near Biezuń. She lived there openly for some two years and the villagers knew that she was Jewish. Previously she had lived with various farmers in the villages of Sadłów, Września and Lutocin, where her Jewishness was widely recognized.<sup>2359</sup>
- Natan Passe was sheltered by the Gosik, Bukowski, Woźniak, and Piórkowski Polish families in the village of Siemiątkowo, near Żuromin. Although his presence there was widely known, no one betrayed him.<sup>2360</sup>
- After being smuggled out of the Warsaw ghetto with her brother and wandering around villages working for farmers as cowherds, 12-year-old Ester Rotfing (later Livny) began working for the Jankowski family in the village of Młyniec (?). She remained with them until the end of the German occupation; many of the villagers knew that she was Jewish.<sup>2361</sup>
- After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto in August 1942, 13-year-old Chana Ajzenfisz and her 10-year-old sister, Chaya, wandered for two weeks from village to village in the countryside north of Warsaw. Unkempt and dirty, both their appearance and their Jewish accent quickly gave them away; nevertheless, the farmers on whose doors they knocked supplied them with enough food and temporary shelter

<sup>2354</sup> Testimony of Stanisław Jeleń, JHI, record group 301, no. 2997.

<sup>2355</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 586–87.

<sup>2356</sup> Testimony of Henryk Prajs, 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/henryk-prajs>.

<sup>2357</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 112.

<sup>2358</sup> Leon Gongola, "O prawach i ludziach," *Polska* [Warsaw], no. 7 (1971): 170–72.

<sup>2359</sup> Artur K. F. Wołosz, ed., *Księga pamięci Żydów bieżuńskich* (Biezuń: Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Bieżunia and Muzeum Małego Miasta w Bieżuniu, Oddział Muzeum Wsi Mazowieckiej w Sierpcu, 2009), 98–101, translation of *Sefer ha-zikaron le-kedoshei Biezun* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Biezun, 1956).

<sup>2360</sup> Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 80–81.

<sup>2361</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 563–64.

to keep them going. When they arrived in the village of Krzyczki-Pieniązki, near Nasielsk, about 50 kilometres from Warsaw, they were taken in by the extended Krzyczkowski family. The girls lived in the village openly, passing as distant family members, until the war ended. The villagers knew that they were Jewish, but no one betrayed them.<sup>2362</sup>

- After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto, Paweł Dutman, a young teenager, was apprehended by the Gestapo in 1942, as he crossed the border between the Generalgouvernement and the Reich on the way to his home town of Ciechanów. Warned by a Pole of his imminent execution, Paweł managed to escape from his work site. Poles he appealed to in the vicinity of Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki, most of them complete strangers, gave him food and clothing. Paweł worked as hired hand on various local farms for the duration of the war.<sup>2363</sup>
- After marrying and converting to Catholicism shortly before the war, Władysław Gugła, a school teacher, settled in the village of Chociszewo, north of Warsaw, where his Jewish ethnicity was widely known. He survived with assistance of a number of villagers who sheltered him, as he moved from place to place, teaching village children clandestinely.<sup>2364</sup>
- Yisrael Golos, then a 12-year-old boy, managed to escape from the ghetto in Ciechanów during an Aktion. He took on an assumed Polish identity and began to wander in the area, hiring himself out to do farm work in villages where he was not known. Early in 1943, Golos arrived at the home of Stanisław and Maria Pajewski in the village of Mierzanowo, near Grudusk. They hired him in return for room and board. One day, a farmer from another village happened to arrive at their house. He recognized Golos and disclosed that he was Jewish. "To Golos's surprise, not only did his employers not treat him any worse as a result, they treated him even better. From that time on, the family took special precautions to safeguard Golos's life and the neighbors demonstrated solidarity with the Pajewski family and did not inform on them to the Germans."<sup>2365</sup>
- After escaping from a German camp, Margita (Miriam) Weiss-Löwy, a Czech Jew, made her way to the farm of Józef and Maria Sadurski in Końskowola, near Puławy. Although the neighbours were aware of her presence, she remained there without incident until the end of the German occupation.<sup>2366</sup>
- A Jewish man by the name of Duczy lived openly, without any problems, in his native village of Tarzymiechy, near Zamość, throughout the entire war. He had always been on good terms with the villagers and was so well liked that he lived there without

<sup>2362</sup> Leociak, *Ratowanie*, 123–24, 128–29, 131–35.

<sup>2363</sup> Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, *The Children Accuse*, 73–74, based on the testimony of Paweł Dutman, JHI, record group 301, no. 4311.

<sup>2364</sup> Suzanne Rozdeba, "A Polish Village's Secret: A Farming Town Hid a Jewish-born Teacher During the Holocaust," *Tablet*, August 21, 2012.

<sup>2365</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 575.

<sup>2366</sup> "Jak można podziękować za życie: Sprawiedliwi wśród narodów świata z Lublina i Końskowoli," *Dziennik Wschodni*, April 26, 2015; Sadurski, RD.

fear of being betrayed to the Germans. He even arranged for several other Jews to hide on the farm of a Catholic family in that same village.<sup>2367</sup>

- Moshe Frank, a teenager from Zamość, was taken in by a poor farmer in Dębowiec who lived in a one-room hut with his wife and sister-in-law. When they realized that he was Jewish, they consulted with relatives and friends about what to do and decided to go on behaving as though Moshe were one of them.<sup>2368</sup>
- Jakub Hersz Griner (later Grzegorz Pawłowski), an 11-year-old boy from Zamość, wandered through nearby villages looking for work as a farmhand. He was taken in by poor Polish families in Białowola and Lipsko-Polesie. Although he pretended to be a Polish orphan, his flawed Polish and behaviour gave him away. He remained with the Bajak family for about a year, and then worked for another family by the name of Kuroń. Suspicions that Jakub was Jewish had spread in the village, but no one mentioned them openly. The boy remained there until the Germans were driven out.<sup>2369</sup>
- Adam Shtibel (then Abram Szybel, b. 1928 in Komarów, near Zamość) worked for a local Polish farmer herding cows. At the end of 1942, when the farmers were ordered to surrender Jews they had been employing, Adam joined a group of Jewish children who wandered the countryside, sleeping in forests or barns and begging for food from farmers. In the summer of 1943, pretending to be an orphaned Polish child, he was expelled from Zamość, together with Polish residents, to make room for ethnic Germans to be resettled there. He was placed with a childless couple, Jan Szelağ and his wife, in the village of Borki, near Stoczek Łukowski. Dark-haired and circumcised, unable to speak Polish fluently and unfamiliar with Catholic prayers, he soon aroused concern among the neighbours, who reminded the Szelağs of the danger they were putting everybody in, but the couple stood by him, and no one betrayed them to the authorities. Adam remained with them for more than two years after the end of the war.<sup>2370</sup>
- Sala Zylberbaum of Zamość (b. 1931) found employment with two farmers in the nearby village of Huszczka Duża. Even though she was recognized as Jewish by the villagers, she was not denounced.<sup>2371</sup>
- The case of author Jerzy Kosinski and his parents, who lived openly in Dąbrowa Rzeczycka, near Stalowa Wola, is by now a well-known example. The Kosiński family attended church in nearby Wola Rzeczycka, obtained food from villagers in Kępa

<sup>2367</sup> Philip “Fizel” Bialowitz with Joseph Bialowitz, *A Promise at Sobibór: A Jewish Boy’s Story of Revolt and Survival in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 141–42.

<sup>2368</sup> Bogner, *At the Mercy of Strangers*, 88–89, 97. See also *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 718.

<sup>2369</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 530–31; “Historia rodziny Bajaków,” Ośrodek “Brama Grodzka—Teatr NN,” Internet: <https://teatrnn.pl/sprawiedliwi-lubelszczyzna/historia-rodziny-bajakow-bialowola-k-zamoscia/>.

<sup>2370</sup> Rachel Shtibel and Adam Shtibel, *The Violin / A Child’s Testimony* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation and Centre for Jewish Studies at York University, 2007), vii–viii, 178–212; Testimony of Abram Szybel, JHI, record group 301, no. 3683.

<sup>2371</sup> Orzeł, *Dzieci żydowskie w czasach Zagłady*, 283.

Rzeczycka, and were sheltered temporarily in Rzeczyca Okrągła. Local villagers also assisted other Jews as well.<sup>2372</sup>

- A network of Polish families was instrumental in rescuing the eight-member Krüger (Krueger) family, consisting of two parents and six children from Sowina, a village north of Jasło, and Jacek Klec, a tailor from the Warsaw area. The rescuers included two families from Sowina who were recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Gentiles, namely, Stanisław and Anna Kopec, and Jan and Kunegunda Frączek with their daughter, Adela Liszka, as well the Stasiowski and Hendzel families and others.<sup>2373</sup>
- Marcin and Maria Brykczyński had an estate in Skołyszyn, a village west of Jasło, where they lived with their four children. In 1940, they took in a Polish family who had been expelled by the Germans from Poznań. Feliks Sandauer (b. 1928) was brought there from Lwów by Maria Brykczyńska's sister in 1941, and passed off as their nephew, Feliks Sawicki. Although word of this spread among the villagers, no one betrayed them.<sup>2374</sup>
- Józef and Józefa Marć hid at least twelve Jews in the attic of their house in Jedlicze, near Krosno, among them many members of the Fries family. They were assisted by their son and by the Zub family, who lived in the neighbourhood. Many inhabitants of the village were aware of this, but not one betrayed them.<sup>2375</sup>
- Zila Weinstein-Beer (later Cipora Re'em or Zippora Ram, b. 1939) was taken in by Maria and Stanisław Dudek, a childless couple in the village of Odrzykoń, near Krosno. She was able to pass as a Catholic with the solidarity of the Dudeks' community and assistance from the local pastor, who baptized her and preached the duty of helping one's neighbours, and the solidarity of the Dudeks' neighbours. Most of the villagers knew where the little girl, the daughter of a local sawmill owner, had come from, but they kept it to themselves.<sup>2376</sup>
- Abraham and Regina Bigajer of Przybówka, along with their daughters, were sheltered by five Polish families in the neighbouring villages of Przybówka and Niepla, between Jasło and Krosno. They were the Obara, Zajchowski, Stefanik, Pomprowicz, and Faryniarz families.<sup>2377</sup>

<sup>2372</sup> Sloan, *Jerzy Kosinski*, 7–54; Siedlecka, *The Ugly Black Bird*, 21–37. After the village came under attack, Sala Zylberbaum was transferred to a relative of one of the villagers living in Zamość.

<sup>2373</sup> Anna Kopec, The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, Internet: <http://www.jfr.org/pages/rescuer-support/stories/poland/-anna-kopec>; The Kopec Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-kopec-family>; Testimony of Anna Kopec, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/audio-list?&page=26>.

<sup>2374</sup> Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 153; Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part 2, 214–18. The Brykczyńskis were recognized as Righteous by Yad Vashem in 2010.

<sup>2375</sup> Rączy and Witowicz, *Poles Rescuing Jews in the Rzeszów Region in the Years 1939–1945 / Polacy ratujący Żydów na Rzeszowszczyźnie w latach 1939–1945*, 92.

<sup>2376</sup> Stanisław and Maria Dudek, RD; The Dudek Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-dudek-family>.

<sup>2377</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 601; Rączy and Witowicz, *Poles Rescuing Jews in the Rzeszów Region in the Years 1939–1945 / Polacy ratujący Żydów na Rzeszowszczyźnie w latach 1939–1945*, 158.

- Several dozen Polish families sheltered Jews in the villages of Ropa, Moszczenica and Rzepiennik Strzyżewski, near Gorlice.<sup>2378</sup>
- The entire village of Ciechania, south of Jasło, near the Slovak border, rescued a local Jew. She was moved from one farmer to another.<sup>2379</sup>
- Two Jewish sisters of the Gershen family, and the husband of one of them, were sheltered by the Adamiak family in the village of Pakoszówka, near Sanok. They would leave at night to beg food from other Polish families.<sup>2380</sup>
- On the day that local Jews were told to report for “transport to the labour camps,” Paul Axer, an elderly music teacher from Przemyśl, removed his yellow armband, gathered up his stool and balalaika, and set out on foot. After reaching the banks of San River, he sat down on his stool until dark, gazing into the water. A couple of shepherds, a brother and sister, found him and took him into their home. The whole village knew about it, but nobody turned him in. Axer died of natural causes before the end of the war.<sup>2381</sup>
- Although it was widely known that the young daughter of Reb Moshe Kestenbaum was sheltered in an orphanage run by nuns in his native village of Grodzisko Dolne, near Przeworsk, no one betrayed her.<sup>2382</sup>
- Menachem Superman, who survived in the Rzeszów area, wrote: “the entire village knew that I was Jewish, but [my rescuer] always said to me that I shouldn’t be afraid, because no one will hand me over to the Germans.”<sup>2383</sup>
- Jan Tojanowski of Nowy Borek, near Rzeszów, hired the teenager Józef Leichter as a farmhand. It became widely known among Trojanowski’s acquaintances that the boy was Jewish, but the farmer allowed him to stay on. The village headman advised him not to venture outside. Despite some threats, no one actually denounced him.<sup>2384</sup>
- From 1942 to 1944, Stanisław and Maria Grocholski hid fifteen members of the extended family of Isaac and Leah Gamss in the attic of their farmhouse. Villagers in the vicinity of Urzejowice, near Przeworsk, knew the Grocholskis were hiding Jews because theirs was the only house that had no snow on its roof in the winter months, and because members of the Gramss family called on them to ask for food.

<sup>2378</sup> Kalisz and Rączy, *Dzieje społeczności żydowskiej powiatu gorlickiego podczas okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1945*, 87–89.

<sup>2379</sup> Zuzanna Schnepf-Kończak, “In the Ciechania Presbytery’: The Story of Saving Zofia Trembska: A Case Study,” *Holocaust: Studies and Materials*, vol. 2 (2010): 367.

<sup>2380</sup> Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 227.

<sup>2381</sup> Bikont, *The Crime and the Silence*, 52. Otto Axer, Paul Axer’s son, loathed the peasants his whole life for their anti-Semitism and was always saying that they denounced Jews during the war. “And then it turned out it was peasants who’d saved his father and the whole village knew about it.” *Ibid.*, 52–53.

<sup>2382</sup> Bertha Ferderber-Salz, *And the Sun Kept Shining...* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1980), 199. For other rescues in Grodzisko Dolne and vicinity, see Lukas, *Out of the Inferno*, 62–64.

<sup>2383</sup> Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945*, 128.

<sup>2384</sup> Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, *The Children Accuse*, 68–72, based on the testimony of Józef Leichter, JHI, record group 301, no. 891.

According to Leslie Gilbert-Lurie, the daughter of one of the hidden Jews: "I would say it took a whole village of people for my mother's family to survive."<sup>2385</sup>

- Faiga Rosenbluth, a penniless teenager from Kańczuga, roamed the countryside from one village to the next for some two years. She was obviously Jewish, yet many peasants helped her, and she was never betrayed.<sup>2386</sup>
- Marian Gołębiowski, who was awarded by Yad Vashem, arranged a hiding place for Dr. Bernard Ryszard Hellreich (later Ingram) and Hellreich's future wife, Irena Szumska, in the village of Czerмна, near Jasło. Going by the names of Zbigniew and Irena Jakobiszyn, the fugitive couple were protected by the owners and manager of a local estate, and all the villagers knew of their presence.<sup>2387</sup>
- The Kądziołka family of Więckowice, near Jarosław, took in two siblings, Mojżesz and Blima Katz, from the neighbouring village of Czelatyce. Mejer Blau joined them later, and the Katz brother, Icek, occasionally stopped by for meals. Neighbours suspected the Kądziołkas were hiding Jews, but they said nothing.<sup>2388</sup>
- Barbara Mikłasz, an elderly woman from Pruchnik, near Jarosław, sheltered Elżbieta Roserman (b. 1940) at the behest of her parents, whom the Germans soon afterwards deported. This was no secret to the villagers, for the child lived there openly throughout the occupation. She remained with her adoptive family after the war.<sup>2389</sup>
- The case of Olga Lilien offers yet another example of solidarity among Polish villagers. A survivor from Lwów, with a very marked Jewish appearance, Dr. Lilien lived openly with a Polish family in Mokrzeszów, near Tarnobrzeg. Germans came looking for a fugitive, summoned the villagers to a meeting, and questioned them. Dr. Lilien recalled, "Suddenly he looked at me and said, 'Oh, but this is a Jewess.' The head of the village said, 'Oh, no, she cooks at the school. She is a very good cook.' Nobody said, 'Oh, well, she is Jewish. Take her.' He let me go. The population of the village was about two thousand. They all knew there was something 'wrong' with me. Any one of them could have sold me to the Germans for two hundred deutsche marks, but out of two thousand people nobody did it. Everybody in the village protected me. I had very good relations with them."<sup>2390</sup>
- The villagers of Czajków, near Staszów, were known for the support they gave to Jewish fugitives. "[I]t was something exceptional to see the humane way the villa-

<sup>2385</sup> Gilbert-Lurie and Rita Lurie, *Bending Toward the Sun*, 46–47, 58, 293.

<sup>2386</sup> Fay Walker and Leo Rosen (with Caren S. Neile), *Hidden: A Sister and Brother in Nazi Poland* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), passim; Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945*, 249–50; Testimony of Fela Walke-Rozenblit, JHI, record group 301, no. 2981.

<sup>2387</sup> Piotr Zychowicz, "Ratowali Żydów i nie godzą się na kłamstwa," *Rzeczpospolita* [Warsaw], October 30, 2009; Marian Gołębiowski, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-golebiowski-marian>.

<sup>2388</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 567–68.

<sup>2389</sup> *Sprawiedliwa wśród narodów świata—Barbara Mikłasz*, Gimnazjum Publiczne im. Ks. Bronisława Markiewicza w Pruchniku, Internet: <http://www.gimnazjumpruchnik.pl/projekty/sprawiedliwa.pdf>.

<sup>2390</sup> Land-Weber, *To Save a Life*, 246.

gers behaved. These simple people helped us of their own free will, and without receiving any money in return. From them we often heard some kind words, quite apart from the money, loaves of bread and boiled potatoes they gave us from time to time.”<sup>2391</sup> Yad Vashem has recognized more than a dozen Czajków villagers as Righteous Gentiles.<sup>2392</sup>

- Villagers were suspicious, but two families in Rytwiany, near Staszów, nevertheless managed to successfully protect and provide for the Mandel family, consisting of parents with four children.<sup>2393</sup>
- Many villagers in Głuchów, near Łańcut, took an active part in sheltering Maria Blazer and her son Tadeusz; the entire community supported the effort.<sup>2394</sup>
- An illiterate Jewish woman who survived in a village near Lublin acknowledged that, “the entire village rescued me. They all wanted me to survive. And when the Germans were routed, I left the village and shall never return there.” When asked why she didn’t want to see the people who saved her life, she replied, “Because I would be beholden to the entire village. So I left and won’t return.”<sup>2395</sup>
- Marianna Krasnodębska (née Jarosz), whose family was awarded by Yad Vashem for rescuing thirteen Jews in Piaski, near Lublin, stated: “With absolute confidence and with a clear conscience, I can say that none of the residents of Piaski ever betrayed the Jews in hiding. They might have been too afraid to help, but [they] would not sell one out. There were two informers, but they were executed by the Home Army.”<sup>2396</sup>
- Hanka Drescher recalled how a group of Jews hiding in the forest near Piaski survived by begging for food from farmers.<sup>2397</sup>
- The villagers of Wola Przybysławska, near Lublin, took turns sheltering and caring for a young Jewish survivor of a German raid on a forest bunker. She was passed from one home to another, thus implicating many in the “crime,” and thereby strengthening the bond of complicity among all who were aware.<sup>2398</sup>
- A Jewish woman named Berkowa (née Zelman) was rescued by Jan Łoś in the village of Żabno, near Żółkiewka. Although this was widely known, no one betrayed her.

<sup>2391</sup> Gabriel Singer, “As Beasts in the Woods,” in Elhanan Ehrlich, ed., *Sefer Staszow* (Tel Aviv: Organization of Staszowites in Israel with the Assistance of the Staszowite Organizations in the Diaspora, 1962), xviii (English section).

<sup>2392</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 197, and vol. 5, 670.

<sup>2393</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 609–10.

<sup>2394</sup> Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945*, 63.

<sup>2395</sup> Klara Mirska, *W cieniu wiecznego strachu: Wspomnienia* (Paris, n.p.: 1980), 455.

<sup>2396</sup> *Polacy ratujący Żydów w czasie Zagłady / Poles Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust* (2008), 79.

<sup>2397</sup> Wang, *Los niños escondidos*, 125–26.

<sup>2398</sup> Shiye Goldberg (Shie Chehever), *The Undefeated* (Tel Aviv: H. Leivick Publishing House, 1985), 166–67; Zofia Krzyżanowska, “W naszym domu ukrywana była mała Żydóweczka,” Ośrodek “Brama Grodzka—Teatr NN,” Internet: [http://teatrnn.pl/historiamowiona/swiadek/Krzy%C5%BCanowska%2C\\_Zofia\\_%281942-%29?tar=85329](http://teatrnn.pl/historiamowiona/swiadek/Krzy%C5%BCanowska%2C_Zofia_%281942-%29?tar=85329); “Polacy na ratunek Żydów: Historie niezwykłe: Wola Przybysławska,” May 10, 2018, TVP 3 Lublin, Internet: <http://lublin.tvp.pl/37148503/10-maja-2018>.

- The Wajc family—Mendel, Ryfka, and their two young sons, Jankiel and Zygmunt—survived in the village of Rożki, near Żółkiewka. All of the villagers knew that they were there.<sup>2399</sup>
- Hershel Mostyzer and Sara Fuks were directed by a mailman to the home of his mother, Franciszka Rybak, in the village of Rogalin, near Hrubieszów. A tailor by profession, Mostyzer did odd sewing jobs for his rescuer's tenants and her neighbours in order to help with their support. Despite misgivings this gave rise to among some villagers (because of the danger this created for the village), the arrangement was not disrupted.<sup>2400</sup>
- A seven or eight-year-old Jewish boy named Abraham tended geese for a farmer near Sandomierz. The peasants referred to him as "Żydek" (the little Jew); he survived the war unharmed.<sup>2401</sup>
- The Idasiak family took in a teenage Jewish boy by the name of Dawid, whom they sheltered for almost two years near Jedwabne. Neighbours, aware that he was Jewish, contributed to his care. He herded cows and played with the village children.<sup>2402</sup>
- A nine-year-old Jewish boy by the name of Wintluk (Wintel) had lost his mother and had three fingers shot off by the Germans while escaping. He found refuge with a poor Polish family in Mulawicze, near Bielsk Podlaski. Eventually, the whole community took part in caring for and protecting him. "The entire village, which was more aware of the danger, took responsibility for his survival. The village administrator gave warning of visits by the Germans, who were stationed in the village school. Thanks to this collective effort, the boy survived the war."<sup>2403</sup>
- Alfreda and Bolesław Pietraszek sheltered several Jewish families—eighteen persons all told—on their farm in Czekanów, near Sokołów Podlaski, for two years. If only just to feed that many people, the Pietraszeks obviously needed help. In fact, they did rely on the assistance of neighbours to feed their charges. All it would have taken was one individual to betray them. Yet, although the presence of the Jews was known to many villagers, no one betrayed them.<sup>2404</sup>
- Two young Jewish men were passed from farmer to farmer in the village of Zdziebórz, near Wyszaków. Eventually they were accepted into the Home Army.<sup>2405</sup>

<sup>2399</sup> Chaim Zylberklang, *Z Żółkiewki do Erec Israel: Przez Kotłas, Buzułuk, Ural, Polskę, Niemcy i Francję*, 2nd rev. and expanded ed. (Lublin: Akko, 2004), 169, 171–72.

<sup>2400</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 684.

<sup>2401</sup> Feldenkreis-Grinbal, *Eth Ezkera—Whenever I Remember*, 544.

<sup>2402</sup> B. Idasiak, "Jedwabne: Dlaczego kłamstwa?," *Nasz Dziennik*, February 26, 2001.

<sup>2403</sup> Alina Cała, *The Image of the Jew in Polish Folk Culture* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1995), 209–10.

<sup>2404</sup> "A Race for Life—Rescued: Ben Zion Sela (Solarz)," PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/your-stories/race-life-rescued-ben-zion-sela-solarz>; Testimony of Josek Kopyto, JHI, record group 301, no. 4085. Two Jewish families consisting of six people were also sheltered in Czekanów by the Fink family. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 215–16.

<sup>2405</sup> Krystian Brodacki, "Musimy ich uszanować!," *Tygodnik Solidarność*, December 17, 2004.

- Yitzhak Kuniak of Kałuszyn did sewing for the peasants among whom he hid. He moved about in several villages that gave him food and shelter.<sup>2406</sup>
- A teenaged boy, Sven Sonnenberg, lived with his mother in a damaged, abandoned house in Drzewica, where he openly played and mingled with the village boys. He survived the war despite his Semitic appearance.<sup>2407</sup>
- A poor Jewish tailor moved from home to home in the village of Dąbrowica, near Ulanów. He lived to see the end of the war.<sup>2408</sup>
- Jerzy and Irena Krępeć (awarded by Yad Vashem) sheltered and otherwise assisted a number of Jews on their farm in Gołębki, near Warsaw. Their son, in his mid-teens at the time, recalled, “[T]he fact that they were hiding Jews was an open secret in the village. At times, there were 20 or 30 people living on the farm. Many of the visitors were urban Jews who spoke Polish with an accent. Their children attended underground schools that moved from house to house. ‘The neighbors knew. It would have been impossible to manage this without people finding out. But everyone knew they had to keep quiet—it was a matter of life or death.’” In fact, many of the Krępeć’s Polish neighbours helped, “if only to provide a meal.”<sup>2409</sup>
- Hinda Żaboklicka was rescued by the Salicki family in the village of Złotokłós, near Warsaw. The rescuers had been her teachers before the war. They smuggled her out of the ghetto in Kałuszyn and brought her to their home. They obtained false identification for her and kept her throughout the occupation, even though neighbours suspected she was Jewish and some expressed concerns about the risk this posed.<sup>2410</sup>
- After living in Warsaw on Aryan papers, passing as a Christian, Joseph Dattner moved to a village outside Warsaw in May 1944. He moved from house to house, working as a tailor in exchange for food and lodging. Dattner recalls: “I survived, like my brothers, by pretending to be Christian. I took the name Poluk but I was well-known and most people knew I was Jewish.”<sup>2411</sup>
- After leaving the ghetto in Jeżów, Nathan Gold received extensive support from Poles in the nearby villages of Przybyszycze and Słupia. “Some 10 families in the villages

<sup>2406</sup> Layb Rochman, “With Kuniak in Hiding,” in Arie Shamri and Sh. Soroka, eds., *Sefer Kaluszyn: Geheylt der khorev gevorener kehile* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Kaluszyn in Israel, 1961), 437 ff., translated as *The Memorial Book of Kaluszyn*, Internet: <http://jewishgen.org/Yizkor/kaluszyn/Kaluszyn.html>.

<sup>2407</sup> Sonnenberg, *A Two Stop Journey to Hell*.

<sup>2408</sup> Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part 2, 161–62.

<sup>2409</sup> Peggy Curran, “Decent people: Polish couple honored for saving Jews from Nazis,” *Montreal Gazette*, December 10, 1994; Janice Arnold, “Polish widow made Righteous Gentile,” *The Canadian Jewish News* [Montreal], January 26, 1995; Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Żegota*, 1st ed., 141–43; Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Żegota*, 2nd ed., 131–32; Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Code Name: Żegota*, 3rd ed., 140–43.

<sup>2410</sup> Joanna Michlic, “Stories of Rescue Activities in the Letters of Jewish Survivors about Christian Polish Rescuers, 1944–1949,” in Dynner and Guesnet, *Warsaw*, 530–31.

<sup>2411</sup> Interview with Joseph Dattner, December 20, 1988, Phoenix Holocaust Survivors’ Association in affiliation with the Cline Library of Northern Arizona University; Al Sokol, “Holocaust Theme Underscores Work of Artist,” *Toronto Star*, November 7, 1996.

took turns hiding him, each one not knowing about the other's activities. They were poor people, many of the older ones illiterate, but all opened their hearts and their homes to him."<sup>2412</sup> Would it have been possible to keep this rescue a secret?

- Ludwika Fiszer was one of three women who escaped naked from an execution pit where Jews from the Poniatowa labour camp were taken. Roaming from village to village, despite their dishevelled appearances, they were helped in various ways, even though the peasants were clearly terrified of retaliation from the Germans and Ukrainian guards. Although peasants were reluctant to have them around, and few would let them stay for any length of time, no one betrayed them. After several weeks, they met up with a Polish woman who took them to Warsaw.<sup>2413</sup>
- In June 1943, Hary (Tzvi) Norich (b. 1928) left the ghetto in Będzin and found shelter with Andrzej and Maria Skop in the village of Woźniki, south of Częstochowa. He stayed with the Skops for eight months, despite the fact that quite a few residents of Chorzów could have recognized him as Jewish—indeed, that happened several times—and many people in Woźniki had known his parents, who lived there for a while after their wedding, and they recognized his resemblance to them. Norich understood that he must look for a different hideout so as not to endanger the Skops excessively. He survived the war with the help of another Polish family.<sup>2414</sup>
- David Danieli, a nine-year-old boy from Rybnik, was taken in by a Polish family who looked after him devotedly and saw to all his needs. Much later, her realized that many people had known he was Jewish. He appreciated their collective restraint, as (obviously) not one of them ever compromised his adoptive parents.<sup>2415</sup>
- After escaping from the Sosnowiec ghetto, Adela Grünfeld and her son, Leon, took up residence in Bujaków, near Bielsko-Biała, in the Beskid Mountains. She was recognized by Bolesław Blachura, a friend from before the war and an underground member hiding in the same village with the Wawak and Porębski families. Adela brought many other Jews to the village, including her sister and brother-in-law. They stayed in the barn or in the attic, and only her son, Leon, lived openly in the house. When asked about the danger of being denounced because of this large movement of people, Władysław Porębski answered: "I was only afraid of [being denounced by] Germans, not Poles, because one of them [the Poles] was in Auschwitz, another in forced labour, transported to Germany, another one was a partisan, yet another left in 1939 and never came back... These things united people."<sup>2416</sup>
- Hania Gross was taken in by the Matlak family of Przeciszów, a village near Oświęcim, at the age of nine. They passed her off as a distant relative, but neighbours

<sup>2412</sup> Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Żegota*, 1st ed., 143–44; Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Żegota*, 2nd ed., 133; Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Code Name: Żegota*, 3rd ed., 43.

<sup>2413</sup> Account of Ludwika Fiszer in the web site *Women and the Holocaust* (Personal Reflections—In Ghettos/Camps), Internet: <http://www.interlog.com/~mighty/personal/ludwika.html>.

<sup>2414</sup> Skop Family, RD.

<sup>2415</sup> Bogner, *At the Mercy of Strangers*, 62–63.

<sup>2416</sup> *Polacy ratujący Żydów w czasie Zagłady / Poles Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust* (2009), 115. See also *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 634–35.

became suspicious. Notwithstanding the danger it posed to their lives and the lives of others, the Matlaks continued to care for Hania as if she were their own flesh and blood. “They were afraid they might get denounced. Fortunately, no one did.” Hania lived a normal life, playing with other children, attending church—not in hiding at all.<sup>2417</sup>

- A Jew from Kraków by the name of Gelbart settled in the nearby village of Wyciąże with his wife and child. He provided tailoring services in exchange for board as they moved from cottage to cottage. They were known to hundreds of people ... and they survived the occupation.<sup>2418</sup>
- Jan Wlazło, a farmer who lived in Liszki, near Kraków, took in as tenants a Jewish family passing as Poles. Although they looked Jewish, and everybody knew about their presence, they survived the German occupation.<sup>2419</sup>
- The Pinkies family was rescued by the residents of the hamlet of Czyżyczka, on the outskirts of Gierczyce, near Bochnia.<sup>2420</sup>
- Lidia Parecka, descended from a family of converts in Lwów, lived openly with Jadwiga and Stanisław Skarżyński in Piaski, near the village of Czchów, not far from Brzesko. Although she had marked Semitic features, and her Jewish origin was widely suspected, no one betrayed her.<sup>2421</sup>
- Bogusława Lifszyc was smuggled out of the Warsaw ghetto and brought to the village of Laskowa, near Nowy Sącz, where she was taken in by the Kraśny family. Though posing as a Catholic, under the name Halina Pisz, her dark features made her stand out, and it was evident to the villagers that she was Jewish. Nevertheless, she survived the war.<sup>2422</sup>
- It was an open secret that Ewa Rajec, the two-year-old child being cared for by Mieczysława Foryniak in the village of Dursztyn, near Nowy Targ, was the daughter of the local Jewish doctor. To assist her cover, the child was baptized by a local priest. Her parents were in hiding nearby.<sup>2423</sup>
- A lay orphanage (run by Jadwiga Strzałecka and financed by the Central Relief Council), which moved from Warsaw to Poronin, near Zakopane, after the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, included both children (about a dozen) and staff members who were Jewish. The director’s Polish staff either knew or surmised the truth. Not one of their Jewish children or personnel was fell into German hands.<sup>2424</sup>

<sup>2417</sup> *Polacy ratujący Żydów w czasie Zagłady / Poles Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust* (2008), 97.

<sup>2418</sup> Krystyna Samsonowska, “Pomoc dla Żydów krakowskich w okresie okupacja hitlerowskiej,” in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 856.

<sup>2419</sup> Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 346.

<sup>2420</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 815.

<sup>2421</sup> Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 371–72.

<sup>2422</sup> Knap, “*Jak ci się uda uratować, pamiętaj*”, 37–38.

<sup>2423</sup> Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 171–78

<sup>2424</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 87, 93; *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 760 (Jadwiga Strzałecka and Janusz Strzałecki). One of the Jewish charges, Janina Hescheles Altman from Lwów (b. 1931), penned a memoir, *Oczyrna dwunastoletniej*

- Alter Szymaszynowicz survived by making soap for villagers near Opoczno and Końskie in exchange for food and shelter.<sup>2425</sup>
- In the village of Dziurków, near Radom, a local Jew lived openly throughout the war with one or the other of two Polish families. His assumed identity was furnished by the Home Army, and he even did seasonal work for the Germans without getting caught.<sup>2426</sup>
- In the village of Tarłów, between Zwoleń and Sandomierz, Józef and Wiktoria Krawczyk agreed to shelter Ewa Górecka, the three-year-old daughter of a Jewish woman whom they did not know. They passed her off as their granddaughter, even though their two adult sons were childless, and the neighbours knew she was not their granddaughter. They kept the child until 1949, when she was taken from them by a Jewish agent.<sup>2427</sup>
- A Jew passing as a Christian became a driver and had to transport some German officials to his hometown of Wierzbnik. “How come no one recognized me?” he wondered. “There are many gentiles who knew me in the town where I was born and raised and still I was not exposed.” After the war, it dawned on him that he had indeed been recognized. He just wasn’t exposed because none of his former acquaintances gave him away.<sup>2428</sup>
- The Konarski and Mermer families sheltered seven Jews who escaped from the Hassag labour camp for twenty-two months. They kept them in the attic of their house in the village of Komorniki, on the outskirts of Częstochowa. Their neighbours were aware of what was going on, but no one gave them away.<sup>2429</sup>
- In the village of Olsztyn, near Częstochowa, four Jewish families passed as Polish Christians with the collusion of the villagers.<sup>2430</sup>
- After escaping from the Częstochowa ghetto, Ignacy Jakobson and his colleagues joined a partisan unit near Konięcpol. They could count on the help of a priest and a number of his parishioners in Kościelna. “[T]he farmers in that village were most favourably disposed to us,” he recalled.<sup>2431</sup>
- Another eyewitness writes: “In Kielce Voivodship I know of cases where an entire village knew that a Jew or a Jewess were hiding out, disguised in peasant clothes,

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*dziewczynski*, which translated as: Janina Heschel, *My Lvov: Holocaust Memoir of a Twelve-Year-Old Girl* (Oegstgeest, The Netherlands: Amsterdam Publishers, 2020).

<sup>2425</sup> Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień...*, 125–26.

<sup>2426</sup> Tadeusz Kozłowski, “Spotkanie z żydowskim kolegą po 50 latach,” *Gazeta* [Toronto], May 12–14, 1995.

<sup>2427</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 579–80.

<sup>2428</sup> Menachem Minberg, “In the Jaws of Destiny,” in Schutzman, *Wierzbnik-Starachowitz*, 201ff, translated as *Wierzbnik-Starachowitz: A Memorial Book*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/wierzbnik/wierzbnik.html>.

<sup>2429</sup> “Sprawiedliwy Wśród Narodów Świata,” *Puls Regionu* [Częstochowa], May 2008 <http://region.czest.pl/cz50/sprawiedliwy.php>.

<sup>2430</sup> Morgens, *Years at the Edge of Existence*, 97, 99.

<sup>2431</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 588–89.

and no one betrayed them even though they were poor Jews who not only could not pay for their silence but had to be fed, clothed and housed.”<sup>2432</sup>

- A similar attitude in several villages near Łowicz is described by Joseph Szmekura.<sup>2433</sup>
- Hanna Mesz, along with her mother, spent the period of September 1944 to February 1945 in the village of Korzeniówka, near Grójec, working for various farmers who would have been suspicious (and probably understood) that they were Jewish.<sup>2434</sup>
- Zygmunt Srul Warszawer lay low for 26 months, moving from place to place among numerous villages (such as Wielki Las) in the triangle formed by Łaskarzew, Sobole and Wilga, “visiting every farm because he figured that if everyone helped him no one would turn him in—to do so would mean self-destruction.” Not only did no one turn him in, but no one turned him away, empty handed. “No one ever refused to help you?’ ‘No, not food! In twenty-six months, not once. Sometimes they were afraid to let me into the house, or into the barn. It varied, but their food they shared.”<sup>2435</sup> In another testimony, Warszawer mentions additional villages: Kownacica, Gończyce, Leokadia, Sośninka, Izdebno, Zygmunty, Romanów.<sup>2436</sup>
- Jankiel Grynblat (Grynblatt) found shelter with farmers he knew in the villages of Koryczany, Sokola, Kokoszka and Feliksin, east of Żelechów. He worked for their families as a tailor. His presence was also known to other villagers, and they treated him well.<sup>2437</sup>
- The young sons of Janina Dulman—Jerzy and Władysław, whose mother had married a Jew and converted to Judaism before the war—were sheltered by Janina’s younger sister (their aunt), Władysława Kaszubska of Żelechów. She hid them with different people in the surrounding villages until the war was over.<sup>2438</sup>
- Lea Starowiejska, a young girl with Semitic features, somehow made her way from Warsaw to Żeliszew Podkościelny, a village between Mińsk Mazowiecki and Siedlce. She was taken in there by Rev. Julian Borkowski, the local pastor, who taught her Catholic prayers so she could pass for a Polish orphan. The Górczyńskis answered his appeal for a Polish family to accept her. They lived in the hamlet of Łęki, and they treated her like a daughter. Everyone there knew that the child was Jewish. No one betrayed them.<sup>2439</sup>

<sup>2432</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 361.

<sup>2433</sup> Gedaliah Shaiak, ed., *Łowicz, A Town in Mazovia: Memorial Book* (Tel Aviv: Lowitcher Landsmanshaften in Melbourne and Sydney, Australia, 1966), xvi–xvii.

<sup>2434</sup> Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 1, 120–23.

<sup>2435</sup> Małgorzata Niezabitowska, *Remnants: The Last Jews of Poland* (New York: Friendly Press, 1986), 118–24.

<sup>2436</sup> Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 80.

<sup>2437</sup> Testimony of Jankiel Grynblat, JHI, record group 301, no. 4800, reproduced in Diatłowski and Roszkowski, *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945*, vol. 2, 140.

<sup>2438</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 569–70.

<sup>2439</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 557; Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 1021; Kopówka and Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki*, 304; *Polacy ratujący Żydów w czasie Zagłady / Poles Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust* (2008), 53.

- Eva Safszycka, not yet 20 when she left the Siedlce ghetto, obtained false identity documents with the help of a Pole, a stranger she happened to encounter, and took a position as a domestic on the estate that was owned by another Pole. She recalled, “I met with so much kindness from the Poles, so many were decent and helpful that it is unbelievable. ... They hid other Jews, one of them a girl of eleven.”<sup>2440</sup>
- Dressed as a peasant, Tema Rotman-Weinstock of Frampol, near Biłgoraj, roamed the familiar countryside—Trzęsiny, Gorajec, Czarnystok, Smoryń, Kajetanówka—moving from employer to employer, most of whom were hungry themselves and had little to share with her. She met a cousin who lived with his wife in a bunker in the forest, but he refused to let her join them. Once, when she was on the verge of collapse, kind peasants took her into their home. After a month, afraid to keep her any longer, they directed Tema to a woman who lived on a farm with her daughter in the village of Kajetanówka. Neighbours became distressed, yet she remained there for the duration of the war. “Fortunately, no bad consequences followed because she found a powerful protector in the local priest. He baptized Tema and defended her ... ‘The priest stood up for me, arguing that conversion was a wonderful Christian deed.’”<sup>2441</sup>
- In another village named Kajetanówka, near Bychawa, four-year-old Rózia Bejman was taken in by the Dudziak family, who passed her off as a relative and enrolled her in the village school. The child had Semitic features, people suspected she was Jewish, and she survived the war in that setting.<sup>2442</sup>
- Three farmers from the villages of Kajetanówka and nearby Bystrzyca Stara participated in the rescue of Lejzor Zandberg, who stayed with the Dziejdzic, Niezgoda and Woś families, spending several weeks at a time with each family.<sup>2443</sup> Zandberg recalled that he looked for help with Polish acquaintances: “[I]n Strzyżewice, Bystrzyca Stara and Nowa, as well as in surrounding places where I knew almost everyone, especially the young people. The Poles who helped me to survive were well-known to me and easy for me to contact. In autumn, winter and early spring, I hid in attics and sheds. In other times of the year, especially during summer, I hid in the crop fields, amongst bushes and in other remote places.”<sup>2444</sup>
- A number of Jews were sheltered by villagers in a small unidentified locality outside Warsaw; the entire village—including the village head and local priest—was complicit.<sup>2445</sup>

<sup>2440</sup> Tec, *Resilience and Courage*, 224.

<sup>2441</sup> Tec, *Resilience and Courage*, 227–29; Testimony of Tema Wajnsztok, JHI, record group 301, no. 7214.

<sup>2442</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 192; The Dudziak Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-dudziak-family-0>.

<sup>2443</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 201.

<sup>2444</sup> The Niezgoda Family and The Woś Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/it-was-awakening-humanity-story-niezgoda-family>; <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/their-calm-healed-our-sick-heart-story-wos-family>.

<sup>2445</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 572–73.

- Józefa Grzegorek of the village of Nowa Wieś, near Sochaczew, took in Jadwiga Becker (b. 1932), a Jewish girl from Zwierzyniec. She sheltered Jadwiga from 1942 until 1945 with the full awareness of the entire village.<sup>2446</sup>
- Brindla (Bronka) and Mojżesz Siekierka and their two sons were sheltered without compensation by the Bronisław Bylicki family in the village of Żwirówka, near Mińsk Mazowiecki. Stanisława Roś, a friend of Brindla's, brought them food and money for fuel on a regular basis, and Brindla would make the rounds in surrounding villages begging for food.<sup>2447</sup>
- Dr. Zofia Szymańska, who was sheltered by the Grey Ursulines in Ołtarzew (Ożarów), received material care and an abundance of spiritual comfort from many nuns and priests, free of any effort on their part to convert her. Her presence with the nuns was widely known among the villagers. A German military unit was, at one point, quartered in the convent. Dr. Szymańska's 10-year-old niece, who had a very Semitic appearance, was sheltered by the Sisters of the Immaculate Virgin Mary in Szymanów, along with more than a dozen other Jewish girls. All of the nuns were in on the secret, as were the lay staff, the parents of non-Jewish children, and Szymanów villagers. None of the Christian parents removed their children from the school, and in fact many of them contributed to the upkeep of the Jewish children. Dr. Szymańska wrote: "The children were under the protection of the entire convent and village. Not one traitor was to be found among them."<sup>2448</sup>
- Another example is provided by Mary Rolicka, whose mother, one other Jewish woman and two Jewish men were sheltered by the Sisters of Charity at the Helcel Institute in Kraków and later at an old age home in Szczawnica.<sup>2449</sup> The nuns' chaplain, Rev. Albin Małysiak, who assisted in the rescue, recalled, "All of the charges of the institute as well as the personnel (nuns and lay staff) knew that there were Jews hidden among us. It was impossible to conceal that fact, even though it was known what danger faced those who were responsible for sheltering Jews. After the passage of weeks and months many of the residents of Szczawnica learned of the Jewish boarders. No one betrayed this to the Germans who were stationed in the immediate vicinity."<sup>2450</sup>
- When Henryk Schönker was fingered in Wieliczka, near Kraków, by a boy who started chasing after him, passers-by ignored the boy's cry to "catch the Jew." No one made an effort to apprehend Henryk. One of the onlookers grabbed the boy and admonished him.<sup>2451</sup>

<sup>2446</sup> Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 210. In the 1960s, Jadwiga Becker, then Bekin, visited the Grzegorek family with her husband to express her gratitude. Józefa Grzegorek was recognized posthumously by Yad Vashem in 2017.

<sup>2447</sup> Justyna Kowalska-Leder, "Pomaganie skazanym na Zagładę jako źródło destrukcji—na podstawie dokumentów osobistych Brandli Siekierkowej," *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i Materiały*, vol. 8 (2012): 176–87.

<sup>2448</sup> Szymańska, *Byłam tylko lekarzem...*, 149–76.

<sup>2449</sup> Mary Rolicka, "A Memoir of Survival in Poland," *Midstream*, (April 1988), 26–27.

<sup>2450</sup> Albin Małysiak, "Zakład Helclów a ratowanie Żydów," *Tygodnik Powszechny* [Kraków], March 15, 1987.

<sup>2451</sup> See Schönker, *Dotknięcie anioła*, 135–36; Schönker, *The Touch of an Angel*, 120.

- Marian Małowist, who survived the war in the village of Jabłoń, near Parczew, said: “The family with whom I lived knew everything about me—in fact, two families knew. After the war it came out that more families knew, and also the chief of the navy-blue police, a Pole, a very decent person. [Professor] Juliusz Kleiner was hiding in the neighbourhood; in the next village there was a Jewess; in that area many were hiding.”<sup>2452</sup>
- Jewish partisan Gustaw Alef-Bolkowiak identifies the following villages in the Parczew-Ostrów Lubelski area as places where “almost the entire population was actively engaged in helping fugitives from the ghettos”: Rudka, Jedlanka, Makoszka, Tyśmienica and Bójki. He also mentions the village of Niedźwiada, near Opole Lubelskie, where foresters sheltered several Jewish families with the knowledge of the entire village.<sup>2453</sup>
- Some one hundred and fifty Poles were killed in mass executions in Białka in the Parczew forest, and in Sterdyń, near Sokołów Podlaski, for the extensive help those villages had been giving to fugitive Jews.<sup>2454</sup>
- More than a dozen villagers in Mętów, near Głusk, outside of Lublin, sheltered Jews.<sup>2455</sup>
- Several survivors recall the helpfulness and solidarity of the villagers of Lendowo, near Brańsk:  
 Liba Goldberg-Warobel (Luba Wrobel): “This village Landowa [Lendowo] had a good name among the Jews who were hiding in the area around Sokoly [Sokoły], and they regarded it as a paradise. Many Jews began to stream there. After two weeks, there wasn’t a house in Landowa where there weren’t three or four Jews.”<sup>2456</sup>  
 Tzipora Tabak-Burstein: “Finally, we came to the village of Landowa [Lendowo]. ... we knocked on the door of a house, not far from the forest. An old farmwoman brought us into the house. She gave us permission to sleep next to the warm stove. ... I remained alone with the old farmwoman. ... Over time, it became known to all of [the villagers] that I was not related to her family and that I didn’t even know how to speak Polish. The farmwoman did not hesitate to admit that she had adopted me, a Jewish girl, as her daughter. ... The farmwoman began to teach me Christian

<sup>2452</sup> “Marian Małowist on History and Historians,” *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 13 (2000): 338.

<sup>2453</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 533–34.

<sup>2454</sup> Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, 123–24, 228.

<sup>2455</sup> Dariusz Libionka, “Polska ludność chrześcijańska wobec eksterminacji Żydów—dystrykt lubelski,” in Dariusz Libionka, ed., *Akcja Reinhardt: Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie* (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2004), 325.

<sup>2456</sup> Liba Goldberg-Warobel, “In a Struggle for Life,” in Kalisher, *Sokoly*, 188–200, translated as *Sokoly: In the Fight for Life*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokoly/sokoly.html>. See also Goldberg, *A Sparkle of Hope*, at p. 63: “This village Lendowo became a refuge for a lot of wandering Jews, they called this village the Garden of Eden. ... here they opened wide the doors without having any fear. Soon there were Jews in every house.”

prayers, and on Sundays I went with her to church. ... The *goyim*, residents of the village who knew I was Jewish, did not hand me over to the Germans.”<sup>2457</sup>

- Several Jews, among them Ida Lewartowska and her daughter, were hidden in a forest bunker near the village of Leńce, just north of Białystok. They survived with the help of Poles. The villagers in the area from Nowe Aleksandrowo, Dobrzyniewo Fabryczne and Letniki knew about these Jews, but no one denounced them.<sup>2458</sup>
- A number of Jewish fugitives took refuge in a forest near the village of Jaświły, near Mońki, where many villagers brought them food.<sup>2459</sup>
- Szymon Datner recalled that his Jewish partisan group “Forojs” (Forward), consisting of escapees from the Białystok ghetto, was assisted by nearly all of the villagers of Dworzysk. Yad Vashem recognized only three of them. Among those Datner mentions as offering food and shelter to the partisans were Alfons and Stefania Radziwanowski, Zachariasz and Józef Słowiński, Afanazy Kaczanowski, and the Tur, Cholewski, Czaban, Kuklik and Kwiatkowski families. In truth, the entire village took part in or was aware of this assistance, and no one betrayed the partisans or rescuers.<sup>2460</sup>
- Maria Kazuczyk, a widow who lived alone in a small house on the edge of the village of Janowicze, near Białystok, sheltered Mira Kwasowicer. Villagers became aware of Mira’s presence, but no one betrayed them. The village headman, who was responsible for registering all residents under pain of death, feared for the lives of his villagers and wanted Mira to leave. Maria Kazuczyk appealed to the local priest, in the nearby village of Juchnowiec Kościelny. He stood up for Maria, protected her charge, and the arrangement was allowed to persist.<sup>2461</sup>
- Rywka Chus and her husband, a grain merchant from Ostrów Mazowiecka, were protected by the villagers of Króle Duże. Rywka and her husband survived the war.<sup>2462</sup>
- Kalmen Wewryk describes the assistance he received, after his escape from the Sobibór death camp, from numerous peasants—decent but frightened Catholic

<sup>2457</sup> Tzipora Tabka-Bustein, “The Shepherdess Returns to Her People,” in Kalisher, *Sokoly*, 201–7, translated as *Sokoly: In the Fight for Life*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokoly/sokoly.html>.

<sup>2458</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 741–42; Datner, *Las sprawiedliwych*, 61.

<sup>2459</sup> Waldemar Monkiewicz and Józef Kowalczyk, “Pomoc Żydom w regionie białostockim podczas II wojny światowej,” *Studia Podlaskie*, vol. 2 (1989): 362–79, at p. 372.

<sup>2460</sup> Szymon Datner, “Szkice do studiów nad dziejami żydowskiego ruchu partyzanckiego w Okręgu białostockim (1941–1944),” *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, no. 73 (January–March 1970): 3–46, at pp. 45–46; Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 348–50; Rogalewska, *Getto białostockie*, 196.

<sup>2461</sup> Kazuczyk Family, RD; Testimony of Mira Kwasowicer-Glikfeld, JHI, record group 301, no. 2007; Marianna Kazuczyk, *Memory and Identity*, Internet: <http://pamiecitozasamosc.pl/en/marianna-kazuczyk-her-husband-son-zygmunt-maria-kazuczyk>.

<sup>2462</sup> Andrzej Żbikowski, *U genezy Jedwabnego: Żydzi na Kresach Północno-Wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej. Wrzesień 1939–lipiec 1941* (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2006), 69.

Poles and some Ukrainian Baptists—as he wandered from village to village in an area south of Chełm. A family of five Jews hid in Teresin, near Chełm: “Everybody in the hamlet knew that this family was hiding, but nobody knew where and they didn’t want to know. Moishe told me how they were loved in that hamlet—there were decent people there.”<sup>2463</sup>

- The teenaged Marian Finkielman worked as an itinerant farmhand in the vicinity of Dubeczno. “In 1941 and 1942 many young Jews wandered from village to village, offering their services in exchange for room and board. The peasant farmers knew who they were, and for some time took advantage of their help, just as the farmer in the village of Kozaki benefited from my situation. ... Luckily, during my stay there from April through July 1942, ... none of the inhabitants of the village, Ukrainians or Poles, informed on Jurek’s [a Jewish boy from Warsaw who also worked as a herdsman] or my existence. It seemed that there were no informants in this village ...”<sup>2464</sup>
- Cypora Frydman, the daughter of a mill owner in Nowy Orzechów, near Ostrów Lubelski, hid in a hut near a lake. She recalled, “All the peasants in the village knew me because all of them used to come to our mill, but not one of them denounced me even though everyone knew I was hiding near the lake. Sometimes they gave me bread for free, sometimes a little milk ... I used to return from the village late at night and hid in my hut.”<sup>2465</sup>
- The villagers of Kubra, near Radziłów, north of Łomża, did not betray the family of Helena Chilewicz when the Gestapo came looking for them in July 1942. Though penniless, moving from village to village, she and her mother survived the war.<sup>2466</sup>
- Chaya and Yisrael Finkielsztejn and their four children posed as Christian Poles in the village of Konopki-Błonie, near Radziłów, moving around among several farmers they knew in the area.<sup>2467</sup> They survived the war.
- Irena Sznycer, a young Jewish girl with strikingly Semitic features, was sheltered by the Brogowski family in the village of Bełżec, within site of the death camp. “I was well cared for by that lady [Cecylia Brogowska] and was not afraid of anything,”

<sup>2463</sup> Kalmén Wawryk, *To Sobibor and Back: An Eyewitness Account* (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies, and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 1999), 66–68, 71.

<sup>2464</sup> Marian Finkielman, *Out of the Ghetto: A Young Jewish Orphan Boy’s Struggle for Survival* (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 2000), 34–36; Marian (Finkielman) Domanski, *Fleeing from the Hunter* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2010), 34–35.

<sup>2465</sup> Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień...*, 89.

<sup>2466</sup> Danuta and Aleksander Wroniszewski, “... aby żyć,” *Kontakty-Łomżyński Tygodnik Społeczny*, July 10, 1988.

<sup>2467</sup> Waldemar Monkiewicz and Józef Kowalczyk, “Pomoc Żydom w regionie białostockim podczas II wojny światowej,” *Studia Podlaskie*, vol. 2 (1989): 362–79, at p. 365; Machcewicz and Persak, *Wokół Jedwabnego*, vol. 1, 317 n.58; Testimony of Israel and Chaia Finkelstein, YVA, file 0.3/3033 (Item 3556665).

Irena recalled. “Although the neighbours knew I was Jewish, this lady had no enemies so nothing [bad] could happen.”<sup>2468</sup>

- Julia Pępiak, also of Beżec, sheltered and successfully protected Salomea Helman, her friend and former neighbour, and Salomea’s young daughter, Bronia. The Helmans’ presence was an open secret in the village.<sup>2469</sup>
- In Majdan Nepryski, west of Tomaszów Lubelski, several families took part in caring for a Jewish girl thrown from a train on its way to Beżec.<sup>2470</sup>
- Mirla Frydrich (Szternzys) of Żółkiewka was shot in the thigh when she jumped from a train headed for the Beżec death camp. A Pole who happened to be driving by took her in his carriage and nursed her to health, with the help of another Pole. As Mirla returned to Żółkiewka, she received assistance from a number of Poles in several nearby villages.<sup>2471</sup>
- About 12 miles outside Lwów, Abraham Trasawucki, dressed only in rags, jumped from a death train on its way to Beżec in the middle of winter. Although he was easily identifiable as a Jew on the run, rather than betray him, Polish villagers at the farmsteads he randomly called on offered temporary shelter, food, clothing, and even money. He was given rides in the wagons of Polish farmers, sold a train ticket by an official, allowed on the train by a guard who checked his ticket, and ignored by passengers who instantly identified him as a Jew.<sup>2472</sup>
- Ryfka Goldiner, a newborn at the time, was sheltered by Stanisław and Helena Wiśliński in Beżyce, near Lublin. Although the villagers were aware of Ryfka’s origin, no one took it to the authorities. The local priest would not formally baptize the child because he thought that her parents might survive the war. In fact, they did survive, and eventually they reclaimed their daughter.<sup>2473</sup>
- After her parents were shot by the Germans, villagers urged Edwarda Kleinfeld (later Rorat, b. 1935) and her older sister to run away. The head of the village of

<sup>2468</sup> Teresa Prekerowa, “Stosunek ludności polskiej do żydowskich uciekinierów z obozów zagłady w Treblince, Sobiborze i Beżcu w świetle relacji żydowskich i polskich,” *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu—Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, vol. 35 (1993): 104, based on the testimony of Irena Schnitzer (Sznycer), JHI, record group 301, no. 4638. The rescuers of Irena Sznycer, Maciej and Cecylia Brogowski, were recognized by Yad Vashem in 2008. See Brogowski Family, RD; The Brogowski Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-brogowski-family-0>; “Zagłada Żydów Biecha—Sprawiedliwi wśród Narodów Świata,” Internet: <http://krzyprzy.zso4.gliwice.pl/zaglada/sprawiedliwi/sprawiedliwi.htm>.

<sup>2469</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 597; Zuzanna Schnepf-Kolacz, “Pomoc Polaków dla Żydów na wsi w czasie okupacji niemieckiej: Próba opisu na przykładzie Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata,” in Engelking and Grabowski, *Zarys krajobrazu*, 236; Karolina Dzieciołowska, “‘I forgot about the terror, the fear and the consequences.’ The Story of Julia Pępiak,” PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/i-forgot-about-terror-fear-and-consequences-story-julia-pepiak>.

<sup>2470</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 709–10.

<sup>2471</sup> Zylberklang, *Z Żółkiewki do Erec Israel*, 181–84.

<sup>2472</sup> Abraham Tracy, *To Speak for the Silenced* (Jerusalem and New York: Devora, 2007), 165–72.

<sup>2473</sup> Dąbrowska, *Światła w ciemności*, 56–61.

Olszanka, near Lublin, a prewar acquaintance of Edwarda's father, took an interest in the girls' fate. He arranged for each of them to work on separate farms. Edwarda was eventually taken in by Jan and Stefania Rorat, a poor, elderly couple who treated her like their own daughter. Her Jewishness was an open secret in Olszanka and the nearby village of Krzczonów, where she attended school. Edwarda enjoyed the protection of her teachers, who would hide her when the Germans came to the village. The parish priest, who was very fond of her, did not press her to convert. Both Edwarda and her sister survived the war.<sup>2474</sup>

- Luba Hochlerer, ten years of age, lived openly with Józef and Bronisława Zajęc in the hamlet of Witoldów, near Wojsławice, where she attended the village school. She survived the war there.<sup>2475</sup>
- According to three separate testimonies of Jewish escapees from the death camps of Treblinka and Sobibór, they "walked about the villages" and were "known to everybody," without betrayal or harm at the hands of the local Polish inhabitants.<sup>2476</sup>
- After escaping from Treblinka, Szymon Goldberg made his way to the villages of Kukawki, Basinów and Kiciny, just beyond Łochów, where farmers protected him. He recalled, "There were good people, they helped, they gave me food."<sup>2477</sup>
- Mieczysław Grajewski (later Martin Gray), who escaped from the Treblinka death camp, recalled the help he received from peasants: "I was free. I walked to a village. ... I knocked to ask for bread. The peasants looked at me in silence. 'Bread, bread.' They saw my red hands, torn jacket, worn-out slippers, and handed me some hard, gray crusts. A peasant woman, huddled in shawls, gave me a bowl of hot milk and a bag. We didn't talk: my body had turned red and blue from the blows and the cold, and my clothes, everything proclaimed Jew! But they gave me bread. Thank you Polish peasants. I slept in a stable near the animals, taking a little warm milk from the cow in the morning. My bag filled with bread."<sup>2478</sup>
- A Jew from Serock, north of Warsaw, escaped from a German execution site badly wounded. A great many of the villagers where he sought refuge took part in caring for him.<sup>2479</sup>

<sup>2474</sup> Rorat Family, RD; Oral history interviews with Edwarda Rorat, April 15, 1995 and February 25, 1996, USHMM, RG-50.030.0319 and RG-50.549.01.0010, respectively.

<sup>2475</sup> Dąbrowska, *Światła w ciemności*, 106–7.

<sup>2476</sup> Teresa Prekerowa, "Stosunek ludności polskiej do żydowskich uciekinierów z obozów zagłady w Treblince, Sobiborze i Bełżcu w świetle relacji żydowskich i polskich," *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu—Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, vol. 35 (1993): 108.

<sup>2477</sup> Testimony of Szymon Goldberg, JHI, record group 301, no. 656, noted in Józwiak, Mahorowska, and Umińska, *Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz / Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue*, vol. 1, 227.

<sup>2478</sup> Martin Gray and Max Gallo, *For Those I Loved* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1972), 178.

<sup>2479</sup> Michał Grynberg, *Żydzi w rejencji ciechanowskiej 1939–1942* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1984), 134.

- Numerous families from the village of Szreńsk, near Mława, extended help to Jews: Lendzion, Gross, Olczak, Siemiątkowski, Goczewski, Nydziński, Zarecki, and Miłobędzki.<sup>2480</sup>
- Izaak Zemelman of Płock recalled the assistance provided by a strikingly large number of persons in the village of Sikórz, where he and his family found shelter. He specifically mentioned the Stawiarski, Romanowski, Górski, Danielak, Adamski, Kłosiński, and other Polish families.<sup>2481</sup>
- In 1942, Fr. Jerzy Mirewicz, a Jesuit priest, escorted a Jewish fugitive by train from Biłgoraj to Milanówek, near Warsaw, so that he could join members of his family who were being hidden by a Christian family. Even though the priest had permission to travel, officials were constantly checking the papers of passengers. When the train reached Dęblin, a policeman came into the car and demanded to know if his companion was a Jew. Fortunately for the priest and the fugitive, the whole compartment came to their rescue by insisting that the priest was escorting a “lunatic” to a hospital asylum.<sup>2482</sup>
- Irena Bakowska, then a teenager, was in a group of six Jews being smuggled from Warsaw to the countryside: “We entered into a single train compartment occupied already by the Christian Poles ... We were greeted in a friendly manner, and the man sitting by himself moved over and sat with his four companions. ... The conductor, a Christian Pole, entered the compartment to check the tickets. ... we uncovered our armbands to identify ourselves. I watched the reaction of the Christian Polish passengers with great apprehension. ... But the attitude of the Christian passengers was sympathetic and not at all hostile. They started talking with us, and urged us to throw away our armbands and our Jewish identity. ... Those five people seemed truly to care about my survival, repeating over and over again that I could be saved and survive as a Pole. They persuaded me that all Poles did not hate us, did not wish us to perish.”<sup>2483</sup>
- Historian Raul Hilberg wrote: “A friend of mine, Bronia Klebanski, who is Jewish but lived on the ‘Aryan’ side of society and was an active member of the Jewish underground in the Białystok [Białystok] area, once told me a story of how she at a time took the train during the war, and was suddenly pointed out by a little girl who yelled ‘Jew!’ All the Polish passengers sat quietly, and nobody said anything to instigate further interest. This account is a small example of the general practice of non-collaboration among the Poles during the war.”<sup>2484</sup>
- A scene similar to the one described by Bronia Klebanski was observed by Szmul Zygielbojm, a respected Jewish member of the Polish National Council in London.

<sup>2480</sup> Grynberg, *Żydzi w rejencji ciechanowskiej 1939–1942*, 133, 134; Juszkiewicz, *Losy Żydów mławskich w okresie II-ej wojny światowej*, 121–22.

<sup>2481</sup> Jan Przedpeński, *Żydzi płoccy: Dzieje i martyrologia, 1939–1945* (Płock: Fraza, 1993), 52.

<sup>2482</sup> Lapomarda, *The Jesuits and the Third Reich*, 130.

<sup>2483</sup> Irena Bakowska, *Not All Was Lost: A Young Woman’s Memoir, 1939–1946* (Kingston, Ontario: Karijan, 1998), 142–44.

<sup>2484</sup> Interview with Professor Raul Hilberg, June 20, 2005, Internet: [http://www.maxveritas.com/pb/wp\\_1add70b0.html?0.611384753320024](http://www.maxveritas.com/pb/wp_1add70b0.html?0.611384753320024).

Zygielbojm recalled that when he was on his way to Kraków, he heard a Pole sermionizing on the Jews in the presence of other Poles. Finally, one of the Polish peasants who had heard enough of the anti-Semitic diatribe asked the man, "And where did you learn to preach so well in German?" The anti-Semite tried to respond but was drowned out by the laughter of the pro-Jewish Poles.<sup>2485</sup>

- Several Jews were hiding in the village of Osieczny, near Myślenice, south of Kraków. This was widely known, yet no one betrayed them.<sup>2486</sup>
- Janina Katz (b. 1939) was adopted by the Kapłański family of Dobczyce, south of Kraków. The Kapłańskis were prominent in their community, so it was impossible for the truth about Janina to have been obscure. The child lived unharmed with the Kapłańskis throughout the war.<sup>2487</sup>
- A number of Jews took refuge in a forest near the village of Kornatka. The entire village became aware of their presence. The priest from the nearby parish in Dobczyce urged his parishioners to help the Jewish fugitives, and not to betray them. Villagers provided them with food. During the winter months, they allowed them to stay overnight in their homes, barns and stables.<sup>2488</sup>
- A local Jewish farmer named Eichhorn was hidden by a Polish farmer in Stróža, near Limanowa for quite a long time. When a treacherous policeman learned of this, neighbours of the farmer took the fugitive in, passing him among themselves until the occupation ended.<sup>2489</sup>
- Alexander Bronowski and his family were passing as Poles in the village of Imbramowice, near Wolbrom. Although their true identity became known to the priest and other villagers, no one interfered with or molested them.<sup>2490</sup>
- A Jewish lawyer was able to continue his practice in Mielec, in defiance of a Nazi ban, with the collusion of the town's entire legal profession, until he was denounced by a fellow Jew, first to the Gestapo and then to the Justice Department.<sup>2491</sup>
- In the village of Czajkowa, near Mielec, the brothers Zygie and Sol Allweiss were sheltered by Maciej and Zofia Dudzik. The Dudziks' neighbours were aware that they were hiding Jews, but they had no intention of betraying them. "In the village, if one knows something, everyone knows," the rescuers said. "They were our neighbors and they were good people."<sup>2492</sup>

<sup>2485</sup> Lukas, *The Forgotten Holocaust*, 142–43.

<sup>2486</sup> Marek Stoszek, "The History of Jews in Myślenice County During the Second World War," in Wierzbieniec and Rączy, *Righteous Among Nations*, 49–50.

<sup>2487</sup> Marek Stoszek, "The History of Jews in Myślenice County During the Second World War," in Wierzbieniec and Rączy, *Righteous Among Nations*, 50.

<sup>2488</sup> Przemysław Miśkiewicz, interview with Tadeusz Jakubowicz, "Dzięki nim żyję, dla mnie to bohaterowie," Dodatek Narodowy Dzień Pamięci Polaków ratujących Żydów, Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, *Dziennik Zachodni*, March 26, 2018. See also Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 263–66; *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 234.

<sup>2489</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 74.

<sup>2490</sup> Bronowski, *They Were Few*, 38–39.

<sup>2491</sup> Mark Verstandig, *I Rest My Case* (Melbourne: Saga Press, 1995), viii, 109–13, 130–32.

<sup>2492</sup> Tammeus and Cukierkorn, *They Were Just People*, 22.

- A Jewish woman who had converted to Catholicism when she married a Pole continued to live in her village near Mielec throughout the war with the acquiescence of the local community.<sup>2493</sup>
- Then in his teens, Menachem Kuperman wandered into the village of Borki Nizińskie, north of Mielec, without any documents. He entered the home of Eugeniusz Pieróg, a farmer whom he had never met before, and introduced himself as a Polish boy looking for farm work. Pieróg agreed to take him on. One day, when they were collecting wood in the forest, they came across German soldiers. Pieróg warned Kuperman not to approach them and on the way home said to the boy, “Did you think I didn’t know you were Jewish?” With time, Kuperman understood that others in the village had figured out that he was Jewish. Whenever Kuperman became frightened that someone in the village would inform on him, Pieróg reassured him that he, Pieróg, had no enemies in the village who would want harm him, and that Kuperman therefore had nothing to fear from the villagers. Kuperman remained with Pieróg, unharmed, until the war was over.<sup>2494</sup>
- Several Polish families in the villages of Bobrowa, Wola Bobrowska and Nagoszyn, near Dębica, sheltered various members of the Knie family. Among the rescuers from Nagoszyn recognized by Yad Vashem are Michał Dygdoń and Józef Cholewa. Although villagers were not blind to the rescue going on, they supported it with a wall of silence.<sup>2495</sup>
- A teenage boy with a Semitic appearance, the son of a Jewish beggar woman, lived openly in the village of Głowaczowa, near Dębica, with the Polish farmer who had taken him in. Nobody betrayed him.<sup>2496</sup>
- A Jewish boy named Josek Mansdorf was allowed to stay on as a farmhand in a village in the township of Ryglice, near Tarnów, even after his Jewishness became evident to the villagers.<sup>2497</sup>
- In November 1941, the Jewish Social Self-Help organization in the town of Proszowice, near Miechów, solicited food supplies from 20 Polish estates in the vicinity for the soup kitchen in the ghetto; 19 owners promptly responded, agreeing to supply produce free of charge.<sup>2498</sup>
- In the village of Goszcza, near Miechów, everyone was aware that Jews, some of them with a marked Semitic appearance, were being sheltered in their midst. No one betrayed them.<sup>2499</sup>
- After fleeing during the liquidation of the Szczucin ghetto, Shiyer Mutzenmacher ran to the farm of Anna and Stanisław Jaje in the nearby village of Lubasz. Everyone

<sup>2493</sup> Tomasz Frydel, “Powiat dębicki,” in Engelking and Grabowski, *Dalej jest noc*, vol. 2, 434.

<sup>2494</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 605.

<sup>2495</sup> Adam Kazimierz Musiał, *Lata w ukryciu*, vol. 2 (Gliwice: n.p., 2002), 535–37; *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 719–20.

<sup>2496</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 640.

<sup>2497</sup> Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, *The Children Accuse*, 109, based on the testimony of Josek Mansdorf, JHI, record group 301, no. 570.

<sup>2498</sup> Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part A, 552.

<sup>2499</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 643–44.

in the village knew that a young man of Jewish descent was hiding with the Jajes. He did tailoring for the neighbours and other villagers, thus contributing towards his upkeep. Nobody denounced him.<sup>2500</sup>

- Similar reports come from the villages of Gałuszowice and Chrzastów, near Mielec.<sup>2501</sup> In the latter village, it was widely known that the Markowski family was sheltering the Verstandig family, and that several other Polish families there were hiding Jews.<sup>2502</sup>
- In Grodzisk, a small town outside Warsaw, an elderly Jewish teacher was able to live openly with his wife, a Polish Catholic woman, throughout the war. “Everybody knew my uncle was Jewish but no one reported him to the Gestapo.” This family took in other Jews, also without incident.<sup>2503</sup>
- A foundry in Wołomin, outside of Warsaw, engaged a Jew whose appearance and manner of speaking readily gave him away, yet he remained among them as if undetected.<sup>2504</sup>
- After receiving a great deal of sporadic help from Poles as he wandered in the countryside around Garwolin, Meir Herc was introduced, through a Jewish friend and his Christian intermediary, to a farmer in the village of Jagodne who agreed to shelter him. Herc was one of six Jews the farmer hid in his pigsty. Herc was able to pay for his upkeep with the money he received from Poles to whom he had entrusted his property. The money was collected by an intermediary and delivered to Herc. The entire group of six Jews survived this way for 23 months. Meir Herc writes: “I only survived thanks to more than a dozen Poles who sold our goods and would send the money to me. They even knew the village in which I was hiding but did not betray me.”<sup>2505</sup>
- Another resident of Garwolin, Chana Karpman-Rozenberg, received a great deal of help from many local residents before she decided to move to Warsaw. As she travelled by train to Warsaw, pretending to be a smuggler, she encountered many Poles from Garwolin whom she knew, and not one of them so much as gave a sign that would have blown her cover. She was helped by a number of Poles in Warsaw. While passing as a Pole there, she met other Poles from Garwolin, among them Home Army members and a policeman; they were glad to see her.<sup>2506</sup>
- Other examples of communal rescue in the Generalgouvernement include: Niedźwiada (near Opole Lubelskie); Runów (near Grójec); Przydonica, Ubiad, Klimkówka,

<sup>2500</sup> Jaje Family, RD; Musiał, *Lata w ukryciu*, vol. 2, 344–49.

<sup>2501</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 721–22.

<sup>2502</sup> Krempa, *Zagłada Żydów mieleckich*, 2nd rev. ed., 98.

<sup>2503</sup> Rothchild, *Voices from the Holocaust*, 225.

<sup>2504</sup> Antoni Marianowicz, *Życie surowo wzbronione* (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1995), 159–60, translated as Antoni Marianowicz, *Life Strictly Forbidden* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004).

<sup>2505</sup> Meir Herc, “My Experience in September,” in Zaltsman and Shein, *Garwolin yisker-bukh*, 187–93. Rubin Rudolf Steckman was sheltered by several farmers near Garwolin, moving from house to house. See the testimony of Rubin Rudolf Steckman, JHI, record group 301, no. 1753.

<sup>2506</sup> Chana Karpman-Rozenberg, “On the Aryan Side,” in Zaltsman and Shein, *Garwolin yisker-bukh*, 208–15.

Jelna, Słowikowa, and Librantowa (all near Nowy Sącz); Rakszawa (near Łańcut),<sup>2507</sup> Medynia Głogowska, Siedlecza, and Sokołów Małopolski (all near Rzeszów),<sup>2508</sup> two villages near Parczew,<sup>2509</sup> Piszczac (near Biała Podlaska) and Kolonia Dworska,<sup>2510</sup> several villages near Lublin,<sup>2511</sup> Mchy (near Krasnystaw),<sup>2512</sup> villages near Skierniewice, Rożki (near Krasnystaw), villages near Zamość, Radzymin, and Otwock.<sup>2513</sup>

- Even when neighbours were displeased with the fact that they were put at risk because of the Jews sheltered in their midst, and were justifiably fearful of German retaliation, this did not usually result in denunciations, as is shown by a number of cases.<sup>2514</sup>
- Finally, it must be noted that the terrifying spectacle of public executions of Polish rescuers did not bring rescue activity to a halt.<sup>2515</sup>

**A**ssistance from Polish villagers in Volhynia, where Poles constituted a small minority of the mostly Ukrainian population, was also plentiful.

- In Woronówka, near Ludwipol, “the collusion of the peasants was cemented by blood ties: every villager was either a Kuriata or a Torgoń.”<sup>2516</sup>
- Almost every Polish family in the hamlet of Zawołoczce, near Ludwipol, sheltered or helped Jews. None of the Jews who took refuge there was betrayed.<sup>2517</sup>
- Jews hiding in the forests in the vicinity of Berezne (Bereźne), near Kostopol, received extensive assistance from Polish villagers and partisans.<sup>2518</sup>
- A number of Jews were sheltered in the Polish colony of Święte Jezioro, near Olesk, some even living there openly. The villagers also provided food to still other Jews that were living in the forests, and Poles in nearby villages knew of these activities.<sup>2519</sup>

<sup>2507</sup> Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, 269, 322, 349, 353, respectively.

<sup>2508</sup> Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945*, 63.

<sup>2509</sup> Kowalski, *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance, 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 308.

<sup>2510</sup> Armstrong, *Mosaic*, 576–81; Roman Soszyński, *Piszczac: Miasto ongiś królewskie* (N.p.: n.p., 1993), 95, 97; Andrzej W. Kaczorowski, “Danusia z miasteczka Piszczac,” *Biuletyn Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, no. 8 (March 2009): 69–73.

<sup>2511</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 95, 317, 326.

<sup>2512</sup> Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor*, 207 ff.

<sup>2513</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 343–44, 452, and vol. 5, 647, 673 and 692, 927, respectively. Regarding Rożki, see also Sabina Leszczyńska, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-leszczynska-sabina>.

<sup>2514</sup> See, e.g., Joanna Beata Michlic, *Poland’s Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 192–93.

<sup>2515</sup> See, e.g., Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part 1, 21 (Mariampol).

<sup>2516</sup> Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945*, 45.

<sup>2517</sup> Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part 2, 77–78.

<sup>2518</sup> Testimony of Seweryn Dobroszkłanka, JHI, record group 301, no. 1222; Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, 324–25; Orzeł, *Dzieci żydowskie w czasach Zagłady*, 79–82.

<sup>2519</sup> Suzanne Ginsburg, *Noike: A Memoir of Leon Ginsburg* (San Francisco: Avenger Books, 2012), 93–99, 120–24, 127–37, 141–58. This book refers to the Polish colony as “Podswientne” and mentions several helpful families by name.

- Polish villages in the vicinity of Korzec helped Jews that were hiding in the nearby forests.<sup>2520</sup>
- After leaving the home of a Ukrainian Baptist family in the village of Charałów, Haya Tessler, her brother Israel and their nephew, Mordechai Tennenbaum, all from Międzyrzecz Korecki, “got to a village where Poles lived ... we stayed in their midst for a while, and when [fearful of Ukrainian partisan attacks] they decided to abandon the village for the safety of the dense forests, ... we joined them.”<sup>2521</sup>
- A report about the village of Stara Huta, near Szumsk, states: “The people of a small Polish village named Stara Hota [sic] welcomed a group of Jews to stay and hide in their homes. The Ukrainians found out about the Jewish presence in the village. They informed the Germans right away. The Poles had managed to help the Jews run into the fields, but they were all caught and killed during their escape.”<sup>2522</sup>
- Dawid Sasower recalls: “Near Zaturne [near Łuck], there was a Polish village in which about twenty Jews lived. In the daytime they worked in the fields and at night the Poles gave them rifles so that they could protect themselves from the banderovtsy [i.e., Ukrainian nationalist partisans].”<sup>2523</sup>
- Polish villagers in Netreba, Okopy, Dołhań, Borowskie Budki (or Budki Borowskie), and Snowidowicze, all near Rokitno, are mentioned in several accounts: “In the village of Netrebe [sic], tens of Jews from Rokitno and the area found shelter. They were helped by the villagers who not only did not harm them but also hid them near the village during the day. At night they took them to their homes. Many Jews survived there until the liberation by the Red Army. In the Polish village of Budki some Jews survived ... In the same area, in the Polish village of Okopi [sic], some tens of Jews were saved thanks to two special individuals... the Catholic priest [Rev. Ludwik Wrodarczyk] and the village teacher [Felicja Masojada]. The priest used to give sermons to his followers telling them not to be involved in the extermination of Jews. He asked them to help the Jews to survive ... The village teacher also had compassion for the unfortunate Jews. Their suffering touched her heart and she helped in any way possible. She was killed by a Ukrainian gang on the way from the village of Rokitno where she was helping a Jewish family. The priest was

<sup>2520</sup> Nyuma Anapolsky, “We survived thanks to the kind people—Ukrainians and Poles,” in Boris Zabarko, ed., *Holocaust in the Ukraine* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005), 10–11.

<sup>2521</sup> Mordechai Tennenbaum, “The Life History of a Holocaust Survivor from Mezirich,” in Israel Zinman, ed., *Memorial for Greater Mezirich: In Construction and Destruction* (Haifa: n.p., 1999), Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Mezhirichi/Mezirich.html>.

<sup>2522</sup> Ruth Szejnman Halperin, “The Last Days of Shumsk,” in Chaim Rabin, ed., *Szumsk: Memorial Book of the Martyrs of Szumsk*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/szumsk/szumsk.html>, translation of *Shumsk: Sefer zikaron le-kedoshei Shumsk* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Szumsk in Israel, 1968), 29 ff.

<sup>2523</sup> Rima Dulkinienė and Kerry Keys, eds., *Su adata širdyje: Getų ir koncentracijos stovyklų kalinių atsiminimai; With a Needle in the Heart: Memoirs of Former Prisoners of Ghettos and Concentration Camps* (Vilnius: Garnelis and Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, 2003), 319–20.

burned alive in his church.” “[I]n a Polish village near Snovidovich [Snowidowicze], we found a few Jewish families working in the houses and fields of the villagers.”<sup>2524</sup>

- After escaping from the ghetto in Rokitno, Rachela Sznuler moved from village to village, sewing farmers who took her in.<sup>2525</sup>
- In Huta Sopaczewska, near Sarny, and other Polish villages near Berezołupy, near Rożyszcze: “When I arrived in the Polish village, someone told me that five kilometers from there, here was another Polish village where I might find my brother ... I went there and asked the farmers about him. They told me where to go, and I found him in a forest, with a group of six other Jews. ... They too had spent the winter in the forest, and at night they had brought potatoes and bread from the Polish village. ... I was accepted by an older couple ... My brother also got a job with another Polish farmer, about four kilometers from the village where I was. ... I stayed with that farmer for almost a year, until the Russians freed our area in April 1944.”<sup>2526</sup>
- In Tresteniec, a Polish settlement near Aleksandria, all the villagers knew about and assisted the sisters Cypa and Rywa Szparberg and their father.<sup>2527</sup>
- In Karaczun, near Kostopol, Polish villagers and the Polish underground were extremely helpful to Jews that hid in the forest.<sup>2528</sup>
- In October 1942, after the liquidation of the ghetto in Zdołbunów, the Germans and Ukrainian militiamen combed the town to locate any signs of survivors: “[Fritz] Germ would point to a certain house, always one occupied by Polish citizens, and the guards would crash through the door or a window, emerging with a family and the Jews whom they had hidden. The fate was the same for the rescuers as it was for the Jews. This occurred at four or five different homes.”<sup>2529</sup>

<sup>2524</sup> Leoni, *Rokitno*, 317 ff., 327 ff., 334 ff., 342 ff., 351, translated as *Rokitno-Wolyn and Surroundings: Memorial Book and Testimony*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/rokitnoye/Rokitnoye.html>; Yehuda Bauer, “Sarny and Rokitno in the Holocaust: A Case Study of Two Townships in Wolyn (Volhynia),” in Katz, *The Shtetl*, 273. The following Poles from Okopy have been recognized by Yad Vashem: Rev. Ludwik Wrodarczyk, Felicja Masojada, Weronika Kozińska-Romaniewicz, and Aniela Romaniewicz. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 594–95, 611.

<sup>2525</sup> Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień...*, 125.

<sup>2526</sup> Denise Nevo and Mira Berger, eds., *We Remember: Testimonies of Twenty-four Members of Kibbutz Megiddo who Survived the Holocaust* (New York: Shengold, 1994), 209, 257.

<sup>2527</sup> Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 309.

<sup>2528</sup> J. Peri, “Death and Sorrow,” in Ganuz, *Our Town Stepan*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/stepan/Stepan.html>, translation of *Ayaratenu Stepan* (Tel Aviv: Stepan Society, 1977), 213 ff.; Stanisław Siekierski, ed., *Żyli wśród nas...: Wspomnienia Polaków i Żydów nadesłane na konkurs pamięci polsko-żydowskiej o nagrodę imienia Dawida Ben Guriona* (Płońsk: Zarząd Miasta Płońsk, Miejskie Centrum Kultury w Płońsku, and Towarzystwo Miłośników Ziemi Płońskiej, 2001), 121; Andrzej Leja, “Urodzona w ZSRS,” Internet: <https://www.salon24.pl/u/polismpc/157657,urodzona-w-zsrs-andrzej-leja>; Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 363, 368.

<sup>2529</sup> Douglas K. Huneke, *The Moses of Rovno: The Stirring Story of Fritz Graebe, a German Christian Who Risked His Life to Lead Hundreds of Jews to Safety During the Holocaust* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1985), 84. See also *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*:

- In a number of Volhynian villages, Jewish fugitives who were protected by Poles joined the Polish self-defence in defending their villages from attacks by Ukrainian partisans: Huta Stepańska (near Kostopol);<sup>2530</sup> Kurdybań Warkowicki, Bortnica, Pańska Dolina, Żeniówka (Ziniówka), Przebraże (all near Dubno).<sup>2531</sup>
- Additional examples of communal assistance by Poles have been documented in the following locales in Volhynia: Władysławówka (near Swojczów);<sup>2532</sup> Konińsk (near Sarny), Pańska Dolina (near Dubno), Świnarzyn (near Dominopol), the vicinity of Bereżne (near Kostopol), Woronówka (near Ludwipol), Obórki (near Łuck), Wólka Kotowska (near Łuck), Przebraże (near Łuck);<sup>2533</sup> a village near Horochów;<sup>2534</sup> Głęboczyca (near Włodzimierz Wołyński);<sup>2535</sup> Wodzinów (near Włodzimierz Wołyński).<sup>2536</sup>

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*Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 605; Edward Prus, *Holocaust po banderowsku: Czy Żydzi byli w UPA?* (Wrocław: Nortom, 1995), 82.

- <sup>2530</sup> Ganuz, *Our Town Stepan*, 287; Testimony of Motel Waks, JHI, record group 301, no. 2363, as cited in Czajka, Młodkowska, and Umińska-Keff, *Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz / Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue*, vol. 3, 154, and reproduced in Orzeł, *Dzieci żydowskie w czasach Zagłady*, 265–66. See also Daniel Kac, *Koncert grany żywym* (Warsaw: TU, 1998), 183.
- <sup>2531</sup> Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 250–52 (Kurdybań Warkowicki, Bortnica, Pańska Dolina, Ziniówka or Żeniówka); Tadeusz Piotrowski, ed., *Genocide and Rescue in Wołyń: Recollections of the Ukrainian Nationalist Ethnic Cleansing Campaign Against the Poles During World War II* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland, 2000), 214–16; Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews, 1941–1944*, 251, 259–60, 266–67 (Huta Stepańska, Przebraże, Pańska Dolina, Kurdybań Warkowicki, Bortnica, Żeniówka). Compare with Władysław Siemaszko and Ewa Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na ludności polskiej Wołynia 1939–1945*, vol. 1 (Warsaw: von borowiecky, 2000), 60 (Bortnica), 92–94 (Pańska Dolina), 107–8 (Kurdybań Warkowicki), 109 (Ziniówka or Żeniówka), 284–93 (Huta Stepańska), 650–54 (Przebraże).
- <sup>2532</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 1027; Testimony of Jacek Grębecki in Edmund Mazur, “Po prostu człowiek: Materiały dotyczące pomocy niesionej Żydom w czasie okupacji hitlerowskiej w Warszawie,” *Palestra*, no. 11 (1968): 65–104, at p. 84.
- <sup>2533</sup> Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, 263, 265, 266, 324–25, 327, 361 and 389, 386–392, respectively. Regarding Konińsk, see also Tarmon, *Memorial Book*, 39–40, 67–68, 74, 85. Regarding Przebraże, see also Kac, *Koncert grany żywym*, 183, and the testimony of Estera Kac, JHI, record group 301, no. 2890, English translation: Boaz Cohen and Beate Müller, “A Teacher and His Students: Child Holocaust Testimonies from Early Postwar Polish Bytom,” *East European Jewish Affairs*, vol. 46, no. 1 (2016): 68–115, at pp. 96–97.
- <sup>2534</sup> Sonya Tesler-Gyraph, “Memories from the Nazi Period,” in Yosef Kariv, ed., *Horchiv Memorial Book* (Tel Aviv: Horchiv Committee in Israel, 1966), 63.
- <sup>2535</sup> Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na ludności polskiej Wołynia, 1939–1945*, vol. 1, 872.
- <sup>2536</sup> Orzeł, *Dzieci żydowskie w czasach Zagłady*, 104–5. Dwojra Frymet (b. 1930) states that, after the war, she wanted to convert and be a Pole because Poles had helped her during the German occupation, whereas Jews had never treated her decently.

Assistance from Polish villagers was also widespread in Eastern Galicia.

- In Kretowce, near Zbaraż, Tarnopol voivodship, “several dozen Jews were able to move about almost freely because the whole village shielded them from the Nazis.”<sup>2537</sup>
- Michael Zipper was one of thirteen Jews who hid for eight months in a forest bunker not far from the predominantly Polish village of Zabojski, near Tarnopol. The group included five children and two of Michael’s cousins: Fella Sieler and Maria Goldhirsh with her daughter Ruzia (later Rose Slutzky), according to whom: “The whole village kept us a secret, and when they could, they shared some food with us. ... good Polish people who gave us a bit of food, when they themselves were hungry.”<sup>2538</sup>
- Sixteen Jews were rescued in the predominantly Polish village of Draganówka, near Tarnopol.<sup>2539</sup>
- Farmers in Kościejów, north of Lwów, located near the railway line leading to the extermination camp in Bełżec, “tended to Jews who jumped out of the ‘death trains.’ They not only brought them food and clothing but also sent word to Jews in the nearby village of Kulików to come and fetch the heavily injured immediately; the rest were taken by the peasants themselves to Kulików under cover of darkness.”<sup>2540</sup>
- In Bar, near Gródek Jagielloński, “villagers supplied a group of 18 Jews hiding in the neighbouring woods with food; they came into the village at night for their provisions and thanks to this help were able to hold out until the area was liberated by the Soviet Army.”<sup>2541</sup> One of the rescued Jews praises the “noble attitude of the entire population, without exception, of the Polish village of Bar;” who made it possible for more than twenty people hiding in nearby forests to survive.<sup>2542</sup>

<sup>2537</sup> Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945*, 46. According to Marek Szmajuk, some 70 Jews from Zbaraż were rescued by Poles; the village of Kretowce, where more than 20 Jews were saved, stood out in this respect. Jews there lived openly and their presence was known to the entire village. See the testimony of Marek Szmajuk, JHI, record group 301, no. 2571, cited in Czajka, Janczewska, and Umińska-Keff, *Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz / Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue*, vol. 3, 233–34 (Kretowce), and reproduced in Roszkowski, *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 268–69 (Kretowce). The following Poles from Kretowce have been recognized as “Righteous” by Yad Vashem: Agnieszka Mazurkiewicz, Helena Sokalska and her daughter, Janina Szkilnik (who rescued Marek Markus Szmajuk and his family), and six members of the Zalwowski family.

<sup>2538</sup> Testimony of Rose Slutzky in Belle Millo, ed., *Voices of Winnipeg Holocaust Survivors* (Winnipeg: Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada, 2010), 364; Testimony of Rose Slutzky, SFV, Interview code 23960.

<sup>2539</sup> Testimony of Jakub Zajd, JHI, record group 301, no. 2166.

<sup>2540</sup> Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945*, 45.

<sup>2541</sup> Berenstein and Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939–1945*, 45.

<sup>2542</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 444, based on Gerszon Taffet, *Zagłada Żydów żółkiewskich* (Łódź: Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna, 1946), 62. For a Polish account, see Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part 2, 115–16.

- While hiding with the Beck family in Żółkiew, Gerszon Taffet was astonished to see two youngsters arrive unexpectedly at the hideout: “in broad daylight, at 10 a.m., two Jewish children went down the street where they had lived since they were born, where everybody knew them, and nobody stopped them.”<sup>2543</sup>
- The Polish villagers of Stanisłówka, near Żółkiew, fed and sheltered Jews who moved from place to place.<sup>2544</sup>
- In the Polish village of Czukiew, near Sambor, a farmer sheltered 18 Jews; most of the villagers were aware of what was going on.<sup>2545</sup>
- Several Jews were sheltered by Polish villagers in Święty Stanisław, near Stanisławów. No one betrayed them.<sup>2546</sup>
- With reference to the small, predominantly Polish town of Kozowa, near Brzeżany, Bronia Beker (née Rohatiner) states: “My aunt didn’t have to hide. She was so well loved and respected by all because she always helped the poorest of the poor, that while she was walking around freely, living among the ruins nobody gave her away. ... The people in the town also made sure she had food at all times.”<sup>2547</sup>
- Samuel Eisen, then a teenager, survived in a forest near Tłuste. “We had no money, but in the village nearby lived a lot of Poles who knew us and were good to us. They were afraid to hide us but they [always] gave us food.”<sup>2548</sup>
- Maria Fischer Zahn survived the war and occupation near Zborów with the help of Polish villagers. “Everybody in the neighborhood knew we were hiding, but nobody told the Germans. The people in Jezierna were good people. They didn’t give us away. They helped us with food. We couldn’t have survived without them.”<sup>2549</sup>
- Shlomo Berger passed as a Pole in a small town near Czortków. He worked for a company whose Polish director, Tadeusz Duchowski, knew that he was Jewish. “I rented a room in Niżniów with one of the Polish workers. I learned from him that the man who was in charge of the office was the son of a judge who was a Jew who had converted to Catholicism. The son was probably raised as a Christian, but by German criteria he was still Jewish. The people at the office knew who he was, but nobody said anything.”<sup>2550</sup>
- Markus Lecker, who joined up with a large group of Jews living in a forest bunker in the vicinity of Borszczów, describes their relations with a Polish settlement that provided them with food. “The colony ... consisted of six houses with six Polish families living there. ... These 6 Polish families were the main support for

<sup>2543</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 444.

<sup>2544</sup> Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 1, 172–74.

<sup>2545</sup> Dean, *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945*, vol. 2, Part A, 825, based on the testimony of Meyer Lamet, July 15, 1945, JHI, record group 301, no. 4967.

<sup>2546</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 620; Knap, “*Jak ci się uda uratować, pamiętaj*”, 101–3.

<sup>2547</sup> Bronia Beker’s account in “Women of Valor: Partisans and Resistance Fighters,” Internet: [www.interlog.com/~mighty/personal/bronia.htm](http://www.interlog.com/~mighty/personal/bronia.htm), originally published in the *Journal of the Center for Holocaust Studies*, vol. 6, no. 4 (Spring 1990).

<sup>2548</sup> Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, *The Children Accuse*, 206, based on the testimony of Samuel Eisen, JHI, record group 301, no. 197.

<sup>2549</sup> Vogel, *We Shall Not Forget!*, 2nd ed., 280, and also 276.

<sup>2550</sup> Berger, *Constructing a Collective Memory of the Holocaust*, 55.

us Jewish outcasts who lived in the bunker. We used to go to the Polish colony at night and exchange whatever we had left for food ... But I must say these Polish colonists did supply us with some food ... even if we didn't have what to give them in return ..."<sup>2551</sup>

- Hundreds of Jews were helped by Polish villagers in Biłka Szlachecka,<sup>2552</sup> about 20 kilometres east of Lwów, and in Hanaczów and Świrz,<sup>2553</sup> about 40 kilometres east of Lwów. More than 200 Jews were sheltered or helped by Poles in Hanaczów. Jews joined with the Polish Home Army to fend off attacks by Ukrainian partisans.<sup>2554</sup>
- Of Ostra Mogiła, a predominantly Polish village near Skałat, Jewish survivors wrote: "The people in this village were friendly to the Jews and provided them with whatever they could. ... Twenty-nine Jews survived in Ostra-Mogila."<sup>2555</sup> A Jew who

<sup>2551</sup> Marcus Lecker, *I Remember: Odyssey of a Jewish Teenager in Eastern Europe* (Montreal: The Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies, and The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, 1999), 56.

<sup>2552</sup> Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 483; *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 602–3.

<sup>2553</sup> Jerzy Węgierski, *W lwowskiej Armii Krajowej* (Warsaw: Pax, 1989), 77–78, 147–48, 151–52, 201; Yones, *Smoke in the Sand*, 227–28; Dorota Szwarcman, "Żywoć Klemzera: Wywiad z Leopoldem Kozłowskim," *Midrasz*, January 2003; Roszkowski, *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 12–13 (testimony of Edmund Adler), 346–50; Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part 2, 204–7; *Na Rubieży* [Wrocław], no. 1 (1997): 21; *Na Rubieży* [Wrocław], no. 59 (2002): 18; *Na Rubieży* [Wrocław], no. 73 (2004): 6–22; Komański and Siekierka, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie tarnopolskim 1939–1946*, 286–90, 774–78, 789–91, 798–99; Dariusz Libionka, "ZWZ-AK i Delegatura. Rządu RP wobec eksterminacji Żydów polskich," in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 112–13; Ewa Koper, "Partyzantka żydowska na terenach objętych deportacjami do niemieckiego nazistowskiego obozu zagłady w Bełżcu: Zarys problematyki," in Tomasz Domański and Edyta Majcher-Ociesa, eds., *Żydzi i wojsko polskie w XIX i XX wieku* (Kielce and Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2020), 251–64, at pp. 255–60; Testimony of Edmund Adler, JHI, record group 301, no. 808 and YVA, file O.62/143 (Item 3732334); Testimony of Feiga Pfeffer, JHI, record group 301, no. 1356, as cited in Czajka, Józwick, Mahorowska, and Umińska-Keff, *Relacje z czasów Zagłady Inwentarz / Holocaust Survivor Testimonies Catalogue*, vol. 2, 154. The Home Army unit also cooperated with a Jewish partisan unit in that area. The leaders of the Jewish unit (Captain Fryderyk Staub "Proch," Isaac Braun) were decorated for their valour by the head of the Lwów district of the Home Army, and the Wojtowicz brothers (Alojzy, Kazimierz, and Antoni), local Home Army members, were recognized by Yad Vashem as "Righteous Among the Nations." See Shmuel Krakowski, "The Polish Underground and the Jews in the Years of the Second World War," in David Bankier and Israel Gutman, eds., *Nazi Europe and the Final Solution* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority and The International Institute for Holocaust Research, 2003), 226; *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 886–87.

<sup>2554</sup> This remarkable story is described in Joshua D. Zimmerman, *The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 314–17.

<sup>2555</sup> Abraham Weissbord, *Death of a Shtetl*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/skalat1/skalat.html>, translation of *Es shtarbt a shtetl: Megiles Skalat* (Munich: Central

was given shelter by the Firuta family said that almost every one of the ten houses on their street sheltered Jews, and that the entire street merited recognition.<sup>2556</sup>

- A group of 28 Jews took refuge in the forests near their hometown of Skała Podolska, on the River Zbrucz, in Tarnopol voivodship. They turned for food and other necessities to a Polish colony known as Mazury. “There was a small village at the edge of the Skala [Skała] forest, called Mazury. ... I vividly remember the late June of 1943, when my two cousins and I, along with a handful of other young men and women, escaped to the forest during a week-long rainy weather spell. We were cold, wet and starving for days. Our first ‘meal’ in the forest, was a slice of cold corn pudding we all shared, that my cousin, Nechamia Stock of blessed memory, brought from the Mazury colony after sneaking out of the forest and knocking at the door of a Polish colonist, a total stranger. Later that summer, my cousin Malcia Rothststein (née Stock) made a deal with a woman colonist to knit sweaters with wool provided by her in exchange for bottles of milk, a rare luxury at the time. In the fall of 1943, after German troops raided our section of the forest, killing scores of Jews, we decided to build underground bunkers for the winter. The Mazury colonists were those who lent us the necessary construction tools—saws, picks, shovels and hammers—no questions asked. Those tools eventually made our survival possible! Regretfully, the names of those individual Polish colonists lie buried in the graves of the survivors who dealt with them at the time, but their deeds are still remembered with gratitude.”<sup>2557</sup>
- Żeniów, near Gliniany: “The few Jews of Gliniany who saved their lives were hiding in the woods near Żeniów [Żeniów]. The Polish peasants of that village supplied their food.”<sup>2558</sup>
- Hucisko Olejskie (or Huta Olejska), near Złoczów: “It is a Polish village ... The gentiles were also very kind. We were there. We slept in barns. We slept here a day, here a day, here a night.”<sup>2559</sup>
- The villagers in nearby Majdan Pieniacki, near Brody, supplied scores of Jews from that and other villages living in forest bunkers with food. Some of the Jews participated in the village self-defence to fend off raids by Ukrainian nationalist partisans.<sup>2560</sup>
- Gila Shmulowitz recalled her family’s reception by the villagers of Dźwinogród, near Buczacz:

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Historical Commission of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in the U.S. Zone of Germany, 1948), 65.

<sup>2556</sup> Firuta Family, RD.

<sup>2557</sup> Max Mermelstein (Weidenfeld) and Tony Hausner, eds., *Skala on the River Zbrucz: A History of the Former Skala Jewish Community* (United States: Skala Research Group and Skala Benevolent Society, 2009), 397–98, also 183–90.

<sup>2558</sup> “Letter of Chayeh Kanner,” in *Khurbn Glinyane* (New York: New York: Emergency Relief Committee for Gliniany and Vicinity, 1946), 10, translated as *The Tragic End of Our Gliniany*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/gliniany1/Gliniany1.html>.

<sup>2559</sup> Account of Rose (Raisel) Meltzak in Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds*, 164.

<sup>2560</sup> Bernard Scharf, *Courage* ([Canada]: Mark Scharf, 2011), 39, 44, 50, 54.

We went into the fields. We spent the whole summer there, and yet, since we knew everyone in Winogród [Dźwinogród], we were coming to their places at night and got some food. After they had gone to bed, we sneaked into the cowsheds and the stables for the night. ... In November, when the peasants collected everything from the fields we found shelter in a dugout. In the evenings we also went to get food. More often than not my sister [who had a distinctive Jewish appearance] did this. She used to bring back bread, sugar and potatoes. ... Winter came. ... We entered the village and went round to one Polish peasant, who was forty or forty-five, called Wacek; his wife's name was Michalina. I don't remember their surname. They had children—don't know how many and two cows. 'You will be warm in my stable, stay here,' said Wacek to my father [Ajzyk]. He used to bring us bread and soup. ... We stayed at Wacek's for about a month. We left his stable when the Russkies came."<sup>2561</sup>

- Etunia Bauer Katz describes the help her family—consisting of her parents and four siblings—received from a number of villagers in Mateuszówka, near Buczacz.<sup>2562</sup>
- Israel M., together with his mother, took refuge in Wojciechówka, a Polish village near Buczacz; he stated: "Good people lived there."<sup>2563</sup> According to another account, the inhabitants of Wojciechówka forged an alliance with Jews, whom the villagers had protected, to defend the village from attacks by Ukrainian partisans.<sup>2564</sup>
- Another Polish village near Buczacz, Nowosiółka Koropiecka, is mentioned in the same context.<sup>2565</sup>
- In another village near Buczacz: "There were approximately fifty to sixty Jews in different bunkers. The Jews who were hiding near the village were working with Polish farmers to protect the area from the *Banderowcy* [i.e., Ukrainian partisans], whose goal it was to burn down all the Polish villages. The Poles and Jews would be on guard throughout the night. It was very interesting to listen to their conversations. Jews were helping the Polish Christian farmers, and in return, the farmers would help the Jews."<sup>2566</sup>
- Other Polish villages in that area:

The last months before the liberation, our security was very compromised. The Ukrainians organized big, armed groups known as Bendrovitches [Banderowcy], who wanted badly to catch us. The roads were full of them. Our wanderings from place to place became almost impossible. At the same time, the Ukrainians started killing the Polish population, finishing off

<sup>2561</sup> Isakiewicz, *Harmonica*, 106–8; Isakiewicz, *Ustna harmonijka*, 96–98.

<sup>2562</sup> Katz, *Our Tomorrows Never Came*, 73–99.

<sup>2563</sup> Cited in David Ravid (Shmukler), ed., *The Cieszanow Memorial Book* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 2006), 190–91. Regarding Wojciechówka, see also Munio Wurman, "Local Population," in Blond, *Memorial Book of Tlumacz*, col. clxxiv (English section); Oral history interview with Pepa (Sternberg) Gold, March 26, 1987, Kean College of New Jersey Holocaust Resource Center; Testimony of Pepa Gold, SFV, Interview code 39449 (misidentified as Wojciechowice).

<sup>2564</sup> Testimony of Alicia Appleman-Jurman, cited in Bauer, *The Death of the Shtetl*, 107, 185 n.2. See also Alicia Appleman-Jurman, *Alicia: My Story* (New York: Bantam, 1988), 149, 157.

<sup>2565</sup> Yehuda Bauer, "Buczacz and Krzemieniec: The Story of Two Towns During the Holocaust," *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 33 (2005): 298; Bauer, *The Death of the Shtetl*, 107.

<sup>2566</sup> Maxwell Smart, *Chaos to Canvas* (Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2018), 79.

entire villages. One night, we got an interesting offer. We were staying with Polish friend when a Polish delegation came and asked us to help organize a Polish resistance against the Ukrainians. We accepted the offer. They appreciated our courage and gave us a beautiful welcome. In turn, they promised to protect us and help us in any way. We mentioned how many of the people helped the Germans kill our brothers and sisters. They replied that every nation has its bad element, but most of Polish people felt sorry for the Jews!

It is interesting to note that we found the Polish people to be unarmed, but the Ukrainians had a lot of ammunition. We spent some time in the Polish villages. Many people from hiding in nearby villages joined us. They treated us very well, as they had promised, and had a big dinner for us every night. We went about our business at night and in the day stayed in hiding. Only on Sunday would we go out with our automatic guns to guard the church where everybody was praying. Before we came to the village they had been afraid to go to church for fear of raids by the Ukrainians. They priest told them: "Today we can pray in peace because there is a power outside the building, guarding us from all evil." We stayed in the Polish village until the liberation.<sup>2567</sup>

- Additional examples of communal assistance by Poles have been documented in the following locales in Eastern Galicia: Rakowiec and Hołosko Wielkie (both near Lwów);<sup>2568</sup> Adamy (near Busk);<sup>2569</sup> Huta Brodzka (near Brody);<sup>2570</sup> Dzwonica (near Złoczów);<sup>2571</sup> Ułaszowce (near Czortków);<sup>2572</sup> an unidentified village near Złoczów;<sup>2573</sup> Horyhlady (near Tlumacz);<sup>2574</sup> Hucisko (near Brzeżany), a Home Army base;<sup>2575</sup> a village near Zaleszczyki.<sup>2576</sup>

Spontaneous—and often anonymous—assistance was much more frequent than is often assumed. In response, the Germans issued public announcements warning the population not to engage in such activities. In order to instil fear into the popu-

<sup>2567</sup> Yehoshua Vermut, "How I Survived," in Sh. [Shimshon] Meltzer, ed., *Sefer Horodenka* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Horodenka and Vicinity in Israel and the USA, 1963), 296 ff., translated as *The Book of Horodenka*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/gorodenka/Gorodenka.html>.

<sup>2568</sup> Stepan Makarczuk, "Straty ludności w Galicji Wschodniej w latach II wojny światowej (1939–1945)," in *Polska–Ukraina: Trudne pytania*, vol. 6 (Warsaw: Światowy Związek Żołnierzy Armii Krajowej, Związek Ukraińców w Polsce, and Karta, 2000), 240.

<sup>2569</sup> Bronisław Szeremeta, "Zagłada wsi Adamy—rok 1943," *Semper Fidelis* [Wrocław], no. 1 (14) (1993): 19; Testimony of Leokadja Bochner, JHI, record group 301, no. 234; Prus, *Holocaust po banderowsku*, 144.

<sup>2570</sup> Prus, *Holocaust po banderowsku*, 167.

<sup>2571</sup> Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe*, 450; "Letter of Chayeh Kanner," in *Khurbn Glinyane*, 10, translated as *The Tragic End of Our Gliniany*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/gliniany1/Gliniany1.html>.

<sup>2572</sup> Abraham Morgenstern, *Chortkov Remembered: The Annihilation of a Jewish Community* (Dumont, New Jersey: n.p., 1990), 83–84, 98.

<sup>2573</sup> Testimony of H. Fromer, JHI, record group 301, no. 1793/6.

<sup>2574</sup> Blond, *Memorial Book of Tlumacz*, col. clxxiv.

<sup>2575</sup> Hersch Altman, *One the Fields of Loneliness* (New York and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and The Holocaust Survivors' Memoirs Project, 2006), 139 ff.

<sup>2576</sup> Bartov, *Anatomy of a Genocide*, 260.

lation, the Germans conducted public executions—like those in Tarnopol (described below) and Stryj<sup>2577</sup>—of those who dared to help Jews.

In Tarnopol, the Germans erected gallows in the town's main square, announced the event through loud speakers, and forced residents to come out of their homes to witness the execution. In the countryside, they simply pacified Polish villages suspected of helping Jews.

- Irene Gut Opdyke, a Polish rescuer who is credited with saving at least 17 Jews,<sup>2578</sup> recalled, "There was a priest in Janówka [near Tarnopol]. He knew about the Jews' escape—many of the Polish people knew about it. ... Many people brought food and other things—not right to the forest, but to the edge—from the village. The priest could not say directly 'help the Jews,' but he would say in church, 'not one of you should take the blood of your brother.' ... During the next couple of weeks there were posters on every street corner saying, 'This is a Jew-free town, and if any one should help an escaped Jew, the sentence is death.'"<sup>2579</sup>
- The terrifying reality behind that warning was impressed to the fullest possible extent on the consciousness of the population as they were forced to watch the public execution of rescuers in nearby Tarnopol. The town square "was choked with a milling, bewildered crowd," Irene Gut Opdyke recalled. "SS men abruptly pushed me into the middle of the square, just as they had the others, with a command not to leave. A scaffold had been erected in the center of the square, and what appeared to be two separate families were slowly escorted through the crowd to the block. A Polish couple, holding two small children, were brought up first, followed by a Jewish couple with one child, all three wearing the yellow Star of David. Both groups were lined up in front of dangling nooses. They were going to hang the children as well! Why didn't somebody do something? What could be done? Finally, their 'crimes' were announced—the Polish family had been caught harboring the Jewish family! Thus we were forced to witness the punishment for helping or befriending a Jew."<sup>2580</sup>
- In Huta Werchobuska or Werchobudzka, near Złoczów, and Huta Pieniacka, near Brody, both in Eastern Galicia, the Polish villagers were simply annihilated, and their homes and farmsteads were burned down in German pacifications. Ukrainian SS Galizien forces were among the perpetrators. The long-standing assistance provided to Jews by many of the locals was undoubtedly a factor in provoking this bloody reprisal.<sup>2581</sup>

<sup>2577</sup> Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, 229 (Entry 482).

<sup>2578</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 261.

<sup>2579</sup> Rittner and Myers, *The Courage to Care*, 47–48.

<sup>2580</sup> Opdyke with Elliot, *Into the Flames*, 139.

<sup>2581</sup> Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity*, 154–55, based on Tsvi Weigler, "Two Polish Villages Razed for Extending Help to Jews," *Yad Washem Bulletin*, no. 1 (April 1957): 19–20; Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe*, 450–53. See also Komański and Siekierka, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na Polakach w województwie tarnopolskim 1939–1946*, 66–71 (Huta Pieniacka), 499–500 (Huta Werchodudzka). According to another account, 35 Jews hidden by Polish villagers escaped

- Feiweł Auerbach, a Jew from Sasów, made the following deposition shortly after the war: “There were 30 of us [Jews] in the forest. We hid in Huta Werchobuska and Huta Pieniacka. The Polish inhabitants of those villages helped us. The peasants were very poor and were themselves hungry but they shared with us their last bits of food. We stayed there from July 1943 until March 1944. Thanks to them we are alive. When there were manhunts, the village reeve warned us. Once 500 Germans encircled the forest, but since they were afraid to enter deep into the forest they set their dogs on us. We were saved because our Polish friends warned us of the impending danger. Because of a denunciation [by the Ukrainian police] all of the villagers of Huta Pieniacka and Huta Werchobuska were killed. Some of them were burned alive in a barn. The village was burned to the ground.”<sup>2582</sup>
- About twenty residents of Berecz, in Volhynia, were killed during a pacification of that Polish settlement by Ukrainian police in November 1942. The locals had been assisting Jewish escapees from the ghetto in Powórsk (Powórsk).<sup>2583</sup>
- In Polesie (Polesia), a largely Belorussian region to the north of Volhynia, Kopel Kolpanitzky describes the helpfulness of the residents of Zahorie [Zahorze], a small village of Polish Catholics three kilometers from Łachwa. The Germans burned Zahorze to the ground.<sup>2584</sup>

Collective rescue of Jews was widespread as well in the in northeastern corner of German-occupied Poland (i.e., the prewar provinces of Wilno and Nowogródek).

- Shulamit Schreyber Żabinska, a teenage girl who was sheltered by Poles in the Wilno countryside, recalled that many Poles brought food to the ghetto, “otherwise everyone would have starved to death. It was dangerous, and people were shot for this.” After escaping from the Wilno ghetto she was taken in by Weronika (“Wercia”) Stankiewicz and her mother, passing as Wercia’s niece. The Polish villagers knew perfectly well that she was Jewish. She survived the German occupation.<sup>2585</sup>

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during the pacification of Huta Werchobuska. See Scharf, *Courage*, 50, 54 (misidentified as Wutawakabusta).

<sup>2582</sup> Testimony of Fajwel (Feiweł) Auerbach, JHI, record group 301, no. 1200. Irving Guttman, a native of Złoczów who was given sanctuary by a Christian woman in Huta Pieniacka, recalled the raid that took the lives of hundreds of villagers, among them a number of Jews who were hidden there. Based on his personal experiences, Guttman has only good things to say about the Poles in this area. See the testimony of Irving Guttman, April 25, 1995, Holocaust Memorial Center, Farmington Mills, Michigan, and SFV, Interview code 24374.

<sup>2583</sup> Siemaszko and Siemaszko, *Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na ludności polskiej Wołynia, 1939–1945*, vol. 1, 363.

<sup>2584</sup> Kopel Kolpanitzky, *Sentenced To Life: The Story of a Survivor of the Lahwah Ghetto* (London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2007), 89–96.

<sup>2585</sup> Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Zegota*, 1st ed., 117–18; Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Zegota*, 2nd ed., 110; Tomaszewski and Werbowski, *Code Name: Żegota*, 3rd ed., 117.

- Similarly, Estera Bielicka found safe harbour with the Myślicki family in Motejkany, near Ejszyski, where she lived openly. No one drew attention to her Jewish origin.<sup>2586</sup>
- After miraculously surviving a mass execution in Ponary, Ita Straż wandered in the countryside without documents near Nowa Wilejka, Witaniszki and Gajluny, sewing for farmers with whom she stayed in exchange for food.<sup>2587</sup>
- A female pharmacist survived in the vicinity of Kiemieliszi, near Wilno, by healing sick villagers and livestock.<sup>2588</sup>
- The neighbours of a Polish family in Białożoryszki, near Wilno, were aware that they were sheltering a Jewish boy.<sup>2589</sup>
- Khyene Izraïlsky Katsev (Chana Israelski Kacaw) and her sister, Frida, from Podbrzezie were sheltered by a number of Polish families—Orszewski, Gładkowski, Matyas, Matulaniec, and others—in the village of Borskuny, near Meszajgoła.<sup>2590</sup>
- Pola Wawer of Wilno recalled the help that she and her parents, Don and Dr. Maria Komaj, received from all of the inhabitants of Zameczek, a hamlet north of Nowa Wilejka. The families of five cousins—Aloszko and Nieścierowicz—made up the entire population there.<sup>2591</sup>
- Joanna Malberg, under an assumed identity, worked as a private French teacher and lived openly in the town of Niemenczyn. She had a marked Semitic appearance and was widely suspected of being a Jew.<sup>2592</sup>
- Chana Mirski (later Hana Shachar) was born at the end of 1939 or in early 1940. Her paternal grandfather, Nathan Mirski, entrusted her for safekeeping to his acquaintance, Stanisław Świetlikowski, who smuggled her out of the Podbrodzie ghetto, northeast of Wilno, in September 1941. The Świetlikowskis' neighbours would have figured out the sudden new addition to their family was a Jewish child. Nobody denounced them.<sup>2593</sup>
- Estera Bielicka lived with the Myślicki family in Motejkany, near her hometown of Ejszyski, in plain sight of all of the residents of this village. Not only did the villagers know about her, but she was also seen at church services in town. No one betrayed her.<sup>2594</sup>

<sup>2586</sup> Wiktor Noskowski, "Czy Yaffa Eliach przeprosi Polaków?," *Mysł Polska* [Warsaw], July 20–27, 1997; Testimony of Gita Giliat, YVA, file O.71/92.

<sup>2587</sup> Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień...*, 124.

<sup>2588</sup> Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień...*, 126.

<sup>2589</sup> Chodorska, *Godni synowie naszej Ojczyzny*, Part 1, 104–9.

<sup>2590</sup> Testimony of Mikhoel (Michael) Potashnik, in Sandler, *The Lithuanian Slaughter of Its Jews*, 281.

<sup>2591</sup> Wawer, *Poza gettem i obozem*, 69, 71–73. One of the families, Wincenty and Paulina Aloszko and their two sons, were awarded by Yad Vashem for sheltering Izaak and Celina Melcer and their daughters, Raya and Helena. See *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 57.

<sup>2592</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 58–59; Antonowicz Family, RD; Testimony of Wacława Dobrzyńska, JHI, record group 301, no. 5427.

<sup>2593</sup> Świetlikowski Family, RD.

<sup>2594</sup> Wiktor Noskowski, "Czy Yaffa Eliach przeprosi Polaków?," *Mysł Polska* [Warsaw], July 20–27, 1997, reproduced in *The Story of Two Shtetls, Brańsk and Ejszyski*, Part 2, 154–55.

- Another Jew from that area recalled the assistance he and his father received on a number of occasions from the villagers of Powiańce. “The village was composed of some forty houses strung out side by side on a single street. Each house was inhabited by Poles, but my father knew many of them and had done favours for them in the past. At each house, we knocked and explained our plight. Only a few turned us down ... Very soon our wagon was filled with butter and eggs and flour and fresh vegetables, and my father and I wept at their kindness and at the realization that we had been reduced to beggars. The people of Powielancy [Powiańce] were so generous ... Now we sent out a food gathering group each evening to beg in the neighbouring villages where most of the people felt kindly toward us. One of the villages in this area was Powielancy whose people had filled our cart with food when father and I had come from the Radun [Raduń] ghetto. They helped us again most willingly for they sympathized with our plight.”<sup>2595</sup>
- Meir Stoler escaped the German massacre of Jews in Raduń on May 10, 1942. He managed to reach the tiny Polish hamlet of “Mizhantz,” actually Mieżańce, where the villagers took him in and fed him.<sup>2596</sup> Other accounts also portray Mieżańce as friendly to Jews.<sup>2597</sup>
- Boris and Gitel Smolnik were sheltered by the Korobiec family in Porzecze, near Grodno. Not one of their neighbours or other local persons in the know informed on them to the German authorities.<sup>2598</sup>
- The Krepski family of Helenów, near Stołpce, sheltered Shimon Kantorowicz for two years. Almost the entire village was aware of this, but nobody betrayed them.<sup>2599</sup>

Jews passing as Polish Christians in cities were often recognized by people who knew them or who recognized them as Jews. Such encounters did not usually result in betrayal. Open displays of sympathy were also evident. The following accounts pertain to Warsaw.

- Stefan Chaskielewicz, passing as a Christian in Warsaw, unexpectedly ran into many Poles whom he knew—and who knew that he was Jewish—without their giving him away. “I often met people I knew who either looked at me without greeting me, or greeted me with open sympathy. ... Occasionally, I did not even realize that the person I met knew me.”<sup>2600</sup>

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See also the testimony of Gita Giliat of Ejszyszki, who was sheltered by a farmer in Motejkany with a female friend, YVA, O.71/92 (Item 3552495).

<sup>2595</sup> Leon Kahn (as told to Marjorie Morris), *No Time To Mourn: A True Story of a Jewish Partisan Fighter* (Vancouver: Laurelton Press, 1978), 55, 124.

<sup>2596</sup> Gilbert, *The Righteous*, 19.

<sup>2597</sup> Testimony of Beniamin Rogowski, YVA, file O.3/2820 (Item 3556535); Testimony of Mosze Michalowski, YVA, file O.3/2815 (Item 3560227).

<sup>2598</sup> Emilia Korobiec, RD.

<sup>2599</sup> Krepski Family, RD.

<sup>2600</sup> Chaskielewicz, *Ukrywałem się w Warszawie*, 35–36.

- Henryk Lewandowski, one of a number of Jews from Zamość who took refuge in Warsaw, recalled, “[M]any Polish families in Warsaw knew about me and my acquaintances; but none of us experienced the slightest trouble because of this.”<sup>2601</sup>
- Marcus David Leuchter, who lived in “Aryan” Warsaw for more than two years, attested: “Having escaped from the [Kraków] Ghetto, I assumed a Polish gentile identity. While everybody around me knew, or at least suspected, that I was a Jew, nobody betrayed me.”<sup>2602</sup>
- The well-known writer Jan Brzechwa, who was of Jewish origin, lived openly in Warsaw, frequenting the same places he used to frequent before the war. No one turned him in.<sup>2603</sup>
- When Wiera Gran, a well-known singer, was hospitalized in Warsaw, all of the staff, other patients and visitors knew that she was Jewish. Nobody said a word.<sup>2604</sup>
- Henryk Grabowski, the famed liaison officer between the Polish and Jewish underground, smuggled scores of Jews out of the Warsaw ghetto. Many of his neighbours were aware that he often used his small, crowded apartment in Warsaw to hide the fugitives.<sup>2605</sup>
- Edward Reicher, who resided with a group of Jews on Waliców Street in Warsaw, recalled, “Petty incidents led us to quarrel constantly and without dignity. We fought not just with words but also with our fists. It was obvious that we were living there, but days, weeks, and months went by and nobody denounced us, even though the entire apartment complex, which was home to several hundred people, knew of our presence. Even the Polish prostitutes who received German clients in the same building did not betray us.”<sup>2606</sup>
- Wanda Jedlicka (then Grossman or Grosman), her husband, Wilhelm, and their two young sons did not relocate to the Warsaw ghetto when it was created in 1940; they remained in Warsaw proper. Although they had converted to Calvinism several years before the war, they were still considered to be Jews under German law. Wilhelm managed to obtain false identity documents for the family under the name of Jedlicki, and they did not go into hiding. They survived the war with the help of a number of Poles. As Jedlicka pointed out, dozens of persons knew or surmised the truth, yet only once did they encounter problems—with a gang of professional blackmailers. Eventually, that gang was liquidated by the Polish underground.<sup>2607</sup>
- An entire apartment building in Warsaw’s working-class district of Mokotów was aware that an extended Jewish family resided in their midst. Some of family members were very Jewish-looking, and some spoke with a Yiddish accent.<sup>2608</sup>

<sup>2601</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 68.

<sup>2602</sup> Marcus David Leuchter, “Reflections on the Holocaust,” *The Sarmatian Review* [Houston, Texas], vol. 20, no. 3 (September 2000).

<sup>2603</sup> Mariusz Urbanek, *Brzechwa: Nie dla dzieci* (Warsaw: Iskry, 2023), 98 ff.

<sup>2604</sup> Agata Tuszyńska, *Oskarżona Wiera Gran* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2010), 142.

<sup>2605</sup> Barbara Stanisławczyk, *Czterdzieści twardych* (Warsaw: ABC, 1997), 91.

<sup>2606</sup> Reicher, *Country of Ash*, 198, 201.

<sup>2607</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 675–81.

<sup>2608</sup> Marek Halter, “Tzedek,” *Wprost*, June 13, 1993.

- Fryderyka Godlewska (Szulemit Karmi), then a six-year-old child with obvious Semitic features, was taken in by the Domański family and passed off as their daughter. The entire tenement house in the Mokotów district was aware of this, and no one betrayed them.<sup>2609</sup>
- Juliusz and Jadwiga Saloni took in Irena Dąb, a seven-year-old fugitive from the Warsaw ghetto. Because the child unwittingly performed a Jewish dance in public—and because her features made it obvious—the neighbours in their apartment building in Warsaw’s Saska Kępa suburb realized that she was Jewish. None of them caused her any harm.<sup>2610</sup>
- Fanny Gothajner and her teenage son lived with the Słowakiewicz family on Powsińska Street in the Czerniaków district. Many of the residents of the apartment building recognized that she was Jewish. Far from betraying her, though, they made it clear that they were favourable disposed.<sup>2611</sup>
- The journalist Rafał Praga and his wife were sheltered by Franciszek and Klementyna Olbrychski in their apartment on Nowogrodzka Street in Warsaw. Although the Pragas’ Jewish origin was common knowledge, and Rafał Praga, who had a distinctly Jewish appearance, used to frequent a nearby café, no one betrayed them.<sup>2612</sup>
- Zofia Rosen lived undisturbed in her Warsaw apartment, with the knowledge and assistance of the building’s residents, until the Warsaw Uprising broke out in August 1944.<sup>2613</sup>
- Liliana Alter, a girl who looked Jewish, lived openly with the Stupnicki family in an apartment building on Mickiewicz Street in the Żoliborz district of Warsaw without any adverse reaction from its many residents.<sup>2614</sup>
- Other Warsaw tenement houses whose residents acted in tacit unison to protect one or more Jewish neighbours are mentioned in testimonies, e.g., 11 Wielka Street, and 45 Morszyńska Street.<sup>2615</sup>
- A Jewish woman who had to find new lodgings in Warsaw for herself and a friend with a Jewish appearance recalled, “Maria’s physician paid a house call, bringing some medication and an injection. It was only one of several visits for which he never asked payment or information of any kind. ... We combed the neighborhood, asking in the storefronts if there might be a room to let. We gave many in those streets occasion to wonder about the two forlorn young women, one with a black-

<sup>2609</sup> Piotr Zychowicz, “Są nowi sprawiedliwi,” *Rzeczpospolita* [Warsaw], December 21, 2011.

<sup>2610</sup> Juliusz Bożydar Saloni, Archiwum Historii Mówionej, Muzeum Powstania Warszawskiego, Internet: <https://www.1944.pl/archiwum-historii-mowionej/juliusz-bozydar-saloni,2273.html>. The Salonis were recognized by Yad Vashem for rescuing Irena Dąb and her parents.

<sup>2611</sup> Testimony of Fanny Gothajner, JHI, record group 301, no. 2011.

<sup>2612</sup> Justyna Kobus, “Wykołysała mnie Drohiczyn,” *Sukces*, March 28, 2008; Ewa Bağlaj, *Słoneczna dziewczyna: Opowieść o Klementynie Sołonowicz-Olbrychskiej* (Warsaw: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie Muza, 2007).

<sup>2613</sup> Stanisław Piątkowski, “W mrokach kamienic,” *Kuryer Kielecki*, July 6, 2020.

<sup>2614</sup> The Stupnicki Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-stupnicki-family> (see Anna Bando’s audio account “Dissection of Neighbours”).

<sup>2615</sup> Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 533; Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 93; Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 208–9.

-and-blue face. But no one denounced us as Jews or escapees from the ghetto. In fact, one morning the owner of a barber shop on Rakowiecka Street offered Maria his shop to stay in. All he asked was that she come late and leave early, before his help arrived.”<sup>2616</sup>

- Tomasz Prot, who was accepted into the Stefan Czarnecki Boarding School for Boys in Warsaw run by the Main Welfare Council, wrote: “At that time my looks were very characteristic. I was a dark-haired boy, the features of my face were clearly Semite. ... seeing my looks ... would hardly have any doubts on me being a hiding Jewish boy. Nevertheless, during my stay at the school, ... none of the teachers, nor even my schoolmates made me feel that they knew I was Jewish.”<sup>2617</sup>
- A network of Poles in the Warsaw suburb of Żoliborz was engaged in finding rooms among trusted persons for Jews who were attempting to pass as Poles.<sup>2618</sup> As one Jew remarked, “in the small houses in Warsaw’s Żoliborz district inhabited mostly by the Polish intelligentsia there were hidden many Jews who had escaped from the ghetto. I was in such a home which belonged to a known prewar Endek [nationalist]. Having learned that he was sheltering two Jewesses I asked with surprise: ‘You who before the war were an anti-Semite are now harbouring Jews in his home???’ He replied: ‘We have a common enemy and I am fighting in my way. They are Polish citizens and I have to help them.’”<sup>2619</sup>
- Feliks Tych, a historian at the Jewish Historical Museum in Warsaw, survived the war as a teenager. “Not infrequently, I would see individuals on the tramway or on the street who were, rather doubtless, Jews, looking about themselves anxiously, but the other passengers paid no attention to them, or pretended not to. ... For most of the time I was in hiding, I lived with my adopted family in the Warsaw suburb of Miedzeszyn. The neighbours could must have known that several Jews were hidden in that building. No one was denounced. They all survived.”<sup>2620</sup>
- Employees of the Warsaw Department of Social Welfare were heavily involved in the rescue of Jewish children, placing hundreds of them in Catholic convents. “Once we were informed that two boys were hidden in a cubbyhole in [the suburb of] Praga. One of them was running a high fever and it was imperative to move them. A nun took the sick boy on a streetcar and he started to scream out something in Yiddish. The driver was astute enough to sense the danger and yelled out: ‘This

<sup>2616</sup> Rosenberg, *To Tell at Last*, 122.

<sup>2617</sup> Ceremony of Awarding Medals and Honorary Diplomas “Righteous Among the Nations,” Warsaw, June 14, 2010.

<sup>2618</sup> Marian Turski, ed., *Losy żydowskie: Świadectwo żywych*, vol. 2 (Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Żydów Kombatantów i Poszkodowanych w II Wojnie Światowej, 1999), 150.

<sup>2619</sup> Zdzisław Przygoda, *Niezwykłe przygody w zwyczajnym życiu* (Warsaw: Ypsilon, 1994), 49.

<sup>2620</sup> “O ukrywaniu się po ‘aryjskiej stronie’: Z profesorem Feliksem Tychem rozmawia Barbara Engelking,” *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i Materiały*, vol. 1 (2005): 234; Barbara Engelking, “Rozmowa z prof. Feliksem Tychem,” *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i Materiały*, vol. 2 (2006): 340.

streetcar is going to the depot. Everyone out.’ At the same time he signalled to the nun that she and the boy should remain.”<sup>2621</sup>

- A Jewish woman who was being pursued by a blackmailer in Warsaw turned to the conductor of the streetcar she had boarded with a plea, “‘Sir, that man is an extortionist and he’s persecuting me.’ Without hesitating, the conductor went over to the intruder and slapped him twice across the face.” In the ensuing confusion, she managed to jump off unmolested by the other passengers.<sup>2622</sup>
- Zdzisław Przygoda, who was passing as a Christian, described a scene he witnessed during the 1943 Warsaw ghetto revolt: “On my way home from work in the street car, I listened to the loud discussions amongst the passengers. ‘The ghetto is burning! The Jews are burning, and we will finally be rid of them!’ said one. The majority of passengers reacted quickly by beating him as he made a quick exit from the moving carriage. It was clear that the majority of passengers were upset by the German action, and pleased that the ghetto inhabitants were beginning to fight.”<sup>2623</sup>

**B**ernard Nissenbaum, a Jewish survivor, wrote with admiration about the Polish prisoners of Pawiak prison, located inside the ghetto. Their acts of kindness brought the Jewish prisoners “comfort and encouragement,” both “physically and morally.”

The behavior of other [Pawiak prison] inmates, all political prisoners—towards us, Jewish prisoners, deserves high praise. They showed good comradeship and solidarity with us. When passing the street of the prison, they threw us their bread rations through the prison windows. On Sunday, when we were brought to the prison for [delousing], the kitchen personnel, with the inmates’ agreement, had kept for us the entire rations of soup and bread for distribution among us: What that meant to us, only people who have suffered acute hunger as we had under the Nazis know.<sup>2624</sup>

**A**lmost all of the Jews who survived the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, numbering at least several thousand, were evacuated long with the Polish population to a transit camp in Pruszków, some 20 kilometres away. As historian Gunnar Paulsson points out, this included people with a conspicuously Semitic appearance who had, therefore, previously been at pains to keep themselves out of sight. If “hostile, anti-Semitic” Poles were going to denounce covert Jews to the Germans, they had

<sup>2621</sup> “Traktowałem to jako obowiązek chrześcijański i polski” (an interview with Jan Dobraczyński), *Słowo–Dziennik Katolicki* [Warsaw], no. 67 (1993).

<sup>2622</sup> Gross, *Who Are You, Mr Grymek?*, 249–50.

<sup>2623</sup> Przygoda, *The Way to Freedom*, 54.

<sup>2624</sup> Bernard Nissenbaum, “My Deportation,” p. 28, USHMM, Accession no. 1984.066, RG-02.005.01, cited in Michael Berkowitz, *The Crime of My Very Existence: Nazism and the Myth of Jewish Criminality* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2007), 87.

no shortage of opportunities. However, no evidence exists that a single Jew was betrayed by Poles, either during this exodus or later at the Pruszków camp.<sup>2625</sup>

Among those injured during the uprising there were Jews. They too were taken to the make-shift hospital in Podkowa Leśna, where Polish doctors and nurses treated all their patients with indiscriminate care and devotion. There is no record of any betrayals by fellow patients or personnel.<sup>2626</sup>

Jews who survived the German occupation by hiding in Polish cities other than Warsaw reported similar experiences.

- Helena Ziemba, one of several Jews rescued in Kalinowszczyzna, a suburb of Lublin, stated that many Poles knew she was being hidden, and some even brought food to her hideout. A Polish housekeeper who had an illegitimate son by her Jewish employer was not, likewise, betrayed by anyone.<sup>2627</sup>
- An entire street in the city of Przemyśl was aware of a Jewish hideout which was not betrayed.<sup>2628</sup>
- Nine Jews lived for two years behind a false wall in the attic of a flour mill in Tarnów. Some of the Jewish men used to leave the hideout at night to forage for food. It is unclear how many Poles knew about that situation. Israel Unger, one of those hidden there as a child, at first estimated the number to be about ten. “Who knew about the Jews in the attic? I am not sure even to this day. Probably the Dagnans, and the Skorupas, and the Drozds. ... Likely about ten non-Jewish people knew about the Jews in hiding and no one told on us.” However, as Unger learned much later, the Jews in the attic were an open secret among Poles who worked at the flour mill.<sup>2629</sup>
- Mordecai Peleg, who was passing as a Pole, remained in his native Tarnów for a time and then returned on several occasions. He was well known, and therefore undoubtedly sometimes recognized. No one betrayed him. “Among the Poles, as it turned out, I had no enemies and no-one bothered me.”<sup>2630</sup>
- The fact that Frederick Weitzenblum Baar did not look Jewish helped him to pass as a Pole, as he moved from place to place in his native Kraków. Many acquaintances knew that he was Jewish, and of course he ran into these people from time to time. No one turned him over to the Germans.<sup>2631</sup>

<sup>2625</sup> Paulsson, *Secret City*, 191–92.

<sup>2626</sup> Testimony of Róża Dobrecka, JHI, record group 301, no. 2274.

<sup>2627</sup> Jerzy Jacek Bojarski, ed., *Ścieżki pamięci: Żydowskie miasto w Lublinie—losy, miejsca, historia* (Lublin and Rishon LeZion: Norbertinum, Ośrodek “Brama Grodzka–Teatr NN,” Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko-Izraelskiej w Lublinie, Stowarzyszenie Środkowoeuropejskie “Dziedzictwo i Współczesność,” 2002), 35.

<sup>2628</sup> Wroński and Zwolakowa, *Polacy Żydzi 1939–1945*, 307.

<sup>2629</sup> Gammon and Unger, *The Unwritten Diary of Israel Unger*, 14–15, 199.

<sup>2630</sup> Peleg-Mariańska and Peleg, *Witnesses*, 4.

<sup>2631</sup> Frederic B. [Baar] Holocaust Testimony (HVT-2016), FVA.

- Henryk Meller hid for a time on the Aryan side of Kraków, where he became one of those iconic children who sold cigarettes for a living. According to his testimony, he made enough money to allow himself to dress properly and eat well and even attend a cinema in the evening. The local Polish youths viewed him as an equal; if they were short of merchandise, they would shout to him, “Jew-boy, give us a Sport” (a well-known cigarette brand). They knew he was a Jew, but they accepted and respected him as a member of their own community, and no one among them informed on him.<sup>2632</sup>
- The following story of solidarity emerged from Radom.

My parents along with the other Jews of Radom, Poland were imprisoned in the ghetto in March of 1941. My grandfather’s huge leather factory, located a mile or so outside the ghetto, was seized by the Nazis and the Polish workers who had been employed by my grandfather were forced to work in the factory under harsh Nazi supervision. The leather they were producing was being turned into combat boots for German soldiers fighting on the Eastern front.

As the Radom ghetto was being “liquidated” by the Nazis in October 1942, my mother was nine-months pregnant with me. A few of the factory’s Polish workers came into the ghetto and smuggled my mother to the factory. There, in the factory’s attic, with Gestapo officers one floor below closely supervising the Polish workers preparing the leather used to make the boots for Nazi soldiers, my mother gave birth to me with the help of a Polish midwife, and was guarded by a cluster of Polish workers. During all this time, not one of the hundred workers in the factory or the hundreds of Poles living in the village nearby, betrayed my mother to the Nazis. These brave Poles risked their own lives to save the life of my mother and me, her newborn child. My mother was then smuggled back to the ghetto and one of the Polish workers immediately took me to his home; there he and his wife raised me as their own child for three years, risking their own lives and that of their 19-month-old daughter since the Nazi were killing Poles on sight who were harboring Jews.

Then, back in the Radom ghetto, as my parents, together with other Jews, were being marched to the cattle train, Polish partisans—probably employees of my grandfather’s factory—pulled my parents out of the line and, hiding them in a horse and carriage, smuggled them up to Warsaw where another Polish family hid them in their basement for three years.<sup>2633</sup>

In Poznań, a stronghold of the right-wing National Party (Endek), relations between Polish political prisoners and the Jews imprisoned in the Stadion labour camp in 1941–1943 were amicable.

- Samuel Bronowski, who appeared as a witness in the trial of Arthur Greiser, Gauleiter of the so-called Wartheland, said the following in his deposition before the Supreme National Tribunal:

The only help possible was aid in kind by supplying food. In the camp we received 200 grams of bread and one litre of turnip soup per day. Obviously, those who had no help from outside were bound to die within a short time. A committee was formed in Poznań for the collection of food. This was no easy matter since everything was rationed under the food coupon sys-

<sup>2632</sup> Hochberg-Mariańska and Grüss, *The Children Accuse*, 66.

<sup>2633</sup> Andrew Griffel, “Did the Poles Who Saved My Parents Do It For Money?,” *The Times of Israel* (blog), February 19, 2018. Andrew Griffel’s parents, Henryk and Paulina Griffel, were sheltered in Warsaw by Helena and Piotr Spus. See the testimony of Helena Spus, SFV, Interview code 49133.

tem. Many a time, we received bigger parcels which reached us secretly at the construction sites where we worked and met the Polish people. Parcels were also thrown into the camp by night. It is not easy to describe the attitude of the civilian population outside the camp—to say that it was friendly, would be too little. There was marked compassion. There has not been a single case in Poznań of a Pole who would betray a Jew escaping the camp. There has not been a single case on the construction site of a foreman striking a Jew without immediate reaction on the part of the Polish co-workers. Those Jews who survived did so only thanks to the help from the Polish population of Poznań.<sup>2634</sup>

- Maks Moszkowicz, another inmate of the Stadion labour camp, made this statement in his deposition for Yad Vashem: “I wish to stress that the behaviour of the Polish population in Poznań towards us, the Jewish prisoners, was very friendly and when our labour battalions were coming out of the camp, people—mostly women—waited for us in the street in order to throw us food in spite of severe interdictions and punishment.”<sup>2635</sup>
- People readily recognizable as Jews who spoke poor Polish were able to survive in the Western Polish countryside, an area that was incorporated directly into the German Reich (from which Jews had been removed at the beginning of the German occupation), without being betrayed. “[Alexander] said that he had gone through the war with a false identity. It sounds like a joke with his Yiddish accented Polish, with his looks. ‘I presented myself as a Lithuanian [he said], I had no papers, I had no money, but I was young and strong. ... I escaped westward, to the Poznan [Poznań] region where Jews were hardly known. I worked in the village, at the farm of somebody ... He didn’t pay me anything. ... What matters is that he fed me, gave me some rags to wear, and I lived like a king.’”<sup>2636</sup>

**S**tories of solidarity among prisoners come from other German camps as well. Although such encounters were far from routine in the repressive and fearful atmosphere created by the German authorities, they attest to a broader understanding of human relations.

Many Jewish testimonies mention Polish prisoners of Auschwitz in a very favourable light. The vast majority of such cases would never have been recorded given the very high mortality rate among Jewish prisoners. These are just some examples that were recorded.

- Yad Vashem has recognized seven Polish prisoners who came to the assistance of Jewish prisoners as “Righteous”: Jerzy Bielecki, Romualda Ciesielska, Maria Kotarba, Jerzy Pozimski, Jerzy Radwanek, Stanisława Sierzputowska-Grodzicka, and Marianna Sowiak-Chodnikiewicz.<sup>2637</sup>

<sup>2634</sup> Bartoszewski, *The Blood Shed Unites Us*, 225.

<sup>2635</sup> Bartoszewski, *The Blood Shed Unites Us*, 225.

<sup>2636</sup> Ephraim F. Sten, *1111 Days In My Life Plus Four* (Takoma Park, Maryland: Dryad Press, in association with the University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 66–67.

<sup>2637</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 90 (Bielecki), 148 (Ciesielska), 256 (Grodzicka); vol. 5, (Pozimski), 658 (Radwanek), 742 (Sowiak-Chodnikiewicz); *Encyclopedia of the Righteous: Supplementary Volumes (2000–2005)*, vol. 2, 577–78 (Kotarba).

- Jerzy Bielecki, one of the first prisoners of Auschwitz, met and befriended Tzila Cybulska, a young Jewish woman prisoner. They used to meet in secret, despite the fact that it was forbidden to do so, and grew fond of each other. Bielecki arranged their escape in July 1944 and, with assistance of various Poles, took Tzila to the home of his relatives in the village of Muniakowice. She was later transferred to a neighbouring village, where she was cared for devotedly by the Czernik family until the Germans were expelled from the area.
- Romualda Ciesielska and her husband, Feliks, provided assistance to a number of Jews in Kraków. They were both arrested by the Gestapo. Romualda was interrogated, tortured, and sent to Auschwitz, where she continued helping Jewish prisoners. Her husband was interned in the Mauthausen concentration camp, where he perished.
- Maria Kotarba, who was part of the Polish resistance movement at Auschwitz, used her position to help several Jewish female prisoners who were passing as Poles with the connivance of Polish prisoners.
- Jerzy Pozimski used his position at Auschwitz to help many prisoners, among them Jews.
- Jerzy Radwanek, a member of the Polish underground at Auschwitz, used his position as camp electrician to provide widespread assistance to Jewish prisoners. He came to be known by them as the “Jewish uncle” of Auschwitz.<sup>2638</sup>
- Stanisława Sierzputowska-Grodzicka used her position at Auschwitz to save at least three Jewish female prisoners.
- Marianna Sowiak-Chodnikiewicz helped to conceal the identity of a Jewish woman who was passing as a Pole, and threatened to report any snitch to the Polish underground in the camp.
- Halina Nelken, a Jewish woman from Kraków, writes of the solidarity of Polish and Jewish prisoners in the Płaszów concentration camp and the help provided by Polish inmates of Auschwitz, the camp’s first inmates, to later transports of prisoners including Jews. These anonymous benefactors, who may not have been the “norm,” were known by the name of *kochany* (darling). While they did not have much to offer—perhaps some scraps of food or clothing—their attitude had a great impact on the new arrivals. Nelken relates similar displays of solidarity shown to her by Polish women inmates at Ravensbrück.<sup>2639</sup>
- Dr. Peta Welian, who was deported from the Białystok ghetto in September 1943, first to Stutthof then to Auschwitz, recalled that she and the Jewish prisoners who arrived with her were helped by Polish political prisoners: “They had big hearts, they helped us as much as they could and risked a lot.”<sup>2640</sup>
- Sigmund Gorson (Zygmunt Gruszkowski), taken to Auschwitz as a 13-year-old Jewish boy, recalled that Fr. Maximilian Kolbe was “like an angel to me. Like a mo-

<sup>2638</sup> See also the profile of Jerzy Radwanek under “Poland,” The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, Internet: <http://www.jfr.org>.

<sup>2639</sup> Halina Nelken, *And Yet, I Am Here!* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 232, 248, 272.

<sup>2640</sup> Testimony of Peta Welian, JHI, record group 301, no. 1856.

ther hen, he took me in his arms. He used to wipe away my tears. ... he gave away so much of his meager rations that to me it was a miracle he could live." Another Jewish survivor, Eddie Gastfriend, recalled warmly the scores of Polish prisoner priests who were subjected to particular forms of degradation in the camp: "They wore no collars, but you knew they were priests by their manner and their attitude, especially toward Jews. They were so gentle, so loving."<sup>2641</sup>

- Sigmund Gorson also reported that Polish doctors imprisoned in Auschwitz stole medication from the infirmary to treat his gangrene-infected leg and to help other Jews.<sup>2642</sup>
- One such doctor was Janusz Makowski.<sup>2643</sup> Dr. Ludwik Fleck credits Dr. Włodzimierz Ławkowicz with saving his life when he fell ill by sharing his food.<sup>2644</sup>
- Max Eisen was only 15 years of age when he was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau from Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1944. He was immediately assigned to a work detail draining swamps in the vicinity of the camp. One day, Eisen received a terrible blow from an SS guard and was knocked unconscious. Severely injured, he was left at the camp infirmary. Tadeusz Orzeszko, the Polish doctor in charge of the clinic, took pity on Eisen and saved him from certain death. Patients who could not return to work were being taken to the gas chamber. Dr. Orzeszko operated on Eisen, nursed him back to health, and engaged him as his assistant. What Eisen did not know was that Dr. Orzeszko was a member of the Polish resistance, carrying on activities even in the heart of this notorious death camp.<sup>2645</sup>
- Dr. E. Szor, a Jewish inmate of Auschwitz, confirmed the helpfulness of fellow prisoner, Jan Kledzik, who was a hospital attendant at the camp: "He displayed a father's devotion to his fellow sufferers, irrespective of race and nationality." Kledzik, in turn, acknowledged the helpfulness of other Poles who collaborated with him: "As a former inmate of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp, I wish to state how Poles saved and helped the Jews in the camp. Jews were hidden in hospitals; food that other prisoners received in parcels were shared with them. This was how the people working with me in the hospital gave help. They were: Andrzej Białecki, Stach Bukowski, Tadeusz Radomski, Marian Czerwiński, Bogdan Kolasiński. And in this way, thanks to our help, the following people regained their liberty: Doctors Knoch, Szor, Gabej, August, Dizerej, and [Ludwik] Fastman, the pharmacist Gotlieb, Zukier, Zieliński. The last two had already been selected for the gas chamber and, thanks, to Zygmunt, the *Schreiber* [clerk], they were taken from the hospital to the workers' camp. They all survived. When I was in the workers' *lager* before I started

<sup>2641</sup> Treece, *A Man for Others*, 138, 152–53.

<sup>2642</sup> Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 375.

<sup>2643</sup> Roszkowski, *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 90.

<sup>2644</sup> Testimony of Ludwik Fleck, JHI, record group 301, no. 1175.

<sup>2645</sup> Max Eisen, *By Chance Alone: A Remarkable True Story of Courage and Survival at Auschwitz* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2016); "Canadian Max Eisen's stories of surviving Holocaust," CBC, Internet: [https://www.cbc.ca/news/science/holocaust-survivor-hologram-1.5436430?\\_vfz=medium%3Dsharebar](https://www.cbc.ca/news/science/holocaust-survivor-hologram-1.5436430?_vfz=medium%3Dsharebar). See also the story of Dr. Tadeusz Orzeszko, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-orzeszko-tadeusz>.

to work in the hospital, Father [Wawrzyniec] Wnuk from Gniezno and I saved Jews, who were so exhausted during roll call, that they collapsed and lay in the mud. Their co-religionists could not save them since they were afraid of the Nazis, but we Poles carried them on our shoulders to the block. There the Poles washed and fed them.”<sup>2646</sup>

- Zofia Hauswirt, another Jewish inmate of Auschwitz, worked with imprisoned medical staff. She recalled the helpfulness to Jews of a number of Polish inmates: Dr. Alina Tetmajer, Dr. Stefania Perzanowska, Dr. Katarzyna Łaniewska, Dr. Rudolf Diem, Dr. Stanisław Kłodziński, Dr. Jan Nowak, Dr. Mieczysław Kościelniak, Dr. Stefan Stolarzewicz, Janina Palmowska, Wiktoria Klimaszewska, Teodozja Piątkowska, Ludwik Wrona, Jadwiga Dąbrowska, Maria Zielińska, Adam Kopyciński, Zygmunt Rzążewski, and others.<sup>2647</sup>
- Dr. Stanisława Leszczyńska, who assisted in the delivery of hundreds of children in Auschwitz, gave over the Jewish children to their mothers in contravention of camp regulations and succeeded in concealing the origin of some of the Jewish children in order to prevent them from being killed.<sup>2648</sup>
- Other Polish doctors and medical staff who helped Jews—Adam Kuryłowicz, Władysław Fejkiel, Jan Grabczyński—were identified by Frank Stiffel, who was assigned to work in the infirmary for prisoners in Auschwitz I.<sup>2649</sup> Stiffel also reported that he was helped by a Polish block leader,<sup>2650</sup> and that a Pole protected a Jewish barber from Marseilles from being sent to the Birkenau death camp.<sup>2651</sup>
- Mieczysław Maślanko and Wolf Glicksman, Jewish inmates of Auschwitz, attest to the help provided to Jews by the following Polish Christian prisoners: Józef Cyraniewicz, Jan Mosdorf, and Adam Kuryłowicz.<sup>2652</sup>
- In a letter published in the *New York Times* on December 27, 1998, Marianne Sann wrote: “I want to, and must attest, to the fact that I was saved by Catholic fellow prisoners, at their great personal risk, in Auschwitz and again in Mauthausen.”<sup>2653</sup>

<sup>2646</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 478–79.

<sup>2647</sup> Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 670–71.

<sup>2648</sup> Erin Blakemore, “The Midwife at Auschwitz Delivered 3,000 Babies in Unfathomable Conditions,” Internet: <https://www.history.com/news/auschwitz-midwife-stanislaw-leszczynska-saint>; “Stanisława Leszczyńska,” Medical Review Auschwitz, Internet: <https://www.mp.pl/auschwitz/journal/english/206159,stanislaw-leszczynska>.

<sup>2649</sup> Frank Stiffel, *The Tale of the Ring: A Kaddish: A Personal Memoir of the Holocaust* (Toronto and New York: Bantam Books, 1985), chapter 10.

<sup>2650</sup> Testimony of Frank Stifel, YVA, O.3/5741 (Item 3555270).

<sup>2651</sup> Stiffel, *The Tale of the Ring: A Kaddish*, 289.

<sup>2652</sup> Friedman, *Their Brothers' Keepers*, 114; Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 10–11, 16; Bartoszewski and Lewinówna, *Ten jest z ojczyzny mojej*, 2nd ed., 91, 668–70.

<sup>2653</sup> This was part of a longer letter which read: “As a Jewish woman and a survivor of Auschwitz, I am deeply disturbed by the feud over the crosses there. ... Because the Nazis preferred to incinerate more Jews than Roman Catholic Poles does not mean that Polish non-Jewish victims do not deserve a cross of remembrance and place of honor among their fellow Jewish victims. The Polish inmates felt the icy winds of doom just as acutely as I did. I want to, and must attest to the fact that I was saved by Catholic fellow prison-

- Berek Latarus from Łódź recalled, “One time I stole a bread and they took me to shoot me, but a non-Jewish guy from Cracow, he was my friend, and he ran and took me away from the Germans! This non-Jew was on good terms with the S.S., he used to smuggle them cigarettes, and we called him the ‘Jewish father’ because he was sticking up for us all the time.”<sup>2654</sup>
- Ada Omieljanczuk, a Jewish woman prisoner, attributes her survival to Polish fellow prisoners of Auschwitz who shared their food parcels with her.<sup>2655</sup>
- Two Jewish survivors from Ciechanów recalled that Polish prisoners in Auschwitz who received food parcels from home gave their camp-issued portions away to Jews and other prisoners.<sup>2656</sup>
- Two Jewish sisters who were imprisoned in Auschwitz recalled with gratitude the extra bread they received from a Polish prisoner.<sup>2657</sup>
- Historian Yisrael Gutman credits a Polish prisoner who hid him and fed him without expecting any reward with saving his life when he was imprisoned in Auschwitz for several months.<sup>2658</sup>
- Szymon Laks, an acclaimed composer and musician, identifies three Poles who helped him: Tadeusz Jawor, Ludwik Żuk-Skarszewski, who used his connections to pull Laks out of a work crew, and Jan Stojakowski, a supervisor in the food warehouse who provided Laks with extra food.<sup>2659</sup>
- Benjamin P. credits Bronisław Staszak, an orchestra conductor, with saving his life by providing him with extra food.<sup>2660</sup>
- Moishe Kantorowitz credits the Polish prisoner Leon Kulowski with saving his life by arranging his transfer, with the agreement of a Polish Kapo, from a hard labour task whose only exit was death, to an inside mechanic shop job and by giving some of his food to Kantorowitz.<sup>2661</sup>

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ers, at their great personal risk, in Auschwitz and again in Mauthausen, Austria. I hope the Polish government will not be pressured to remove these symbols of respect. ...” On the controversy surrounding the Carmelite convent on the perimeter of the camp, see Władysław T. Bartoszewski, *The Convent at Auschwitz* (London: Bowerdean Press, 1990).

<sup>2654</sup> Lewin, *Witnesses to the Holocaust*, 60.

<sup>2655</sup> Tadeusz Andrzejewski, “Wileńscy strażnicy oświęcimskiej pamięci,” *Tygodnik Wileńszczyzny*, February 3–9, 2005.

<sup>2656</sup> Noach Zabłudowicz, “My Experiences in World War II,” and Moshe Kolko, “Ciechanow Jews in the Uprising in Auschwitz,” in A. Wolf Yassini, ed., *Memorial Book for the Community of Ciechanow*, Internet: <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/ciechanow/Ciechanow.html>, translation of *Yisker-bukh fun der Tshekhanover yidisher kehile* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Ciechanow in Israel and in the Diaspora, 1962), 337, 382.

<sup>2657</sup> See Rena Kornreich Gelissen, with Heather Dune Macadam, *Rena’s Promise: A Story of Sisters in Auschwitz*, expanded ed. (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 2015), 67.

<sup>2658</sup> Piotr Zychowicz, in conversation with Israel Gutman, “To nie Polacy założyli obozy, tylko Niemcy,” *Rzeczpospolita* [Warsaw], May 30, 2012.

<sup>2659</sup> Szymon Laks, *Music of Another World* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 40–41, 104–5, 107.

<sup>2660</sup> Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds*, 131–32.

<sup>2661</sup> Moishe Kantorowitz, *My Mother’s Bequest: From Shershev to Auschwitz to Newfoundland* (Canada: n.p., 2004), book 4.

- Walentyna Konopska and Wanda Marossanyi conspired to change the ethnic identity of Maria Kozakiewicz, a Jewish prisoner, from Jewish to Polish, and have her sent to a different camp (Flossenbürg), thereby saving her life.<sup>2662</sup>
- Czech prisoner Valter Hoffman describes how Polish prisoner Antonina Piątkowska used her position to help Jewish prisoners avoid selections for the crematoria and medical experiments, and provided them with food. Hoffman also mentions the assistance provided to Jewish prisoners by Polish prisoners Zofia Barto and Franciszek Buczyński.<sup>2663</sup>
- Szaja Gertner describes how a Polish prisoner who was a military officer trained a group of Jews from Birkenau on the tactics of how to escape from the camp. The Jewish prisoners staged a breakout in January 1944.<sup>2664</sup>
- There are a number of Jewish testimonies that recall Polish *Kapos* and block supervisors at Auschwitz in favourable light.<sup>2665</sup> Anna Kovitzka (Kaletska) credits her block elder, a Polish political prisoner, with saving her life when she fell gravely ill. This Polish woman tried to protect Jewish prisoners from being sent to the ovens and helped other prisoners as well.<sup>2666</sup>
- A Jewish prisoner recalls how a Polish *Kapo* protected a well-respected rabbi from his hometown: “As it turned out, the father had been the rebbe in the Galician shtetl where the *Kapo* had lived. He had been greatly respected by the entire population, even by the Christians. He had been called ‘the Holy Father,’ and many Poles had gone to him when they needed advice. ... The *Kapo* had recognized him and his son in Block 16, the death block ... and brought them directly over to his *Kommando*. ... The *Kapo* supplied the rebbe and his son with food so that they would not have to eat the blood sausage and the nonkosher soup from the pot.”<sup>2667</sup>
- Another Jewish inmate mentions a Polish *Kapo* who allowed Jewish inmates to hold a religious service and guarded the entrance to the barracks to watch out for the SS.<sup>2668</sup>

<sup>2662</sup> Ulrich Herbert, Karin Orth, and Christoph Dieckmann, eds., *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager: Entwicklung und Struktur*, vol. 1 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1998), 966.

<sup>2663</sup> Testimony of Valter Hoffman, JHI, record group 301, no. 6306.

<sup>2664</sup> Roszkowski, *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 94–95.

<sup>2665</sup> The impression conveyed in Art Spiegelman’s *Maus*, a very popular graphic novel used as an educational tool in American and Canadian elementary and high schools, that *Kapos* were invariably brutal Poles is demonstrably false. The first *Kapos* were German prisoners; as more Polish prisoners arrived, a small number of them became *Kapos*. When the number of Jews grew dramatically, there was no shortage of Jewish *Kapos*, whose reputation was no better than their predecessors. See *Poles as Pigs in MAUS: The Problems with Spiegelman’s MAUS*, Appendix 1, Internet: <http://www.kpk-toronto.org/obrona-dobrego-imienia>.

<sup>2666</sup> Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds*, 15, 205, 210; Account of Anna Kaletska, Internet: [https://voices.library.iit.edu/interview/kaletskaA?search\\_api\\_fulltext=kaletska](https://voices.library.iit.edu/interview/kaletskaA?search_api_fulltext=kaletska).

<sup>2667</sup> Konrad Charmatz, *Nightmares: Memoirs of the Years of Horror under Nazi Rule in Europe, 1939–1945* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 101–2.

<sup>2668</sup> Judy Weissenberg Cohen, “The Kol Nidre I always remember,” *The Canadian Jewish News* [Toronto], September 24, 1998.

- Walter Plywaski, formerly Władysław Pływacki, who was transferred with his twin brother from the Łódź ghetto to Birkenau in the summer of 1944, recalled, “I remember being overly clever with my brother in going to a barracks where we heard that there were double or triple food rations to all underage twins. We lied that we were fraternal twins. The barracks was, of course, a holding pen for Dr. Mengele’s so-called medical experiments. One of the Polish Gentile Kapos in that barracks took me aside and told me what my brother and I were facing there. He told me that he would try to get us out as soon as he can manage, and he did just that probably on the third day there. He was a total stranger to me. He smuggled us out and we rejoined our father and the men’s camp barracks.”<sup>2669</sup>
- Polish workers and nearby residents were also known to have helped Jewish prisoners by providing them with food and assisting in their escape.<sup>2670</sup>
- Józef Wrona, a civilian employee in the Buna chemical plant of the I.G. Farben Industry Concern, which was in Monowice (Auschwitz III), orchestrated the escape of two Jewish prisoners whom he hid in his home in the village of Nowa Wieś near Kęty.<sup>2671</sup>

In an inhumane and poisonous environment like Auschwitz, one should not take these acts of kindness for granted. Israel Lior, a Polish Jew, recalled, “I saw people stealing the last possessions of people who were dying ... I was ashamed of what one Jew did to another; that he would report on or try to steal from his comrades.”<sup>2672</sup>

A Hungarian survivor, a rabbi, recalled:

The Polish Jews discriminated terribly. They blamed us that we had the privilege of living such a good life in our own homes while they were taken into Auschwitz two years earlier than us. “Now we should suffer!” they said. “We should work and they shouldn’t have to work.” And they kept constantly picking on us, for no reason. We are Jews too; we didn’t send them to Auschwitz.<sup>2673</sup>

Helen Lewis, a Czech Jew who was an inmate of Birkenau, which held primarily Jews, did not have fond memories of the Jewish prisoners from Poland, “some of whom had become completely brutalized with the years they had been there, and who were more frightening and dangerous than the SS.”<sup>2674</sup>

<sup>2669</sup> Walter Plywaski, “I Remember,” *Jewish Magazine*, September-October 2007.

<sup>2670</sup> Świebocski, *Ludzie dobrej woli*, 66–67, 70, 78, 351, 501–2 (Merka Szewach), 506–7 (Jenny Spritzer), 513–14 (Kurt Julius Goldstein), 516–17 (Géza Schein Kozma).

<sup>2671</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 904.

<sup>2672</sup> Lauren Lior-Lichtenstein and Philippe Lichtenstein, *Remember Never to Forget: The Story of Israel Lior* (Bloomington, Indiana: Xlibris, 2010), 101–2.

<sup>2673</sup> William B. Helmreich, *Against All Odds: Holocaust Survivors and the Successful Lives They Made in America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 176–77.

<sup>2674</sup> Gill, *The Journey Back From Hell*, 411.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of Polish Jews—passing as Christians—survived in Germany as forced labourers. Most of them were women, and many of them were recognized as Jews by Polish labourers, yet not betrayed by them.

- Sarah Blattberg-Cooper, who was rescued by Poles near Mielec, states that one of her daughters and a niece, who volunteered to go to Germany posing as Polish workers, spent two years there in separate labour camps. Polish workers recognized that they were Jews, but they did not betray them to the German administration.<sup>2675</sup>
- After escaping from the Warsaw ghetto with the help of Polish smugglers, Zosia Goldberg was—after passing as a Christian in “Aryan” Warsaw for some time—caught in a German street dragnet as a Pole, taken to detention centre along with young Christian Poles, and deported to Germany for forced labour. Her story illustrates the many dangers faced by Jews who tried to pass as Poles, right from the moment she left the ghetto. It also compels one to confront prejudicial generalizations about the behaviour of Poles.

When we got on the tramway, we were so smelly, so dirty, the conductor took one look and then looked away. He started to drive the tramway fast, as fast as he could. He started to sing songs like he was coming back from work. ... The smugglers got an idea to sing an insulting song about a Jewess ... the conductor knew who these two girls were. He saw how we looked. One thing certain about the tramways. All the conductors were socialists from Pilsudski's [Pilsudski's] party. They helped the Jews. They helped anybody. They were very good in this way. ... these conductors were very helpful.<sup>2676</sup>

Once, later, when I was living in the Aryan section, I saw one woman, a Gentile, a neighbor who used to live in our building before the ghetto was formed. She recognized me, but she made believe that she didn't see me. She could have turned me in, yet she didn't.<sup>2677</sup>

- Zosia Goldberg recounts how Franka, her Jewish “friend” from the ghetto in whom she had confided, worked closely with a Volksdeutscher plainclothes policeman to squeeze jewelry out of her after she escaped to the “Aryan side.”<sup>2678</sup> She also recounts several other close calls.

I was almost exposed three times when I was on the street. Several times I saw the trucks with the *placowka* [*placówka*, an outpost for Jewish labor forces from the ghetto], the Jews who worked outside the ghetto, and many times they would holler, “Zosia, how are you?” I made believe I didn't know them when they yelled from the trucks because ... They were not doing it on purpose to give me away, they were just hollering hello, happy to see someone they knew.

Another time there was one fellow by the name of Lifszitz whom I had known from before the war. He was tall and skinny, with curly, kinky, blond hair, and he worked for the Germans. I was told that he would go into the Aryan section and he would look for Jews to denounce. One

<sup>2675</sup> Sarah Blattberg-Cooper, “My Memories from the Bloodiest Era of My People’s History,” in *Sefer zikaron le-kehilat Mielec: Sipur hashmadat ha-kehila ha-yehudit* (New York: Mielec Yizkor Book Committee, 1979), translated as *Remembering Mielec: The Destruction of the Jewish Community*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/mielec/Mielec.html>.

<sup>2676</sup> Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 60.

<sup>2677</sup> Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 41.

<sup>2678</sup> Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 62–63.

day I saw Lifszitz on the street, and he was heading in my direction. So I went up to him, right up to him, and I said, “You know, I have a knife. I will stab you if you try to give me away. Get away!” He ran away from me; otherwise I would have been in big trouble.

Then one day I met my old history teacher, Mrs. Dinces, who was also the wife of the director of my *gymnasium*. Mr. Dinces had changed his faith and become a Catholic, but that wouldn’t keep his wife safe. She spoke Polish, not Yiddish, and her Polish was so beautiful it was like music, yet now she was running away with her daughter. She had blond hair with very thick braids in the back. When she saw me I almost went over to her to say hello, but she got so scared that she crossed the street and ran away from me. I don’t blame her—she was afraid of me, she didn’t know who I was. These were the three times that I met people, and each time I could have been exposed or denounced.<sup>2679</sup>

- Zosia Goldberg was deported to Germany from Warsaw by train together with other Poles caught by the Germans. “When the train started we sang the Polish anthem, crying. I was crying like a baby, too. This was the last time I saw Poland. ... I saw Jews wearing yellow stars working the fields. I took my bread and I threw it out the window. And we all started to throw our bread to the Jews through the windows.”<sup>2680</sup> Once in Germany, she encountered many friendly Polish workers: “The Polish, when they were nice, they were really nice. They pretended they did not know. They did not ask questions.”<sup>2681</sup>

One day I met a fellow from Warsaw, from the Old Town. So many of those Warsaw Gentiles were fantastic, helping Jews wherever they were. The smugglers also came from that same part of town. The workers in the towns, especially from Warsaw, were far from ignorant. ... They did not have that hatred of the Jews and saw the Jews more as fellow citizens.<sup>2682</sup>

- When Zosia was arrested, a Pole who worked as an interpreter and suspected she was Jewish counseled her on her appearance and the “story” she should give to her German interrogators.<sup>2683</sup> She also encountered several Jews (and a Ukrainian interpreter) who wanted betray her, and several other Poles who helped her.

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>2679</sup> Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 74–75.

<sup>2680</sup> Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 83.

<sup>2681</sup> Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 88.

<sup>2682</sup> Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 98.

<sup>2683</sup> Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 129.

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

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

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

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

I found out that he sewed suits for the Gestapo men. He was a tailor. He sewed their clothing, and he translated whenever they needed it. He was a denouncer.<sup>2684</sup>

The Treblinka death camp, which was in operation from July 1942 until October 1943, was the place of extermination of an estimated 900,000 Jews.<sup>2685</sup> Several hundred Jews managed to escape during the revolt of August 2, 1943. Most of the fugitives were captured in manhunts conducted by German forces (hundreds of SS soldiers dispatched from Małkinia, Sokołów Podlaski, Kosów Lacki, and Ostrów Mazowiecka) and Ukrainian guards;<sup>2686</sup> about 100 were still alive at the end of the war thanks to assistance received from Poles. Short-term help was particularly frequent—and, of course, critical.<sup>2687</sup>

Abundant credible sources testify to the support Christian villagers and railway workers gave to Jewish escapees. This help occurred in various settings: for those on trains headed to Treblinka, and especially for those who jumped off trains; for those who escaped during the camp's operation; and for those who fled during the revolt in August 1943. According to three separate testimonies by Jewish escapees from Treblinka and Sobibór, they "walked about the villages" where they were "known to everybody," including the farm-hands and school children, without being denounced.<sup>2688</sup>

<sup>2684</sup> Goldberg, *Running Through Fire*, 132–34.

<sup>2685</sup> Emanuel Ringelblum recorded in his diary that Christian servants—some involuntarily, others voluntarily—were taken to Treblinka from the Warsaw ghetto together with the families they worked for. See Bartoszewski and Lewin, *Righteous Among Nations*, 33.

<sup>2686</sup> Hundreds of SS soldiers dispatched from Małkinia, Sokołów Podlaski, Kosów Lacki, and Ostrów Mazowiecka to search for the fugitives with the help of the camp's Ukrainian guards. They conducted a thorough search of the entire area, setting up checkpoints on the roads, combing nearby villages, and searching villagers' homes. See Treblinka Museum, *Extermination Camp History: "Defiance and Uprising,"* Internet: [http://www.treblinka.bho.pl/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=48&Itemid=48](http://www.treblinka.bho.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=48&Itemid=48).

<sup>2687</sup> Mark Paul, "The Rescue of Jewish Escapees from the Treblinka Death Camp," in Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, Wojciech Jerzy Muszyński, and Paweł Styrna, eds., *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold? Studies on the Fate of Wartime Poles and Jews* (Washington, D.C.: Leopolis Press, 2012), 117–37.

<sup>2688</sup> Teresa Prekerowa, "Stosunek ludności polskiej do żydowskich uciekinierów z obozów zagłady w Treblince, Sobiborze i Bełżcu w świetle relacji żydowskich i polskich," *Biule-*

The most significant impediment to helping Jews was the fear of German retaliation. A Jew who escaped from Treblinka and managed to return to Warsaw recalled:

The peasants near Treblinka didn't want to shelter me even for just one night. They happily gave me food and even money, but they wouldn't hear of my spending the night, because the Ukrainians who were permanently stationed in Treblinka often showed up ... The local peasants told of things that were unbelievable but unfortunately true. ... Everyone I talked to near Treblinka spoke of nothing else. They all told the same thing, in horror. The ones closer to Warsaw let me stay the night, but there was no question of staying there permanently.<sup>2689</sup>

Polish railway workers were known to open train doors during stops allowing Jews to escape, provided them with water, and supplied pliers, hammers and crowbars with which to break open doors and cut the barbed wire covering the small openings in the wagons. Poles who approached stationary trains to give Jews water or food to Jews—something that was strictly forbidden—were brutally beaten or shot at by German guards, and railwaymen were threatened with deportation to the death camp. Jan Maletka, a railroad worker, was gunned down on August 20, 1942 for bringing water to Jews locked up in a death train. His two colleagues, Stanisław Maletka and Remigiusz Pawłowicz, managed to escape.<sup>2690</sup> Karol Socha, a switchman, sheltered a Jewish fugitive for several days; he travelled to Sandomierz to obtain false identity documents and money for him.<sup>2691</sup> Stanisław Wójcik, a railway machinist who lived with his wife in Wólka Okrąglik, provided clothes to a naked Jewish fugitive that knocked on his door at night.<sup>2692</sup>

- Yosef Haezrahi-Bürger—one of those operatives of Jewish organizations that, after the war, tracked down Jewish children sheltered by Christian Poles—described the fate of two Jewish teenagers who had managed to escape from a train on its arrival in Treblinka and were sheltered in a village near the camp.

[I]n one of the transports, two siblings—a boy and a girl—were among the Jews in the wagons that reached the Treblinka village railroad station before they could be moved to the extermination camp. While they were waiting, the people in the wagon broke through the wooden

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*ryn Główniej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu—Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*, vol. 35 (1993): 100–14, at p. 108, translated as “The Attitude of the Polish Population Towards Jewish Escapees from the Treblinka, Sobibór, and Bełżec Death Camps in Light of Jewish and Polish Testimonies,” in Chodakiewicz, Muszyński and Styrna, *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold?*, 97–116.

<sup>2689</sup> Michał Grynberg, ed., *Words To Outlive Us: Voices From the Warsaw Ghetto* (New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2002), 210.

<sup>2690</sup> Jan Maletka, Pilecki Institute, Internet: <https://instytutpileckiego.pl/en/zawolani-po-imieniu/upamietnieni/jan-maletka-ok-1921-1942>. The commemoration of Jan Maletka in the village of Treblinka in November 2021 gave rise to an ugly campaign of disparaging Polish rescuers and rescue efforts led by Jan Grabowski.

<sup>2691</sup> Franciszek Ząbecki, *Wspomnienia dawne i nowe* (Warsaw: Pax, 1977), 46–47, 49–50, 75–76.

<sup>2692</sup> Kopówka and Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki*, 426–28.

floor and several escaped. The guards chased and fired at them but the two children managed to reach a house in the village and hide there, terrifying the owner, whose own children were playing in the yard. When she saw the guards pursuing them, the woman directed the guards to her own house. The guards shot the woman's children, assuming that they were the fugitive Jewish youngsters who were hiding in the house. The terrified woman regained her composure quickly and decided that if this was her fate, she had no choice but to raise the Jewish youngsters. The operative did not know the source of the information about these children after the war but was told that emissaries had been sent to remove them several times, failing each time. In 1947, when he was asked to deal with their removal, the children were sixteen and seventeen years old. They knew they were Jewish but refused to leave their 'mother,' as they called their rescuer, since she had lost her own children and had saved them. The mother left the decision up to them: both persisted in their refusal and remained in the village.<sup>2693</sup>

- Libicz Herkowitz of Pińczów escaped from a train with the help of railway men when it arrived at Treblinka; some women provided him with food, clothing and directions, and he made his way back to his hometown.<sup>2694</sup>
- Sura Bursztyn (Barbara Tyl), a native of Wołomin, was deported with her parents to Treblinka in 1942. On arrival at the camp, in the ensuing chaos, the young girl managed to escape. She wandered in the vicinity until she arrived at the home of Jakub and Janina Krajewski in the village of Krajewo Budziły, near Zambrów, dishevelled, injured and hungry. The Krajewski family took her in, and she remained with them until 1948.<sup>2695</sup>
- Viliam Fried, a native of Czechoslovakia, escaped with some other Jews as their train was pulling into Treblinka. He and a Jew from Poland ran together and took shelter in a stable where they were discovered by the proprietor's son, who fed them and allowed them to stay for a day. They were then directed to a person in the next village, a railroad worker who was in the underground and helped escapees. Fried went alone and was allowed to stay in this man's stable and was given food. When he left, he was given a shovel to allow him to pass as a worker. He went from village to village until he arrived in Międzyrzec Podlaski. On the way, a village woman, who gave him food, warned him of the presence of German gendarmes who were looking for escapees, and she pointed him in a different direction.<sup>2696</sup>
- Just before reaching Treblinka, in January 1943, Miriam Gutholtz and her boyfriend jumped out of the speeding train into the snow. They were met with a barrage of machine-gun fire from the guards in the end carriage, and her boyfriend was killed. Suffering from frostbite and other difficulties, she dragged herself to a nearby farmhouse, where a compassionate farmer offered to help her. The farmer contacted Marian Hamera, a friend of Miriam's from their hometown of Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski. Hamera came to Miriam's aid and brought her back to Ostrowiec.

<sup>2693</sup> Gafny, *Dividing Hearts*, 202–3, 281.

<sup>2694</sup> Ross R. Olney, *Danik! A Holocaust Survivor: The Amazing True Story of David ben Kalma (David Zaid), a Jew in Poland* (U.S.A.: Lulu.com, 2014), chapter 4.

<sup>2695</sup> Righteous Medal Award Ceremony, May 28, 2019, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/news/righteous-ceremony-held-warsaws-royal-lazienki-park>.

<sup>2696</sup> Oral history interview with Viliam Fried, April 10, 1992, USHMM, RG-50.030.0073.

She survived the war, including deportation to Auschwitz, and eventually settled in Israel.<sup>2697</sup>

- David Lieberman of Częstochowa escaped from Treblinka by cutting a hole in the fence with pliers he had stolen. He and his friend ran all night until they encountered a woman in a field who recognized them as escapees and warned them to go away because the Germans were making their rounds to requisition milk and eggs from the farmers. They continued walking and arrived at a farmhouse: “The woman was very nice to me. She came out and walked with me and my friend almost for an hour, showed us to go to another road ... where the police is not there. ... she took her cross out and made a prayer, God should be with you. And we went on our way.” They walked another mile or two and entered another farmhouse. “We told the farmer we want to go to a railroad station. He says he’s going to take us, but he’s not going to walk with us ... [but] a distance away. And he opened a barn. He says, ‘In case the SS comes, you just walked in yourself. I had nothing to do [with it].’ So he walked with us. ... And we followed him. Finally, he came to a small little village. The village name was Sadowne.” The fugitives then gave the villager some money with which to purchase train tickets, which he did, and they boarded the train for Warsaw. They received more help from farmers in the vicinity of Częstochowa, their hometown.<sup>2698</sup>
- Michal Lizervitch, with a similar story, also escaped from Treblinka by cutting the barbed wire fence with pliers. After his escape, Lizerovitch hid in a village close by, and with the help some of the local Poles, managed to obtain a train ticket to Warsaw. From there, he took a train to Częstochowa, where he hid out for the rest of the war.<sup>2699</sup>
- Marian (Maniek) Płatkiewicz, a native of Płock, who escaped during the uprising in Treblinka, recalled that the Germans encircled the forest with troops and the majority of the escapees were killed by the Germans and their Ukrainian collaborators by the morning. Płatkiewicz and a few of his friends avoided detection. For several months they occupied a hideout behind the barn of a sympathetic farmer in a nearby village. Later they joined a partisan group.<sup>2700</sup>
- Notwithstanding summary capital punishment for rendering the slightest assistance to Jews, Polish peasants helped Samuel Willenberg on no less than nine separate

<sup>2697</sup> Rubin Katz, *Gone to Pitchipoi: A Boy’s Desperate Fight for Survival in Wartime* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), 89–90.

<sup>2698</sup> Oral history interview with David Lieberman, USHMM, Accession no. 1990.421.1, RG-50.030.0132.

<sup>2699</sup> Itay Blumenthal, “A Daring Escape from Treblinka,” March 3, 2016, Internet: <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4772963,00.html>.

<sup>2700</sup> Marian Płatkiewicz, “A Revolt in Hell,” in Eliyahu Eisenberg, ed., *Plotzk: Toldot kehila atikat yomin be-Polin* (Tel Aviv: World Committee for the Plotzk Memorial Book, 1967), 79–81, translated as *Plotzk: A History of an Ancient Jewish Community in Poland*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/plock/Plock.html>.

occasions in the first days after his escape from Treblinka. Willenberg stresses the risks involved in assisting Jewish fugitives.<sup>2701</sup>

- After escaping from Treblinka, Jakub (Abraham) Krzepicki and his two companions offered large sums to farmers for food and temporary lodging. Almost all of them declined to help, out of fear, even for such large sums, yet no one betrayed them. Some farmers who provided assistance did so for payment, while others refused to accept payment or took very little. One peasant who provided temporary shelter stated that, if he were not afraid of the Germans, he would help free of charge. On one occasion, a peasant took money but did not provide help as promised; on another occasion, Krzepicki's travelling companion, Anshel Mędrzycki, claimed he had been robbed. He then conned other Jewish escapees to give him money to make up for his loss, even though he had some money hidden away. Krzepicki described him as "an exploiter, a creature without a moral sense ... from the Warsaw underworld ... he tried to take advantage of me as much as he could." When Krzepicki took shelter in the ghetto in Stoczek, where life seemed to continue fairly normally at the time, he found that Jews took advantage of the fugitives from Treblinka, who came with lots of money and valuables, and that the Judenrat and Jewish police tried to weed them out for fear of German repercussions—proving that Jews were capable of treating each other as badly as some Polish farmers. Krzepicki reserved his highest praise for an elderly peasant woman who lived in the village of Wielgie Ogrodniki, near Ostrówek, who, together with her husband, hid the fugitives in their barn for 8 days. "This was the first time since my escape from Treblinka that anyone, Jew or Gentile, helped me get to safety without trying to extort money from me," he recalled. The woman's relatives in Warsaw were equally helpful when Krzepicki arrived there together with his travelling companion, with the help of the farmer's brother-in-law, who acted as a guide.<sup>2702</sup>
- Abraham Bomba and his colleagues, Yankel Eyzner (Jacob Eisner), Moshe Rapaport (Rappaport), Yechiel Berkovitch (Berkowicz), and Yechezkal Kofman (Kaufman, Cooperman), received help from several farmers in the area after their escape from Treblinka.

Lying in the field, we saw a peasant in a wagon go by. We called him over and told him that we had escaped from Treblinka and, perhaps, it would be possible if he could take us into his barn. ... In the end, we convinced him and he showed us his barn in the distance and we went inside. But he doesn't know of anything. And if they would ask, we should say that we sneaked in. That is what we did. We were there the entire day. At night, the head of the village came and told us that he would lead us out of the village and show us the way to go. He indeed took us to the main road, and we traveled all night until the morning. In the morning, we came to a village. We saw, in front of a house, that a woman opens the door. We went over to the house and the woman told us to come in. We were there for a week. The second week, we were at the friend of the peasant in the same village. I remember this peasant's name: Piotr Supel [Sopel?]. ... This

<sup>2701</sup> Samuel Willenberg, *Surviving Treblinka* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell in association with the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, 1989), 25, 143–48.

<sup>2702</sup> Alexander Donat, ed., *The Death Camp Treblinka: A Documentary* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979), 134–35, 137–44; Wiatr, Engelking, and Skibińska, *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, vol. 13, 198–207; Hera, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 173, 174.

was in the village Zagradniki [Zagrodniki] near Ostrovek Vengravski [Ostrówek Węgrowski]. The peasant traveled with us to Warsaw.<sup>2703</sup>

- After his escape from Treblinka, Chil Rajchman was helped by several farmers in the vicinity of the camp before he made his way back to Warsaw, where he received help from Poles in and near the city.<sup>2704</sup>
- After escaping from Treblinka during the uprising, Aron Gleit managed to return to Siemiatycze, where survived in the Jesieniówka forest with the help of Poles.<sup>2705</sup>
- Mieczysław Grajewski (later Martin Gray) recalled the help he received from local peasants after escaping from Treblinka: “I was free. I walked to a village. ... I knocked to ask for bread. The peasants looked at me in silence. ‘Bread, bread.’ They saw my red hands, torn jacket, worn-out slippers, and handed me some hard, gray crusts. A peasant woman, huddled in shawls, gave me a bowl of hot milk and a bag. We didn’t talk: my body had turned red and blue from the blows and the cold, and my clothes, everything proclaimed *Jew!* But they gave me bread. Thank you, Polish peasants. I slept in a stable near the animals, taking a little warm milk from the cow in the morning. My bag filled with bread.”<sup>2706</sup>
- Hershl Sperling was part of a group of three or four Jews who succeeded in escaping from Treblinka. About twelve kilometres from the camp, they turned to a family of Polish farmers who fed them and helped them make their way towards Warsaw.

Slowly and cautiously, uncertainly and with a hammering heart, I emerge from the forest and I approach a peasant’s house which stands free and separate. It is about 30 kilometres from Treblinka. With a prayer and a glance toward heaven, I step onto the threshold of the house. With my first glimpse of the woman, I understand that she recognises me [as an escapee from Treblinka] “You have certainly escaped from Treblinka,” she calls out to me. My condition, my clothing and, most of all, the desperate expression on my face exposes me. But the woman calms me down immediately and says that I need not be at all afraid, that she will help me as much as possible. However, she cannot hide me. The SS is searching and hunting in all the surrounding little towns. And she does not want to put herself and her family in mortal danger. She gives me bread and milk, and tells me to return at 11 at night. At the arranged time all three of us come to her house. This time her husband and daughter are present. We consult each other, and we decide that the best thing would be to go to a particular spot and to jump onto a moving train. At that particular spot the train travels at no more than 10 kilometres per hour. We have no other way out, and we decide to try this. They give us a satisfying dinner and they give us also

<sup>2703</sup> Abraham Bomba, “My Escape from Treblinka,” *Czentochoy: A New Supplement to the Book “Czenstochover Yidn”*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/czestochowa/Czestochowa.html>, translation of Samuel D. Singer, ed., *Tshenstokhover: Naye tslugob-material tsum bukh “Tshenstokhover Yidn”* (New York: United Relief Committee in New York, 1958), 57 ff.

<sup>2704</sup> Chil Rajchman, *Treblinka: A Survivor’s Memory, 1942–1943* (London: MacLehose/Quercos, 2011), 106–11; Oral history interview with Chiel Rajchman, USHMM, Accession no. 1988.H.0179, RG-50.030.0185.

<sup>2705</sup> Testimony of Aron Gleit, YVA, file O.3/3989 (Item 3558403).

<sup>2706</sup> Gray and Gallo, *For Those I Loved*, 178. In her article, “The Men Who Whitewash Hitler,” *The New Statesman*, November 2, 1979, historian Gitta Sereny alleged that Martin Gray was never in Treblinka.

bread and eggs for the way. As an expression of our thanks, we leave 20 gold dollars. Under cover of the night's darkness we take to the road. We arrive at the appointed place, but we decide not to jump onto the moving train; we might fall under the train itself. We continue on foot. We arrive in Rembertov [Rembertów, near Warsaw].<sup>2707</sup>

Sperling mentions the following Treblinka escapees he encountered in Germany after the war: Shmuel Reizmann from Węgrów; Kodlik (Kudlik) from Częstochowa; Schneidermann; and Turovsky.

- After their escape from Treblinka, Samuel (Shmuel) Rajzman (Reisman) and his friend Arie Kudlik approached a farmer's cottage in Ceranów, about twelve kilometres from the camp. Since this was in the middle of the German manhunt, the woman asked them to leave, fearful of being shot herself. They implored her for some bread and a pitcher of water, which she gave them without accepting payment. She said, "Please bring the pitcher back because it's the only one I have." After spending several days in a potato field, the two fugitives went on their way. In Brzozów (?), they received food and temporary shelter from Rajzman's father's friend, Paweł Pieniak and his son. They then went to a village near Węgrów, where Edward Gołoś, another friend of Rajzman's father and member of a "rightist-nationalist organization," agreed to help them live in the forest and, in the winter, hid them in his barn. The rescuer and his family shared their meager fare with their charges without expecting anything in return, until the area was cleared of Germans in August 1944.<sup>2708</sup>
- A group of six Jews who escaped from Treblinka, among them Berek Rojzman, built an underground shelter in a forest and relied on a Polish farmer named Staszek for their food supply; Gitta Sereny remarks, "Rojzman said no more about the man Staszek, thanks to whom they had survived. The implication was that he was paid for what he did. He probably was, but considering the risk he had taken, one did wonder whether that degree of help could ever be paid for in money."<sup>2709</sup>
- Despite the massive German hunt for escaped Jews, some of them found shelter with farmers living nearby. Gustaw and Weronika Diehl lived with their four children on an estate in Jasieniec, about four kilometres from the Treblinka death camp; they sheltered Estera Geist, who escaped from the Warsaw ghetto in 1942. The Diehls, who were awarded by Yad Vashem, also provided temporary shelter and assistance to escapees from Treblinka.<sup>2710</sup>

<sup>2707</sup> Hodge, *Tragedy and Triumph*, 99 (testimony of H. Shperling (Sperling)). See also Mark S. Smith, *Treblinka Survivor: The Life and Death of Hershl Sperling* (Stroud, United Kingdom: The History Press, 2010), 251–52.

<sup>2708</sup> Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 245–49; *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 245; Arnon Rubin, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Communities in Poland and Their Relics Today*, vol. 2: *District Lublin* (Tel-Aviv: A. Rubin, 2006), 385.

<sup>2709</sup> Gitta Sereny, *Into That Darkness: From Mercy Killing To Mass Murder* (New York: McGraw-Hill; London: Deutsch, 1974), 149–56, 242–44.

<sup>2710</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 174; Kopówka and Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki*, 214–15, 269–70.

- Abraham (Abram) Kolski was among a group of prisoners who escaped during the uprising in Treblinka. Gustaw Boraks, Heniek Klein, Henoeh Brenner (Henry Brenner), Stasiek Kohen, Albert Kohen, Erich (Shaya) Lachman, along with Kolski and two other fugitives were hidden for the remainder of the war in Orzeszówka, a village south of the camp, on a farm belonging to Julian Pogorzelski and his elderly father. Throughout the entire period, the Pogorzelskis provided the nine fugitives with all their needs, cared for their health, and obtained medicine for them when they fell ill. (Heniek Klein had tuberculosis and passed away in the hiding place.) When the fugitives emerged from hiding as the Soviet front passed through, their presence became known to the neighbours. Yet no one betrayed them when the Germans returned for a brief period of time.<sup>2711</sup>
- The family of Jan and Aleksandra Góral, who owned a farm on the outskirts of Kosów Lacki, sheltered eleven Jews for some twenty months in a bunker constructed under their barn. There were four members of the Koenig (Koenigstein) family (Isadore and Mary, and their two sons, Jerry and Michael); the brothers Abram and Mendel Rzepka; Gitel Głownia and her daughter Feiga, and three escapees from Treblinka—Szymon Grynszpan, Berek Gersztajn, and Wolf Szajnberg (Szejnberg).<sup>2712</sup>
- The Roguszewski family of Łochów helped Oscar Strawczyński, who escaped from Treblinka during the revolt in Treblinka in August 1943. The daughter-in-law, who met him by chance, immediately realized that he was an escaped prisoner and, despite the danger, brought him home. Strawczyński hid with the Roguszewskis for several weeks until he recovered. Afterwards, he joined other Jews who were hiding in the surrounding forests and had also been helped occasionally by the Roguszewskis.<sup>2713</sup>
- Dawid Nowodworski escaped from Treblinka and made his way back to Warsaw; Poles in Dębe, near Kosów Lacki, helped him along the way.<sup>2714</sup>
- After his escape from Treblinka during the revolt in August 1943, Isadore Helfing was first taken in by a farmer, and then stayed with a partisan group until Soviet forces liberated the area.<sup>2715</sup>

<sup>2711</sup> Oral history interview with Abraham Kolski, USHMM, Accession no. 1990.368.1, RG-50.030.0113; Testimony of Abram Kolski, SFV, Interview code 49970; Testimony of Gustaw Boraks, YVA, file O.3/3061 (Item 3556574); *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 625–26.

<sup>2712</sup> Tammeus and Cukierkorn, *They Were Just People*, 105–12 (Jerry Koenig); Kopówka and Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki*, 285; Testimony of Szymon Grynszpan, JHI, record group 301, no. 1185. Jan Góral had to turn away four members of the Zylberman family because he could not take in any more fugitives. Jerry Koenig states, “I don’t hold it against him in any way at all.”

<sup>2713</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 672; Israel Cymlich and Oscar Strawczynski, *Escaping Hell in Treblinka* (New York and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem and The Holocaust Survivors’ Memoirs Project, 2007), 188.

<sup>2714</sup> Wiatr, Engelking, and Skibińska, *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, vol. 13, 128.

<sup>2715</sup> Oral history interview with Isadore Helfing, USHMM, Accession no. 1994.A.0447.14, RG-50.042.0014.

- Szymon Goldberg made his way to the villages of Kukawki, Basinów and Kiciny, just beyond Łochów, where farmers protected him. He recalled, “There were good people, they helped, they gave me food.”<sup>2716</sup>
- The following Polish families living in the vicinity of Treblinka provided shelter and food to escapees: Jaźwiński (Żochy), Sobotka (Treblinka), Ołowski (Trzciniec Mały), Góral (Kosów Lacki), Socha, Matusik (Maliszewo).<sup>2717</sup>
- Julian and Stanisława Serafinowicz sheltered Shlomo (Szloma) Helman and Yeshayahu (Szyja) Warszawski after their escape from Treblinka, on a farm in Mostówka, a small village south of Wyszaków.<sup>2718</sup>
- After escaping from Treblinka with the help of bribed Ukrainian guards, Chaim Gradel (Grabel) made his way back to his native town of Bełżyce. He joined his brother-in-law, and the two of them found shelter with a farmer, Zygmunt Chlebicki, in the village of Ratoszyn. Later, Gradel joined up with a Soviet partisan group before returning to the ghetto in Bełżyce, from where he was taken to a series of German camps. He survived the war.<sup>2719</sup>
- After their escape from Treblinka, a doctor from Warsaw and his daughter took refuge with Stefan Nowak, the village head in Stoczek Węgrowski. The girl’s mother had been killed in Treblinka, and her father died of a stroke while in hiding. The young girl survived.<sup>2720</sup>
- After wandering in forests for about a month following his escape from Treblinka, Josef Czarny was warmly received by Polish farmers near Parysów, northwest of Garwolin. Szymon and Helena Całka sheltered and cared for Czarny as well as two Jewish women.<sup>2721</sup>
- After his escape from Treblinka, Moshe Kleiman (Klajman) made his way to the village of Sobienie-Jeziory, near Góra Kalwaria, south of Warsaw, where he was sheltered by a Pole named Bojańczyk (or Bojeńczyk).<sup>2722</sup>

<sup>2716</sup> Teresa Prekerowa, “Stosunek ludności polskiej do żydowskich uciekinierów z obozów zagłady w Treblince, Sobiborze i Bełżcu w świetle relacji żydowskich i polskich,” *Biuletyn Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu—Instytutu Pamięi Narodowej*, vol. 35 (1993): 108; Roszkowski, *Żydzi w walce 1939–1945*, vol. 3, 107; Testimony of Szymon Goldberg, JHI, record group 301, no. 656.

<sup>2717</sup> Agnieszka Dąbek and Kinga Mrozek, “Mieszkańcy Kosowa Lackiego i okolic ratujący Żydów w czasie Zagłady,” in Artur Zióntek, ed., *Żydzi Kosowa Lackiego* (Kosów Lacki: Miejsko-Gminny Ośrodek Kultury w Kosowie Lackim, 2016), 285–307.

<sup>2718</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 703.

<sup>2719</sup> Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień...*, 225, based on the testimony of Chaim Grabel, JHI, record group 301, no. 228.

<sup>2720</sup> Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 257; Grądzka-Rejak and Sitarek, *The Holocaust and Polish-Jewish Relations*, 324.

<sup>2721</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 128; Paldiel, *The Path of the Righteous*, 205.

<sup>2722</sup> Kopówka and Rytel-Andrianik, *Dam im imię na wieki*, 297, based on the memoir of Mosze Klajman, JHI, record group 302, no. 118.

- Henryk Poswolski, who was injured while escaping during the revolt in Treblinka yet made his way back to Warsaw, was sheltered and restored to health by Feliks and Marta Widy-Wirski in Podkowa Leśna and nursed back to health.<sup>2723</sup>
- Simche Poliakewicz escaped from Treblinka hidden in a transport train. He jumped from the train near Kosów Lacki. Naked and injured from the fall, he was given clothing and food by a woman he encountered; he was hidden briefly in the attic of a barn by a farmer, who also provided him with clothing and food. When he arrived in Sokołów Podlaski, Poliakewicz sought refuge with the Józef Rogoziński family. With the help of some Poles, including one Piotrowski who was also hiding a Jew, the Rogoziński family obtained false for identity documents for Poliakewicz. Before leaving for Warsaw, he stayed briefly in the home of the Pajka family, former benefactors of his.<sup>2724</sup>
- Jakub Szmulowicz managed to escape from Treblinka in a train wagon full of rags, which he was tasked with sorting, and made his way back to Warsaw, where he was sheltered by Antonina Borucka.<sup>2725</sup>
- Józef Gutman escaped from Treblinka, after a two-week stay there, in a railroad wagon full of clothes together with five other Jews. His companions tried to suffocate him because he was ill. Upon his return to the Warsaw ghetto, Gutman was disbelieved and even physically attacked for spreading false stories. After escaping from the ghetto, he and his wife were sheltered by the Wolf family.<sup>2726</sup>
- Polish railway workers brought news of what was happening in Treblinka to the ghettos, but there was little if anything that could be done to save Jews from the mighty German liquidation machinery in place. Most often, the news was disbelieved. A Jew from Wołomin near Warsaw recalled:

The German tactics against the Jewish population was always a secret, and no one could know the method or the terms of transfer from one place to another. The officials always gave false information to calm the Jews down, saying that no harm would come to them. It did not occur to anyone that the Warsaw Ghetto would suffer first. We were the first to know the bitter truth about transport to Treblinka. The Germans told everyone that the transports were headed east, where work camps were set up and there would be better conditions. The Wołomin [Wołomin] ghetto lay along the railroad tracks, so that we saw each transport that went once or twice a day to Treblinka. We heard the cries that emanated from the cars. It happened that a transport stopped at the station and we heard complaints and pleas for a little water; but by each car stood soldiers with rifles in their hands, ready to shoot anyone who tried to approach the cars. On the way back, Polish rail workers yelled at us and showed us in gestures what was done to the Jews. It would happen that a Wołomin train worker would enter the ghetto and tell us that when the trains arrived at Treblinka, German rail workers would take over and lead the train into the camp. On the way back, the cars were filled with clothing headed for Warsaw. The Germans who were in charge of the empty transports once told the Poles what had been done to the Jews.

<sup>2723</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 5, 863.

<sup>2724</sup> Simkhe Polakewicz [Simche Poliakewicz], *A tog in Treblinke: Khronik fun a yidish lebn* (Buenos Aires: Dos Poylishe Yidntum, 1948), translated as *Dzień w Treblince*, Internet: <https://sokolow.jewish.pl/simche-poliakewicz/dzien-w-treblince/>.

<sup>2725</sup> Testimony of Mieczysław Bortensztajn, JHI, record group 301, no. 3495.

<sup>2726</sup> Testimony of Józef Gutman, JHI, record group 301, no. 2226.

At first people reacted to this news with disbelief. People did not want to believe in all these horrors. Even the most pessimistic could not bring themselves to believe that these things could happen. We took what the Polish rail worker said to be a nightmarish fantasy. There were some who held that he spoke with the intention of scaring us. There was even a case of a Wolomin shoemaker, who came from Vogrov [Węgrów] and did not look like a Jew. He often went to the Aryan side. He himself spoke with a Jew who had managed to return from the camps by hiding in the clothing that was being taken to Warsaw. He related that the Jews who were being taken in the transports were told to take off their clothes and were then led to the gas chambers, where they were gassed, after which their bodies were burned. That Jew had been in a labor battalion, which had to sort the clothing of those who had been gassed. That gave him the opportunity to get into a train car and cover himself with clothes. When the transport had left the camp, he jumped out of the car. Most of the Jews in the ghetto held that his story was a false rumor.<sup>2727</sup>

- Escapees from Treblinka who managed to make it back to their towns were usually disbelieved. No one in Radom believed escapee Nathan Berkowitz's story where the deportation trains were taking all those people: "I gave a detailed report to the head of the Jewish Council, but he called me a liar and chased me out of his office."<sup>2728</sup> David Bayer recalled:

Max Rosenblum was in Treblinka. He was deported from my hometown of Kozenice to Treblinka with all the people. He sneaked into Pionki camp where I was, because he had a sister who was there. He told everybody that in Treblinka, everybody was killed, and we didn't believe him. All the people who the Germans took to Treblinka, [they] gassed them. And we called him crazy: "He's crazy, he must have been crazy. Why would they kill everybody, women and children, for nothing?" And he was telling us, "Believe me! I saw it. They killed everybody—nobody's alive!"<sup>2729</sup>

- Numerous examples of help given to Jews who jumped out of trains headed to Treblinka have also been recorded. Most of the helpers offered immediate or short-term assistance, and they remain anonymous. Waclaw Iglicki (then Szul Steinhendler) from Żelechów, who some place near Łuków or Siedlce jumped off a train that was bound for Treblinka, testified as follows:

People used to really help out. I have to say that objectively: when it came to bread or something else, they shared. But finding a place to sleep was a problem. People were afraid. They wouldn't really agree to have us over for a night, or for a longer stay. That was understandable, because if you consider that in every village, in every community, there was a sign saying that for hiding, for any help given to a Jew, there was the death penalty, it's hard to be surprised that people didn't want to have Jews over and so on. They could tell by my clothes that I was a Jew. Because I looked poor, obviously. Ragged, dirty. Wandered around, as they say, aimlessly,

<sup>2727</sup> Kopel Berman, "My Experiences in the Ghetto," in Kanc, *Sefer zikaron kehilat Wolomin*, 405–28, translated as *Volomin: A Memorial to the Jewish Community of Volomin*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/wolomin/wolomin.html>.

<sup>2728</sup> Alfred Lipson, ed., *The Book of Radom: The Story of a Jewish Community in Poland Destroyed by the Nazis* (New York: The United Radomer Relief of the United States and Canada, 1963), 57.

<sup>2729</sup> Oral history interview with David Bayer, June 16, 2009, USHMM, RG-50.999.0263.

didn't know where to go. ... Because of that, many knew immediately they were dealing with a person of Jewish origin.<sup>2730</sup>

- Shmuel Goldring, who jumped out of a train in Łuków with a colleague, recalled:

I jumped out ... as the train had just left the Lukow [Łuków] station and was progressing slowly. ... In the distance we saw an isolated house. The old Polish lady let us rest to the morning. Come the 10/08/1942 morning she fetched fresh milk from the barn. ... The lady told us: The Germans send a patrol following each train to Treblinka, you better leave. We just left her house when we saw from distance two German soldiers entering in.<sup>2731</sup>

- In his account (reproduced in this compilation), Joseph Kutrzeba writes:

During the first days of September 1942, at the age of 14, I jumped out of a moving train destined for Treblinka, through an opening (window) of a cattle car loaded to capacity with Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto. Wandering over fields, forests and villages, at first in the vicinity of Wołomin, and later of Zambrów, I found myself, in late November, in the area of Hodyszewo (near Łomża). Throughout my wandering, the peasants for the most part were amenable to put me up for the night and to feed me—some either suspecting my origins or pressing me to admit it.<sup>2732</sup>

- As a teenager, Jurek Kestenberg was deported from the Warsaw ghetto. He managed to jump off the train headed to Treblinka and make his way back to the Warsaw ghetto with the help of Poles, complete strangers who agreed to help him without any remuneration, even though this put their entire family in mortal danger. Kestenberg recalled, during an interview in 1946:

I decided to jump. This is it! What will be will be. ... And so I got out on the roof. I was lying down, afraid that the Ukrainians might see me. I lay that way until I saw that the train was going up a hill. Here it was better to jump, because if one jumps on a level stretch, one can fall under the train. ... And so, I thought it over well and jumped. I don't remember any more, but I felt a sharp pain in my legs. And I heard a shot. After perhaps two or three hours I came to, and I saw two children playing nearby ... I started yelling, and the children ran away and brought an old Gentile with them—it must have been their father. The father took me into the house. ... And he made me a ... bandage on the leg, because it appeared that I had a bullet in my leg as far as the bone. The woman bandaged me. The peasants there had various medicines. They brought it, and put it on, and I was with them four days. They gave me good things to eat and drink. ... I still had on me a few zlotys [złotys]. I had money. I wanted to pay. They wouldn't take it. After four days—this was eighteen kilometers from Warsaw—I said that I wanted to go back home. And so the Gentile took a cart with two horses. He drove me about ten kilometers, [and then] I walked to Warsaw. I still had money.<sup>2733</sup>

<sup>2730</sup> Testimony of Waclaw Iglicki, 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropastudent.org/biography/waclaw-iglicki>.

<sup>2731</sup> Meir G. Gover, *Yizkor to Jewish Konstantynow Podlaski*, 4th ed. (Israel: Second Generation, 2018), 308.

<sup>2732</sup> See also Kutrzeba, *The Contract*, 50 ff.

<sup>2733</sup> Niewyk, *Fresh Wounds*, 109–10.

- Hersh Blutman jumped from a train only three kilometres from Treblinka. Bruised and limping, Blutman returned to his hometown of Ciechanowiec, asking local farmers from whom his father used to buy produce for help. Although they all fed him and allowed him to rest, no one was willing to put him up. After many days of wandering, he reached the village of Winna-Chroły, where he was taken in by Aleksander and Helena Komiążyk. They invited him into their home and offered to hide him on their farm. The Komiążyks were already hiding Laib Slowczyk and his two brothers, Josef and David. A fortnight later, Komiążyk came to the refugees one evening and told them that the authorities had been informed that he was hiding Jews on his farm. The four Jewish refugees escaped, just in time. Soon after, the Germans raided the Komiążyks' farm, brutally interrogated them, and burned down the barn where the refugees had been hiding.<sup>2734</sup>
- On the way to Treblinka, Stanisław Aronson managed to escape through a hole in the ceiling of a boxcar. He went to the home of a local farmer who welcomed him in his home, served him breakfast, and asked no questions. The farmer later took Aronson to a local train station and, twenty minutes after boarding the first train, Aronson was in the centre of Warsaw. He then went to the home of his sister's close Polish friend, who received Aronson warmly but told him that staying there was out of the question because she suspected that the Gestapo were closely watching the building for hidden Jews. She sent Aronson on to her aunt's house in Warsaw, where he remained for several weeks. Afterwards, he joined the Home Army and survived under their protection.<sup>2735</sup>
- After the Kosów Lacki ghetto was liquidated in February 1943, Hersh and Chana Kreplak escaped from the transport on its way to Treblinka. Wandering through the surrounding villages, they reached the village of Adolfów, where Stanisława Kołkowska, a devout Catholic widow and an old friend of theirs, lived with her son, Ludwik. They prepared a hiding place for the Kreplaks in a farm building and looked after them, seeing to all their needs until August 1944, when the Red army drove out the Germans. The Kołkowskis provided temporary shelter to other Jews as well, among them Inka Akselrod, who jumped off a train on its way to Treblinka.<sup>2736</sup>
- Two train jumpers from a transport to Treblinka joined at least seven other Jews sheltered by the Postek family, farmers in Stoczek Węgrowski, from the summer and fall of 1942. Stanisław Postek, his wife, Julianna, and their sons, Wacław and Henryk, were arrested on September 5, 1943, for sheltering Jews. Stanisław and his sons were imprisoned in Warsaw's Pawiak prison. The father was sent to Auschwitz, where he perished in March 1944. The sons were released from Pawiak in November 1943 but re-arrested the following June. Their mother, Julianna, died

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<sup>2734</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 366–67.

<sup>2735</sup> Zimmerman, *The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939–1945*, 330–31.

<sup>2736</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 362–63.

on September 6, 1943, from the beatings she endured at the hands of German gendarmes.<sup>2737</sup>

- Ruth Altbeker Cyprys was injured when she jumped, together with her young daughter, from a deportation train from Warsaw headed for Treblinka. She recalled various instances when they were helped by compassionate railway guards, villagers, passers-by, passengers, and even a gang of robbers.<sup>2738</sup>
- Helen Ostrowska-Zuckerwar was also injured when she jumped from a deportation train that left Warsaw headed for Treblinka. She was found by a farmer who took her to his home and, with the help of his wife, nursed her back to health before helping her to return to Warsaw, where she found shelter with the Kijkowski family.<sup>2739</sup>
- Maria Bregman jumped out of a train from Warsaw headed for Treblinka, injuring her head. When she regained consciousness, she dragged herself to a village where, posing ineptly as a Polish woman, she obtained treatment for her wounds from the villagers. When German gendarmes arrived the next day, looking for Jewish escapees, she was told to leave.<sup>2740</sup>
- After jumping from a train bound for Treblinka, Edmund Stanberg found shelter in the village of Łojów, near Łochów, where two farmers cared for the wounded fugitive before he returned to Warsaw.<sup>2741</sup>
- When Adam Kapitańczyk jumped off of a transport train from Warsaw headed for Treblinka, he was shot by German guards and left for dead. Lying by the side of the tracks badly wounded, unable to walk and barely conscious, he was found by relatives of the Sasin family and taken to their farm in Franciszków, near Tłuszcz. The Sasins removed the bullets still lodged in his arm and legs, dressed his wounds, fed him, and slowly nursed him back to health. They built a hiding place for him in the attic of their farmhouse. He remained until liberation.<sup>2742</sup>
- The brothers Leibel and Efraim Tchapowicz, who jumped from the Treblinka-bound train during the liquidation Aktion in Kałużyn, were hidden for a few months by

<sup>2737</sup> Namysło and Berendt, *Rejestr faktów represji na obywatelach polskich za pomoc ludności żydowskiej w okresie II wojny światowej*, 261–62; Grądzka-Rejak and Namysło, *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, vol. 1, 268–69.

<sup>2738</sup> Altbeker Cyprys, *A Jump for Life*, 97, 102–10.

<sup>2739</sup> Jerzy Jurandot, *Miasto skazanych: 2 lata w warszawskim getcie* (Warsaw: Muzeum Historii Żydów Polskich, 2014), 188–89, translated as *City of the Damned: Two Years in the Warsaw Ghetto* (Warsaw: Museum of the History of Polish Jews, 2015).

<sup>2740</sup> Testimony of Fruma Bregman, JHI, record group 301, no. 1984, at p. 14.

<sup>2741</sup> “A Mysterious Crime in Łojew,” April 2, 2017, Pilecki Institute, Internet: <https://instytut-pileckiego.pl/en/poznaj-historie-z-czasow-okupacji/a-mysterious-crime-in-lojew/>.

<sup>2742</sup> Sasin Family, RD; The Sasin Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-sasin-family>.

a Pole named Strychalski, who continued to provide them with necessities while they were living in the forest.<sup>2743</sup>

- The brothers Sandor and Shalom Spector jumped out of two separate trains headed for Treblinka. Both of them survived with the help of friendly Poles.<sup>2744</sup>
- When the brothers Henry and Abe Feigelbaum escaped from the train taking them to Treblinka, they hid in nearby forests for several weeks before they made their way at night to the home of Czesław Głuchowski in the village of Czołomyje, near their hometown of Mordy. They survived in a bunker dug under the granary.<sup>2745</sup>
- After jumping out of a train transporting Jews to Treblinka, Leon Grynberg made his way back to Białystok, where he was sheltered by the Skalski family.<sup>2746</sup>
- Sabina Zisser and her parents were deported to Treblinka from Sandomierz in January 1943. As the train slowed down, she jumped out onto snowy ground near Wohyń, narrowly avoiding German bullets. As part of a group of three women and five men, and later in a smaller group of three escapees, she approached Polish farmers who provided food and even allowed overnight visitors into their barns. On the way to Warsaw, Sabina met a Polish woman who invited her to stay at her home in Mińsk Mazowiecki. After she arrived in Warsaw, Sabina ran across a Polish acquaintance from Szczucin, her hometown, and was invited to stay with her.<sup>2747</sup>
- The above overview is not exhaustive. There are many other accounts of Jews who escaped from Treblinka, or from trains headed there, and who returned safely to their homes owing at least in part to the aid of Poles met randomly along the way.<sup>2748</sup>

<sup>2743</sup> Leibel and Efraim Tchapowicz, “Hiding,” in Shamri and Soroka, *Sefer Kaluszyn*, 397 ff., translated as *The Memorial Book of Kaluszyn*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/kaluszyn/Kaluszyn.html>.

<sup>2744</sup> Sandor Spector, “I Jumped From the Death Trains,” in Yerachmiel Moorstein, ed., *Zelva Memorial Book* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Jacob Solomon Berger, 1992), 81–82.

<sup>2745</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 239.

<sup>2746</sup> Śliwowska, *The Last Eyewitnesses*, vol. 1, 183–84.

<sup>2747</sup> Rozenblum, *Les temps brisés*, 83–88.

<sup>2748</sup> Account of David Wolf in *Entertainment and Ball Given by the United Wisoko-Litowsker and Woltchiner Relief*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Vysokoye/Vysokoye.html>, translation of Samuel Levine and Morris Gevirtz, eds., *Yisker zhurnal gevidmet diumgekumene fun Visoka un Voltshin* (New York: United Wisoko-Litowsker and Woltchiner Relief, 1948); Feivel Wolf, “After the Departure from Treblinka,” in *Memorial Book of Krynki*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/Krynki/Krynki.html>, translation of D. [Dov] Rabin, ed., *Pinkas Krynki* (Tel Aviv: Former Residents of Krynki in Israel and the Diaspora, 1970), 290; Donat, *The Death Camp Treblinka*, 135, 142, 248–89; Trunk, *Jewish Responses to Nazi Persecution*, 100, 123; Benjamin Mandelkern, with Mark Czarnecki, *Escape from the Nazis* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1988), 59, 66–67, 73–75; Grynberg, *Księga sprawiedliwych*, 438–39, 481; Richard Glazer, *Trap With a Green Fence: Survival in Treblinka* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1995), 149–53 (the author passed through a long series of localities; when he was finally caught, it was not by a Pole but by a Volksdeutsche); Goldberg, *A Sparkle of Hope*, 98; Alina Bacall-Zwirn and Jared Stark, *No Common Place: The Holocaust Testimony of Alina Bacall-Zwirn* (Lincoln and London:

Many Jews who perished during the German occupation of Poland had also received help from Poles. Most of those stories will never be known.

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University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 32–35; Grynberg, *Drohobycz, Drohobycz and Other Stories*, 151–52; Eddi Weinstein, *Quenched Steel: The Story of an Escape from Treblinka* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2002); Irene Shapiro, *Revisiting the Shadows: Memoirs from War-torn Poland to the Statue of Liberty* (Elk River, Minnesota: DeForest Press, 2004), 189–90; *Encyclopedia of the Righteous*, vol. 4, 246, 348, 362–63, 364, 366–67, 461, and vol. 5, 703; Maik, *Deliverance*, 87; Grubowska, *Haneczko, musisz przeżyć*, 73–74; Samuel D. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History?: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), 310; Krzysztof Czubaszek, *Żydzi z Łukowa i okolic* (Warsaw: Danmar, 2008), 203, 206, 251; *Amidah: Standing Up: Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust* (Darlinghurst, New South Wales: Sydney Jewish Museum, 2011), 6; Żaryn and Sudoł, *Polacy ratujący Żydów*, 231–34 (rescue of Anna Ożarów in Celestynów-Cegielnia), 349–54 (rescue of Mosze Smolarz in Płosodrza near Mordy—see also Helena Szmurło, RD; Franziska Bruder, *Das eigene Schicksal selbst bestimmen: Fluchten aus Deportationszügen der 'Aktion Reinhardt' in Polen* (Hamburg and Münster: Unrast, 2019); Adek Stein (Bulkowstein), *Australian Memories of the Holocaust*, Internet: [http://www.holocaust.com.au/mm/j\\_adek.htm](http://www.holocaust.com.au/mm/j_adek.htm) and Testimony of Adek Stein, SFV, Interview code 3169.



## (Non)Recognition and (In)Gratitude

This next compilation canvasses Jewish attitudes regarding Poles and the Holocaust, both positive and negative, based entirely on Jewish sources. The quotations have not been made up and are representative of a broad spectrum of views. Nonetheless, they have irked some intrepid sleuths of “Polish anti-Semitism”—of which there are far too many, one trying to outdo the other in coming up with novel “insights”—because they do not fit in with their views.

Joanna Michlic, a Jewish apologist historian and purveyor of anti-Polish stereotypes, has claimed that this compilation perpetuates the “myth” of the “ungrateful” Jew. Allegedly, this myth is the invention of Polish Communists, perpetuated by “ethnonationalists,” and has no basis in fact.<sup>2749</sup>

Michlic herself advances two myths: (1) universal gratitude on the part of Jewish rescuers (the notion that Jewish survivors are incapable of ingratitude has been amply debunked); (2) the sole reason for cutting off contact by Jews with their rescuers after the war was invariably to protect the rescuers from their violent and abusive anti-Semitic neighbours (in fact, in many cases, after leaving their hosts, Jews made no contact with their rescuers at all).

“Yes, it’s true that many Jews broke off contact with their rescuers,” Michlic says. Citing no evidence she continues, “but that was done deliberately to protect them because anti-Semitism was so rampant at the time that had suspicions been raised that they had saved Jews, they would have been punished by their neighbors for being traitors. So while many Jews would have like [sic] to stay in contact with their rescuers after the war, they decided it was best to stay away.”<sup>2750</sup>

The testimonies of Polish rescuers do not support such a sweeping alibi. If established at all, contact was usually broken off fairly early and unilaterally by the rescued Jews, often to the dismay of their rescuers, and had nothing to do with the rescuers’ alleged fear of retaliation by their neighbours. In quite a few cases (some of which have already been cited in this study), the rescued Jews simply left and

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<sup>2749</sup> Joanna B. Michlic, “‘I will never forget what you did for me during the war’: Rescuer–Rescued Relationships in the Light of Postwar Correspondence in Poland, 1945–1949,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 39, no. 2 (2011): 169–207, at p. 204 n.85.

<sup>2750</sup> Judy Maltz, “Debunking the Myth of the ‘Ungrateful’ Holocaust Survivor,” *Haaretz*, June 18, 2014.

never contacted their rescuers again.<sup>2751</sup> Occasionally, the Communist authorities intimidated rescuers to cut off ties with rescuers who lived in the West.

Hymen (Chaim) Federman was one of three brothers rescued by the Matuszczyk family in the village of Bronów, near Działoszyce. The Federman brothers maintained no contact with their rescuers after emerging from their hiding place after the war. In the 2004 documentary *Hiding and Seeking: Faith and Tolerance after the Holocaust*, when asked whether he would have undertaken the risk that his Polish benefactors did, Federman answered unreservedly that he would not have done so.<sup>2752</sup>

Liwa Gomułka, the wife of Communist leader Władysław Gomułka, “refused to see an old Polish woman who had hidden her during the Nazi occupation and had come to her for some small favour.”<sup>2753</sup> Hersz Siedlecki, who survived in Warsaw with the help of several Poles (he lived at the Albertine Brothers’ shelter on Jagiellońska Street in the Praga district for two years), recalled:

The butcher’s brother-in-law lived in the next house. He worked at the Warsaw gas works. A Jew and his wife hid with him, obviously for money. When the Warsaw Uprising broke out, the whole family, including the Jews, came to the butcher’s house. During the uprising, everything was very expensive, if you could get things at all. The Jew took out much gold and dollars and wanted to give them so that he could continue to stay there. According to the butcher, he said, “I’m no speculator and I won’t take anything from you. When the war ends, you can pay me back for everything.” The family stayed with him until the liberation.

The butcher asked me to go to the Jewish family. They had established a factory in their house, and he wanted me to ask them for money, because he was in a bad way. I asked what he needed and he said 1500 zlotys [złotys].

I went to the Jew. A serving [servant] girl answered the door and asked me in. When I told the wife that I had come from Benju (that was the butcher’s name), she was so happy and confirmed his story that he had told me (which I had earlier doubted). She simply called him an angel.

I conveyed the request of her “angel” and she said that her husband was not at home but she would take care of it. A month later I accidentally ran into her at the Jewish Committee. She came up to me and asked if I was going to Benju. She said that 1500 zlotys was too much,

<sup>2751</sup> See the following additional examples: Tammeus and Cukierkorn, *They Were Just People*, 21, 69–70; Marcin Urynowicz, “Zorganizowana i indywidualna pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej eksterminowanej przez okupanta niemieckiego w okresie drugiej wojny światowej,” in Żbikowski, *Polacy i Żydzi pod okupacją niemiecką 1939–1945*, 262–63; Marcin Urynowicz, “Organized and Individual Assistance of Poles for Jewish People Exterminated by the German Occupants in the Second World War,” in Grądzka-Rejak and Sitarek, *The Holocaust and Polish-Jewish Relations*, 332; Sebastian Piątkowski, “Relacje o pomocy udzielanej Żydom przez Polaków zamieszkałych we wsiach Lubelszczyzny w latach 1939–1944: Wybór materiałów źródłowych,” in Marcin Przegiętka, et al., eds., *Polska pod okupacją 1939–1945*, vol. 2 (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej–Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2016), 205–57, especially pp. 217, 220, 225, 238–39, 241, 246, 251, 253, 255.

<sup>2752</sup> *Hiding and Seeking* opens with director Menachem Daum playing a tape for his two sons, who are both Orthodox Jews like him. It is a recording of a Brooklyn rabbi instructing his followers that the “only good goyim is a dead goyim.”

<sup>2753</sup> Michael Checinski, *Poland: Communism, Nationalism, Anti-Semitism* (New York: Karz-Cohl, 1982), 143.

but she could give 500. I was embarrassed and walked away from her. I didn't go back to Benju out of shame. It makes me sad to have to write such a thing. It's a sad fact.<sup>2754</sup>

All too often, as honest survivors acknowledge, Poles are accused of doing nothing or next to nothing by people who themselves would likely never have risked their own lives in similar circumstances. Dismissive of Jews (with lived experience) who hold balanced views that undermine her take on these matters, a Polish cultural anthropologist claims this compilation sets up a "childish" dichotomy. Apparently, it does not live up to her "sophisticated" scholarly standards.<sup>2755</sup>

All of this begets the eye-opening question, why has Yad Vashem done next to nothing to acknowledge that as many as 1,000 Poles were put to death for helping Jews? Why is there no monument to honour their memory anywhere? (The erection of such a monument in Warsaw was strenuously opposed by the Center for Polish Holocaust Research.)

When pondering opinions (generalizations) about the behaviour of Poles, one should bear in mind what French-Jewish intellectual Pierre Vidal-Naquet has aptly decried as "the sort of primitive anti-Polish sentiments that too often characterize those whom I shall call 'professional Jews'."<sup>2756</sup>

Szymon Datner, long-time director of Warsaw's Jewish Historical Institute and survivor of the Holocaust:

In my research I have found only one case of help being refused [by nuns]. No other sector was so ready to help those persecuted by the Germans, including the Jews; this attitude, which was unanimous and widespread, is deserving of recognition and respect.<sup>2757</sup>

Yehuda Bauer, Israeli historian:

Nor was the Catholic clergy any help at all. With some very honorable exceptions, the clergy by and large not only echoed the antisemitic sentiments, but led them. ... Against the background of church antisemitism in an overwhelmingly Catholic country, the action of the Uniate archbishop of Lwow [Lwów], Count Andreas Szeptycki, who ordered his clergy to save Jews despite his antisemitic views, stands out. So do the actions of the Ursuline sisters, and other individual monastic houses and occasional village priests.<sup>2758</sup>

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<sup>2754</sup> Tzvi Shedletzki, "A Saga of Pain and Heroism," in Kanc, *Sefer zikaron kehilat Wolomin*, 485–549, translated as *Volomin: A Memorial to the Jewish Community of Wolomin*, Internet: <https://www.jewishgen.org/Yizkor/wolomin/Wolomin.html>.

<sup>2755</sup> Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, *Pogrom Cries: Essays on Polish-Jewish History, 1939–1946*, 2nd rev. ed. (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2019), 46.

<sup>2756</sup> Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Jews: History, Memory, and the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 182.

<sup>2757</sup> Szymon Datner, "Wydział ochrony człowieka," *Znak* [Kraków], no. 347 (1983): 1607.

<sup>2758</sup> Bauer, *The Holocaust in Historical Perspective*, 57, 59–60. According to Bauer, Jewish citizens owed Poland no loyalty: "... from the perspective of most Jews, interwar Poland was an oppressive regime and could hardly demand loyalty from its badly treated Jewish population." See Bauer, *The Death of the Shtetl*, 37.

Yitzhak Arad (Rudnicki), former partisan and Israeli historian:

It was a period in which the morality of the Church was tested. The clergy should have voiced their objections to the murders and extended help to the victims, despite risks to themselves. An outcry on their part would not have changed the Germans' annihilation policies ...<sup>2759</sup>

Testimonials by Jews rescued by Poles:

I do not accuse anyone that did not hide or help a Jew. We cannot demand from others to sacrifice their lives. One has no right to demand such risks.<sup>2760</sup>

Everyone who states the view that helping Jews was during those times a reality, a duty and nothing more should think long and hard how he himself would behave in that situation. I admit that I am not sure that I could summon up enough courage in the conditions of raging Nazi terror.<sup>2761</sup>

One Polish Jew who often asked this question of Jewish survivors recalled: "The answer was always the same and it is mine too. I do not know if I would have endangered my life to save a Christian."<sup>2762</sup>

"I am not at all sure that I would give a bowl of food to a Pole if it could mean death for me and my daughter," a Jewish woman admitted candidly.<sup>2763</sup>

A Jewish woman who was rescued as a child by a poor Polish family: "Today I would like to talk about my saviors and about the great heroism it requires to give the same amount of food to a third child who isn't yours. Even at times of great hunger they shared each slice of bread—which was so rare—into three equal parts. I have three children and I don't know if in the same circumstances I would be able to give my child less in order to feed someone else's child. It is the greatest heroism one can ever imagine."<sup>2764</sup>

Today, with the perspective of time, I am full of admiration for the courage and dedication ... of all those Poles who in those times, day in, day out, put their lives on the line. I do not know if we Jews, in the face of the tragedy of another nation, would be equally capable of this kind of sacrifice.<sup>2765</sup>

I'm not surprised people didn't want to hide Jews. Everyone was afraid, who would risk his family's lives? You can accuse the ones who kept a Jew, exploited him financially, and later gave

<sup>2759</sup> Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union*, 449–50.

<sup>2760</sup> Pola Stein, cited in Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness*, 129.

<sup>2761</sup> Hanna Wehr, *Ze wspomnień* (Montreal: Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, 2001), 64.

<sup>2762</sup> Cited in Marc Hillel, *Le massacre des survivants: En Pologne après l'holocauste (1945–1947)* (Paris: Plon, 1985), 99.

<sup>2763</sup> Cited in Niezabitowska, *Remnants*, 249.

<sup>2764</sup> Shoshana (Rozalia) Ronen née Wassner cited in The Nawłoka Family, PRP, Internet: <https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/en/stories-of-rescue/story-rescue-nawloka-family>.

<sup>2765</sup> Janka Altman, cited in Marek Arczyński and Wiesław Balcerak, *Kryptonim "Żegota": Z dziejów pomocy Żydom w Polsce 1939–1945*, 2nd ed. (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1983), 264. Rina Scharf Chełmicka, who survived in Lwów with the help of several Poles, expressed a similar sentiment: If the situation were reversed, how many Jews would have risked their lives to rescue Poles? Very few. See the testimony of Rina Chelmska, SFV, Interview code 20694.

him away or killed him. They're murderers. But you absolutely can't blame an average Pole, I don't know if anyone would be more decent, if any Jew would be more decent.<sup>2766</sup>

We did survive thanks to some Polish people. And we are grateful to the Polish Home Army, the leaders, the people directly involved with us who saved many other Jewish people, poor people, without any compensation. Risked their own lives, and I said it before, could anyone of us? Try to inspect my own soul. Could I do the same thing what those Polish people did? I honestly don't know. I was never a hero. Maybe I'm a coward, I don't know. But they were heroes in my eyes, they were.<sup>2767</sup>

When I later traveled in the world and Jews would talk to me about how badly Poles behaved with respect to Jews, that they didn't hide them, I always had this answer: "All right, they could have done more. But I wonder how many could one find among you, the Jews, who would hide a Polish family knowing that not only you, but your children, your whole family, would get shot were you found out?" After that there was always silence and nobody said anything more.<sup>2768</sup>

To tell the truth, I don't know whether today ... there are many Jews who would do the same for another nation. We were another nation ...<sup>2769</sup>

As for the Poles: I do not bear a grudge because many of them did not want to incur danger for us [Jews]; I do not know how we would have behaved [towards them if our roles were reversed].<sup>2770</sup>

When we come to Poland with Israeli youth and I tell them about what happened during the war, I say to them: "I know that if I had to risk my own life, and my family's, for a stranger, I probably wouldn't have the courage to do so."<sup>2771</sup>

I say this without needless comments, because I've been asked before: If I had a family I would not shelter a Jew during the occupation.<sup>2772</sup>

And what right did I have to condemn them? Why should they risk themselves and their families for a Jewish boy they didn't know? Would I have behaved any differently? I knew the answer to that, too. I wouldn't have lifted a finger. Everyone was equally intimidated.<sup>2773</sup>

If I were in their place, would I act like them [i.e., his Polish rescuers]? This is the question that I have been asking myself from the days of my youth, and until this very day I have not come up with an answer. I believe that even if I were to give a positive answer to this question, it

<sup>2766</sup> Testimony of Henryk Prajs, 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/henryk-prajs>.

<sup>2767</sup> Oral history interview with Felix Horn, July 19, 1994, USHMM, RG-50.030.0294.

<sup>2768</sup> Ewa S. (Stapp), September 2005, Centropa, Internet: <https://www.centropa.org> (Biographies).

<sup>2769</sup> Testimony of Bencjon Drutin in Marzena Baum-Gruszowska and Dominika Majuk, eds., *Światła w ciemności: Sprawiedliwi wśród narodów świata: Relacje historii mówionej w działaniach edukacyjnych* (Lublin: Ośrodek "Brama Grodzka-Teatr NN," 2009), 58.

<sup>2770</sup> Testimony of Emilka Rozenchwajg (Shoshana Kossower Rosenzweig), a Home Army and Jewish underground liaison officer in Warsaw, interviewed by Anka Grupińska, "Ja myślałam, że wszyscy są razem," *Tygodnik Powszechny* [Kraków], May 6, 2001.

<sup>2771</sup> Testimony of Ada Lubelczyk Willenberg, Interview with Samuel and Ada Willenberg, "To, o czym pisze Gross jest prawdą," Polska Agencja Prasowa (PAP), January 10, 2011.

<sup>2772</sup> Testimony of Marek Oren (Orenstein), in Piotr Głuchowski and Marcin Kowalski, "Żyd miły z bliska," *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Duży Format, September 11, 2007.

<sup>2773</sup> Frister, *The Cap, or the Price of a Life*, 194. A similar sentiment was expressed by Natalie Sterngast to her Polish benefactors. See the testimony of Natalie Sterngast, SFV, Interview code 1043.

is most doubtful if I would act accordingly, were I to find myself in a similar situation as the Righteous Among the Nations.<sup>2774</sup>

If not for the Poles, none of us would have survived .... A lot of Polish people were murdered, hung, shot, and had their homes burned because they were hiding Jewish people. ... It would be [the] opposite ... Jewish people wouldn't do that for the Polish people.<sup>2775</sup>

A Jew who survived with the help of Czech villagers in Volhynia: "I do not know if a Jew would do for them what they did for us."<sup>2776</sup>

### Other Jews rescued by Poles go on to explain their position:

One must pay tribute to those Poles who lost their lives rescuing Jews. Moreover, one cannot blame those who did not rescue Jews. We should not forget that one cannot demand heroism from ordinary, average people. True there are times and causes that demand heroism, but only certain individuals can aspire to that. One cannot harbour ill-feelings towards or have grounds for complaining about someone for not attaining that level.<sup>2777</sup>

I always protest when I hear that Poles did "too little." How can one judge people who found themselves in such a difficult situation? Human nature is such that one is concerned foremost about one's own life and the lives of close ones. It is their safety that is the most important thing. One has to have great courage to risk death—one's own and one's children—in order to rescue a stranger. To require this of ordinary people terrorized by the occupiers is to ask too much. The Jewish people themselves didn't pass that test either. Who knows how many heroes like the Polish Righteous would be found among the Jews.<sup>2778</sup>

Heroism is something extraordinary, something that one cannot demand from anybody, something, moreover, that cannot even be expected. An individual becomes a hero not because this is what is demanded of him, or even less so because that is what he is forced to do. Heroism is a matter of personal decisions and personal courage. And if someone complains that there were not very many righteous heroes, he should think of whether he himself would have acted heroically in the [same] situation: what would you have done if somebody else, rather than yourself, had been sentenced to extermination? Would you have come running to save him at the peril of death? This is an abstract question, essentially a rhetorical one, but I think it needs to be asked all the same. Even though there is no answer to it, for heroic deeds are done in particular, for most part unpredictable situations.<sup>2779</sup>

<sup>2774</sup> Testimony of Dr. Avraham Horowitz, Świda Family, RD.

<sup>2775</sup> Oral history interview with Leon Lepold, July 25, 1989, for William B. Helmreich's book *Against All Odds: Holocaust Survivors and the Successful Lives They Made in America* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Transaction Publishers, 1996). Leon Lepold, who, like his future wife, survived with the assistance of Poles in southeastern Poland, took issue with those Jews who blamed the Poles for the Holocaust. Helmreich notes, however, that most of his interlocutors "were even more hostile, on the whole, toward Poles, often comparing them unfavorably to Germans." *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>2776</sup> Testimony of Sonia Resnick-Tetelbaum, SFV, Interview code 9702 (Czeskie Nowosiółki, near Beresteczko).

<sup>2777</sup> Henryk Bryskier, *Żydzi pod swastyką, czyli getto w Warszawie w XX wieku* (Warsaw: Aspra-Jr, 2006), 231.

<sup>2778</sup> Szewach Weiss, "Polacy pozostali niezłomni," *Rzeczpospolita* [Warsaw], January 26, 2011.

<sup>2779</sup> Michał Głowiński, "O sprawiedliwych / About the Righteous," in *Polacy ratujący Żydów w czasie Zagłady / Poles Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust* (2013), 9. Surprisingly,

Would Roman [Frayman] risk his own life now to save others? "It's funny that you should ask that question," he said, "because when I teach the children, sixth graders, and I tell them how Maria saved my life, I say to the children, 'How many of you would be willing to risk your life to save someone else, knowing that if you're caught you'll be put to death?' And, of course, after hearing my story, many of them say, 'Oh, we would, Mr. Frayman, we would.' But I say, 'Put your hands down.' Let me tell you honestly, if someone asked me if I'd do it, my honest answer is, 'I don't know.' Would I be willing to sacrifice my children, my grandchildren, I don't know. You don't know that until you are in that circumstance. I don't know how gutsy I am."<sup>2780</sup>

These honest Jewish survivors raise thought-provoking questions. If the situation were reversed, how many Polish fugitives would have been sheltered in shtetls? How could they have blended in? What if the Germans imposed the death penalty for rescuing them? How many Poles would have been turned away? We know from Jewish testimonies that denunciation of fellow Jews was a serious problem. What if the Germans ordered the Jewish police to search out Polish fugitives or risk punishment? How many Poles would have been handed over?

Those who argue that hundreds of thousands of more Poles should have risked their lives, and use this argument to question the decency and morality of those who weren't prepared to put their lives on the line under such circumstances, necessarily invite a close scrutiny of their own demonstrated track record. What have they *done* that demonstrates they would have behaved heroically in such circumstances?

Only someone who has risked his or her life for another person has the moral right to chastise others for their failure to undertake such life-threatening actions. This proposition is entirely hypothetical because true heroes would never compromise their moral values and ethical convictions by demanding such behaviour of others. Eugeniusz Bradło, a member of a family that was awarded by Yad Vashem for rescuing thirteen Jews, does not disparage his neighbours for not sheltering Jews.

"No one found the courage to take them in for a longer period. People were good, but they were afraid of the Germans and said, 'Here is some food, and leave. Don't admit to anyone that we gave it to you.'"<sup>2781</sup>

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questions along these lines are not put to survivors interviewed for the Shoah Foundation—The Institute for Visual History and Education at the University of Southern California.

<sup>2780</sup> Cited in Tammeus and Cukierkorn, *They Were Just People*, 69. Roman Frayman states: "But the thing I feel guilty about today is that we never maintained a relationship [with his rescuer, Maria Bałagowa], while she was living." *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>2781</sup> Musiał, *Lata w ukryciu*, vol. 2, 330. The presence of the Jews became widely known or suspected because of their frequent and loud quarrelling, because of the chance discovery of their hideout by a neighbour who hid in the Bradłos' barn during a German raid, and because of their nocturnal expeditions to obtain food from other farmers since the Bradłos were in no position to feed so many people. *Ibid.*, 331. Another family of rescuers, the Styrnas, hid two penniless siblings whose presence became known to their neighbours despite the precautions the Styrnas took to conceal their charges. Although the Styrnas trusted their neighbours and did not experience denunciation, they were nonetheless

Heroism is a purely personal and self-effacing choice. No one else can make that decision for another person, let alone impose it. No one has that right. But, unfortunately, it is done all too frequently when it comes to Poles. At best, those crude generalizations are a display of self-righteous indignation. At worst, it reveals a darker side about that person—a deep-seated contempt for others and valuing their life above another person's.

What other survivors have to say:

“Now you see why we hate the Polacks,” one survivor concluded her account, in which she presented many instances of Poles' help. There was no word about hating the Germans.<sup>2782</sup>

The Wanderers were among the luckiest Jewish families in town. Both parents and the girls survived the war. They were hidden successively by several Polish families. After the war, the Wanderers emigrated to America. I sent the Wanderer sisters information about the Regulas, one of the Polish families in whose house on the outskirts of Brzezany [Brzeżany] they had hid after the Judenrein roundup. I hoped that they would start the procedure of granting them the Righteous Gentiles award, but nothing came of it. ... When I called Rena, the older one, and asked whether a young Polish historian, a colleague of mine who was doing research in New York, could interview her for my project on Brzezany, her reaction was curt and clear: “I hate all Polacks.” ... Rena advised me not to present the Poles in too favorable a way “for the sake of our martyrs.”<sup>2783</sup>

Berek Rojzman was part of a group of six Jews who escaped from Treblinka and built an underground shelter in a forest, where they relied on a Polish farmer named Staszek for their food supply. Gitta Sereny, herself a Holocaust survivor, remarks, “Rojzman said no more about the man Staszek, thanks to whom they had survived. The implication was that he was paid for what he did. He probably was, but considering the risk he had taken, one did wonder whether that degree of help could ever be paid for in money.”<sup>2784</sup>

After his escape from the German death camp in Sobibór, Stanisław Szmajzner and his two companions took refuge with a Polish family, where they survived the war.<sup>2785</sup> Szmajzner said the following in a 1983 interview given in German, in a country where he apparently feels quite comfortable:

I will never return to Poland, ever. Had the Poles been different, more like the Danes, the Dutch or the French, I think 70, 80 or possibly even 90 per cent of the Jews would still be alive today. Because the Germans had no idea who was Jewish and who wasn't. ... I don't want to speak

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afraid that a weak person might betray them out of fear. Despite their assurances, after the war, their charges showed little gratitude. *Ibid.*, 335–36.

<sup>2782</sup> Cited in Hoffman, *Shtetl*, 245.

<sup>2783</sup> Redlich, *Together and Apart in Brzezany*, 22.

<sup>2784</sup> Sereny, *Into That Darkness*, 242–44.

<sup>2785</sup> Stanislaw Szmajzner, *Inferno em Sobibor: A tragédia de um adolescente judeu* (Rio de Janeiro: Edições Bloch, 1968), 296–301.

Polish and I don't want to return to Poland. This is my sixth visit to Germany and believe me: I really don't want to go to Poland. ... If they [i.e., the Poles] wanted to kill Jews they could always find a pretext. ... That's what the Poles are like. Can you ever like these people? It's impossible. ... Poland was never, and never will be, a country where Jews can live. I would like to make an appeal to those few Jews still in Poland: Leave. This is not a country where you can live. ... It is not necessary for all Germans to atone for all of this. Many Germans were opposed to fascism.<sup>2786</sup>

Ephraim Sten (Sternschuss), one of the more than forty Jews rescued by a number of Polish families in the village of Jelechowice:

They (the Poles) had no objection to the job being perpetrated by the Germans ... That is why the overwhelming majority did not lift a finger to help. ... Poland was the perfect center for the Jewish liquidation.<sup>2787</sup>

Raoul Harmelin, who survived in his native Borysław with the help of a Pole named Jankowski, a Home Army member:

And generally, I would consider Poles much worse than the Germans.<sup>2788</sup>

Peter Gersh, who was captured by the Gestapo in Kraków and imprisoned in several German concentration camps:

...if I hated anyone, I would hate the Polish people. The priests and the Catholic Church, they instilled hate in the Polish people ... in the war they [Poles] had a field day. ... When I heard that the Russians occupied Poland, I thought, God should see to it that they're there for a thousand years!<sup>2789</sup>

Gitel, the granddaughter of Rabbi Efraim Reich (of Brooklyn), one of thirteen Jews rescued by the Mikołajków family in Dębica (whose story is described earlier):

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<sup>2786</sup> Sobiborinterviews.nl—Survivors of an Extermination Camp, Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, Internet: <https://www.sobiborinterviews.nl/en/interviewees/2-profielen/12-stanislaw-szmajzner>. Polish Jews were required to wear distinctive armbands and most were readily identifiable by their appearance. Almost 80 per cent of Dutch Jews, it must be remembered, were murdered by the Germans with considerable Dutch collaboration. Most of those who attempted to hide were betrayed. Many Dutch Jews (e.g., part Jews and converts) were able to survive because they were exempted from Nazi genocidal measures.

<sup>2787</sup> Sten, *1111 Days In My Life Plus Four*, 31–32. Yet the author records, at p. 75, a raid on the village of Jelechowice where several Polish families were sheltering more than 40 Jews (including him): “Today was some panic because last night Hryc informed us about the police arriving ... looking for Jews. ... there were area combings, the Wehrmacht arrived, as well as the foresters and police, and they went from house to house, from forest to forest, because Jews were hiding in the environs.”

<sup>2788</sup> Interview with Raoul Harmelin, April 26, 1992, Gratz College Holocaust Oral History Archive, 47.

<sup>2789</sup> Cited in Lewin, *Witnesses to the Holocaust*, 35.

I think that if I was to step into Poland I would feel like blood was seeping through my shoes. Most of the Poles were sitting around, they saw the smoke from Auschwitz and smelled it, and they knew that people were dying there and did nothing. So I think that even after the war, nowadays people have generally a view of Poles as people who helped and abetted what happened in killing children, mothers, men, and families, they do deserve it. The few people that did help let's honor them. ... They showed that they are people. And the other people are not people. They are murderers and they have to pay now for what they did.<sup>2790</sup>

The Christian spouses of Jews who immigrated to Israel in the 1950s and 1960s—mostly Polish women who had saved the lives of their Jewish husbands—were perceived to constitute a threat to Jewish national identity. They often experienced discrimination and abusive treatment at the hands of Jewish Israeli society.<sup>2791</sup>

Some of the most abusive comments emanate from Israeli politicians. Menachem Begin, former Israeli Prime Minister:

What concerns the Jews, the Poles have been collaborating with the Germans. ... only at most one hundred people have been helping Jews. ... Polish priests did not save even one Jewish life.<sup>2792</sup>

The scandalous remarks of Yitzhak Shamir, Prime Minister of Israel, spoken in 1989, were renewed in February 2019 by Israeli Foreign Minister Yisrael Katz:

Poles collaborated with the Nazis, definitely. As [former prime minister] Yitzhak Shamir said, they suckle anti-Semitism with their mothers' milk.<sup>2793</sup>

<sup>2790</sup> *Druga prawda*, Documentary film by Jagna Wright and Aneta Naszyńska, Lest We Forget, 2008.

<sup>2791</sup> Ofer Aderet, "The Polish Women Who Saved Jews in WWII, Only to be Called 'Russian Prostitutes' in Israel," *Haaretz*, August 30, 2020. For an account of a Polish woman attesting to such mistreatment experienced by her as well as by her children in the 1950s see Boćkowski, Rogalewska, and Sadowska, *Kres świata białostockich Żydów*, 85. Stefan Raczynski, whom Yad Vashem recognized as a Righteous Gentile for saving his future wife, Shoshana Dezent, and a number of other Jews, moved to Israel with his wife in 1960. Shoshana recalled how he was mistreated there: "Stefan has changed a great deal since we came to Israel. They injured him; he felt humiliated and he became cynical. When our son went to the army he wanted to be a pilot. They told him, 'Your father is a Polish Catholic, you won't be a pilot.' One day a few religious Jews were throwing stones at our house screaming, 'Go away, goy.'" See *Rescuers Bios*, "Shtetl," PBS Frontline, Internet: <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shtetl/righteous/stephan.html>.

<sup>2792</sup> Said on Dutch television in 1979. Cited in Stevens, *The Poles*, 317. Stevens, a Jew, described this outburst as "a disgraceful statement in which Begin disgraced himself and dishonored his own people."

<sup>2793</sup> "Poland Cancels Participation in Israel Summit over FM Katz's 'Racist' Remarks," *The Times of Israel* (blog), February 18, 2019. The disturbing phenomenon of anti-polonism was explored by Steve Paiken, in his article "Poland Striving to Shake Off an Anti-Semitic Past," *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], May 29, 1992: "And many Jews around the world blame the Poles nearly as much as the Germans for the Holocaust. They say it wasn't coincidental that the majority of the death camps were on Polish soil—that anti-Semitism

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, in an address to the March of the Living participants, April 2018:

The country of Poland allowed the implementation of the horrific genocidal ideology of Hitler. ... Not for nothing we describe the death camps as the camps of Nazis and their helpers ... we cannot deny the fact that Poland and the Poles lent a hand to the annihilation of Jews.<sup>2794</sup>

Yair Lapid, alternate Prime Minister of Israel since 2021:

No Polish law will change history, Poland was complicit in the Holocaust. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were murdered on its soil without them having met any German officer. There were Polish death camps and no law can ever change that. I am a son of a Holocaust survivor. My grandmother was murdered in Poland by Germans and Poles.<sup>2795</sup>

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in Poland made Hitler's Final Solution in Poland achievable. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir once summed up that view by saying that Poles drink anti-Semitism with their mother's milk. ... The signs of change are even prompting some to challenge the long-held view that Poles were just about as guilty as the Germans for the Holocaust. That view is 'ingrained,' says Nathan Leipciger, chairman of the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Remembrance Committee, and a survivor of Auschwitz. 'How can you say that? I was in camps where 90 per cent of the inmates were Poles. ... Most of this [anti-Polish] feeling is just based on myth.'

This assessment proved to be too optimistic. Scarcely criticized when spoken, the prevalence of such remarks are clearly indicative of views that are widespread, albeit not universal, among Jews.

<sup>2794</sup> Ofer Aderet, "Israeli President to Polish Counterpart: We Cannot Deny That Poland and Poles Participated in the Holocaust," *Haaretz*, April 12, 2018; "Poles Helped in Nazi Extermination, Rivlin Tells Polish Counterpart," *The Times of Israel* (blog), April 12, 2018. At the ceremonies commemorating the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz held on January 27, 2020, Israeli President Rivlin renewed his charge that "many Poles ... assisted in the murder of Jews" and, without acknowledging that Poles uniquely faced the death penalty for helping Jews, reproached them because "too few" Poles risked their lives to save Jews. See Ofer Aderet, "Rivlin Told Poles What Netanyahu Wouldn't," *Haaretz*, January 27, 2020. The "unvarnished truth" that emerges from this narrative, seemingly endorsed by Yad Vashem, is that Poles' wartime purpose was to put their lives at risk to rescue Jews (and ran no greater risk than other Europeans for doing so); otherwise, Poles were hateful anti-Semites (usually), indifferent (at best), or collaborators/murderers (very often).

<sup>2795</sup> TOI Staff and AP, "Lapid: Poland Was Complicit in the Holocaust, New Bill 'Can't Change History,'" *The Times of Israel* (blog), January 27, 2018. Since Lapid's two grandmothers actually lived through the Holocaust (one in Palestine, the other in Budapest), he later had to "clarify" that it was his father's grandmother who was killed, and explained—in terms many Jews, unfortunately, fully endorse—why Poles were responsible for her death: "My father's grandmother, Hermione, was arrested by the Germans in Serbia. She was sent to Auschwitz, where she was murdered in the gas chambers. Why did she make that long journey to her death? Why were most of the camps set up in Poland? The Germans knew that at least some of the local population would cooperate. ... The new law that the Polish government is trying to pass denies all this. So that we'll know that 'fake news' has

## Gideon Meir, Israeli diplomat:

The Germans wouldn't have built the camps in Poland without the corporation [sic] of the polish [sic] people.<sup>2796</sup>

Regrettably, such perverse and odious views are still being disseminated by Israeli officials (and others) even though they have been discredited long ago by leading

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reached Poland, they spun the law with a false headline. 'There is no such thing,' they said, 'as Polish extermination camps. The camps were German.' It's an absurd statement. No one ever says the death camps were built by the Poles. The Germans built them. But they built them on Polish land, with Polish help, in the face of Polish silence. ...Three million Polish Jews were murdered (and another three million Jews from other countries). The Germans managed the extermination and bear ultimate responsibility but they could not have done it alone. ... We have not forgotten and not forgiven. ... We will not accept the re-writing of history. We will not accept the attempt to avoid responsibility." See Yair Lapid, "The Truth about Poland and the Holocaust," *The Times of Israel* (blog), January 29, 2018. The purpose of Poland's so-called anti-defamation law was not to whitewash Polish history or to shut down debate, as is often alleged. The law is directed specifically at the following false claims: blaming Poland and the Poles as a nation for Nazi German war crimes and crimes against humanity such as death camps and the Holocaust, *contrary to the facts*. That is the plain meaning of the law. The law does not prevent anyone from writing or speaking about the actions of individual Poles or even specific groups of Poles during the Holocaust. The opinion editor of the Jewish American journal *Forward*, made that very point in response to Ronen Bergman's audacious attack on Poland's Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, whom he called "a liar." "The thing is, Bergman had not understood the law correctly," Batya Ungar-Sargon stated. "Bergman may discuss the individual Poles and even the group of Poles who betrayed his family with impunity." See Batya Ungar-Sargon, "What Israel and Poland Are Really Fighting Over," *Forward* [New York] February 27, 2018.

Unfortunately, as is often the case, moderate voices were few and far between. Commenting on the avalanche of rancorous comments this law generated, Seth J. Frantzman, wrote: "Over the last few days there has been an extreme outpouring of hatred in Israel and on social media against Poland over a law about the Holocaust; what's strange is that the comments aren't against the law, just hatred and blame for Poland and Poles. And what's even more strange is the constant claim that the death camps were built in Poland are somehow the fault of Poland rather than the German Nazi occupying regime. It's all the more surprising because in other countries in the 1940s there were active collaborationist governments such as Vichy in France or Ustache [Ustashe] in Croatia. Yet anger and hatred is reserved for Poland, not just about the law; but deep antipathy. Is this because of bad education about the Shoah? Or is it about something deeper; anger that has sat quietly and is bursting forth with the law as a symbol of a larger issue? I find it difficult to believe if there was a similar law in Croatia or Hungary or elsewhere that there would be the same level of anger." See Seth J. Frantzman, "Setting History Straight: Poland Resisted Nazis," *The Jerusalem Post*, January 29, 2018.

<sup>2796</sup> "Skandaliczne i kłamliwe słowa b. ambasadora Izraela we Włoszech," November 25, 2019, wPolityce.pl, Internet: <https://wpolityce.pl/polityka/474503-byly-ambasador-izraela-klamie-ws-polakow>.

Holocaust historians such as Yisael Gutman and Lucy Dawidowicz. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance has condemned, as Holocaust distortion, “attempts to blur the responsibility for the establishment of concentration and death camps devised and operated by Nazi Germany by putting blame on other nations or ethnic groups.”<sup>2797</sup>

Jewish leaders have been equally strident in condemning the Poles, as have prominent Jewish activists at every level.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith (who was rescued by his Polish Catholic nanny):

European governments under German domination ... Poland ... betrayed or abandoned their Jewish populations ... the Polish government failed to halt the methodical liquidation of its Jewish population.<sup>2798</sup>

Jack Rosen, President of the American Jewish Congress:

... without the complicity, whether direct or indirect, of ordinary Poles, the Nazi extermination of three million Polish Jews would not have been possible. The term “Polish death camps” may not be technically correct, but the vast majority of Nazi death camps in Europe were built on Polish soil.<sup>2799</sup>

Steve Cohen, U.S. Democratic Congressman:

It’s sad to see that Members of Congress have gotten to this low level that they don’t understand history, they don’t understand the Holocaust. You know, it was not just Nazi Germany. It was Poland where some of this more severe, serious concentration camps were Auschwitz and Birkenau.<sup>2800</sup>

Dr. David Rakowski of Toronto, member of The Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center’s Senate:

The Poles’ complicity in the mass murders of European Jewry easily allowed the Nazis to operate concentration and death camps because of the rampant anti-Semitism of the majority of the Polish population at the time.<sup>2801</sup>

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<sup>2797</sup> 2013 Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion, International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, Internet: <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-holocaust-denial-and-distortion>.

<sup>2798</sup> Abraham Foxman, “Reflections,” in Carol Rittner and Leo Goldberger, eds., *Rescue of the Danish Jewry: A Primer* (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, 1993).

<sup>2799</sup> Jack Rosen, “I Take Poland’s Holocaust Revisionism Personally,” *Haaretz*, February 25, 2018.

<sup>2800</sup> Interviewed by Anderson Cooper, CNN, May 24, 2021, Internet: <http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/2105/24/acd.01.html>.

<sup>2801</sup> Dr. David Rakowski, letter, “Let’s not repeat the past,” *National Post* [Toronto], November 16, 2019.

Isaac Glick, Thornhill, Ontario, former Lieutenant-Colonel in the Israeli Defence Force:

Although it is generally believed that Germans, as a nation, were responsible for the Holocaust, it is very important to state that people in Germany were more resistant to Jewish repression than those in the neighbouring occupied countries, including Poland ... The reason Germans established ghettos and concentration camps in these countries was because the local populations not only didn't object, they were often seen as righteous. The anti-Semitism in Poland actually rivalled that in Germany.<sup>2802</sup>

Freda Wineman, a French Jew, was arrested by French policemen and sent to the Drancy internment camp near Paris, which was run by the French police. French policemen loaded her and her family onto a train operated by French railroad workers and deported them to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Wineman has taken to teaching impressionable students and the public in the United Kingdom about Polish "complicity" in the Holocaust, even though she never encountered a Polish collaborator—only many French ones:

When the Nazis invaded, Poland had the largest Jewish population in Europe, and yet they were rounded up so quickly into the ghettos within a short frame of time that there must have been some complicity with the local Polish population, and only very few actually stood up and tried to help Jews they had lived alongside for a long time. They were almost pleased to be able to take over their homes and things that the Jews had to leave behind.<sup>2803</sup>

Authors and journalists have also weighed in. Elie Wiesel, author and Nobel Prize winner, accused Poles who helped Jews of being mercenaries at best:

We had so many enemies! ... the Poles betrayed them. True, here and there a "good" citizen was found whose cooperation could be bought with Jewish money. But how many good-hearted, upright Poles were to be found at the time in Poland? Very few.<sup>2804</sup>

<sup>2802</sup> "The Poles Are Not Without Blame," Letter to the Editor, *National Post* [Toronto], December 30, 2011.

<sup>2803</sup> Tamara Zieve, "What Do Holocaust Survivors Think of 'Polish Death Camps'?", *The Jerusalem Post*, February 3, 2018. Unfortunately, there are many such pronouncements by Jews involved in Holocaust education and the March of the Living, a program that has come under severe criticism repeatedly since the 1990s. The dark side of the March of the Living was exposed by Israeli author Yishai Sarid through his novel's narrator: "They didn't hate the Germans, the kids in my groups; not at all, not even close. The murderers barely registered in the narrative they created for themselves. They sang sad songs, wrapped themselves in flags, and said prayers for the ascent of the souls of the victims, as if their death had been a divine decree, but never pointed an accusing finger at the perpetrators. They hated the Polish much more. When we walked around the streets in cities and villages, whenever we met the local population, they would mutter words of hatred at them, about the pogroms they had committed, their collaboration, their anti-Semitism." See Yishai Sarid, *The Memory Monster* (New York: Restless Books, 2020), 32. Notwithstanding, Poland's recent suggestion to provide input into the content of this program has met with hostility.

<sup>2804</sup> Introduction to Meed, *On Both Sides of the Wall*, 3–4.

Mark S. Smith, American author and journalist:

It was difficult to fight the rising hatred I suddenly felt for these peasants. My sense of justice wanted to reject such feelings, because it dishonoured those Poles who found ways to resist the Nazi tyranny and assist the persecuted—but the courageous were too few, and Poland's guilt is that of a nation that could have saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, in spite of the Germans, but did not.<sup>2805</sup>

Many historians and academics joined in with equally outrageous accusations.

Max I. Dimont, American historian:

Poland's action was the most shameful. Without a protest she handed over 2,800,000 Jews to the Germans.<sup>2806</sup>

Norman F. Cantor, American historian:

The complicity of the ... Poles ... was very great, and indisputable. Without their help the Germans would logistically not have been able to annihilate as many as six million Jews ...

The same indictment pertains to the Catholic Church in Poland, which was thoroughly inhibited by its centuries-long hostility to the Jews from doing anything significant to oppose the Nazi death camps. Polish Catholics worked in the concentration camps and for the death squads by the thousands. The Church hierarchy never advised them not to accept such employment. Poland was turned into the most savage killing field in modern history while the Church hierarchy looked on quietly.<sup>2807</sup>

David I. Kertzer, an American historian, asks rhetorically:

... could there be any link between the efficiency of the slaughter of millions of Jews in Poland and the deep anti-Semitism inculcated in the Catholic population there?<sup>2808</sup>

Howard L. Adelson, professor of history at the City University of New York:

It was not by chance that the inhuman Nazi murderers chose Poland as the charnel house for European Jewry. With forethought they recognized that within Poland the neighbors of the Jews would assist in the slaughter. ... Even the Home Army, the Armja Krajowa [sic], which was supposedly struggling against the Nazis, pursued the slaughter of the Jews with greater vigor than the war against the German conquerors. The local peasantry displayed an atavistic savagery that is unequalled in the annals of human history. Jews died while their neighbors exulted in their suffering.<sup>2809</sup>

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<sup>2805</sup> Mark S. Smith, "Escape from Treblinka," *The Herald* [Scotland], May 31, 2010.

<sup>2806</sup> Max I. Dimont, *Jews, God and History* (New York: New American Library, 1962), 387.

<sup>2807</sup> Norman F. Cantor, *The Sacred Chain: The History of the Jews* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 345, 347.

<sup>2808</sup> David I. Kertzer, *The Popes Against the Jews: The Vatican's Role in the Rise of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Knopf, 2001), 10.

<sup>2809</sup> Introduction to Samuel Gruber, as told to Gertrude Hirschler, *I Chose Life*, 6.

## Omer Bartov, Israeli-American historian:

... the very term “bystander” is largely meaningless. The majority of the non-Jewish population profited from the genocide and either directly or indirectly collaborated with the perpetrators of the Holocaust. Even if at times the non-Jews also resisted the occupation for their own reasons, only a minority was involved in rescue and feared the vengeance of the majority. In this sense no one was passive or indifferent.<sup>2810</sup>

## Jan Grabowski, Canadian historian:

But no one, in these circumstances, could remain a neutral, emotionally detached witness, often described by historians as a “bystander to the Holocaust.” ... each rural inhabitant—each man, woman, and child [sic]—had a role to play in this horrible theatre of death.<sup>2811</sup>

The motivations of rescuers varied from case to case. If the helpers, however, acted out of compassion, they broke a certain consensus in their own community. Within this consensus there was no place for helping Jews.<sup>2812</sup>

## Barbara Engelking, sociologist and director of Polish Center for Holocaust Research:

Death ... for Poles was merely a biological event, something quite natural—one death was just like any other. But for Jews it was a tragedy, a dramatic experience, metaphysics, a meeting with the highest. It is difficult to imagine how they experienced this death.<sup>2813</sup>

## Yoram Lubling, Israeli professor of philosophy:

Personally, it was only after I met the Polish people that I could finally understand how the Holocaust happened. It is not the case, as some argued, that it was the largest concentration of Jews that motivated the Nazis to build their extermination camp in Poland. Rather, the Germans constructed all their major extermination camps in Poland because they understood the deep and religiously motivated hatred that the Polish masses held against their Jewish neighbors; neither were the death-camps built in Poland for the purpose of exterminating the Polish nation, as Polish historians want us to believe.<sup>2814</sup>

<sup>2810</sup> Omer Bartov, “Much Forgotten, Little Learned,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 35, no. 2 (2007): 267–87, at p. 276.

<sup>2811</sup> Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews*, 83.

<sup>2812</sup> Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews*, 166.

<sup>2813</sup> “Kropka nad i,” TVN24, February 9, 2011: “Ta śmierć żydowska wynikała z całkowitej niemożności porozumienia. Dla Polaków to była po prostu kwestia biologiczna, naturalna—śmierć jak śmierć, a dla Żydów to była tragedia, to było dramatyczne doświadczenie, to była metafizyka, to było spotkanie z najwyższym, czy nie wiem, w jaki sposób oni przeżywali tą śmierć.” Engelking’s words are eerily reminiscent of Talmudic teachings—still voiced by some today—that the soul of a Gentile (*goy*) is inferior to that of a Jew. Eli Ben Dahan, an Orthodox rabbi and then Deputy Religious Services Minister, stated in an interview published in *Maariv*, a leading Israeli Hebrew-language daily newspaper, in December 2013, that “a Jew always has a much higher soul than a non-Jew.” See “The Gospel According to Eli Ben Dahan,” Editorial, *Haaretz*, December 30, 2013.

<sup>2814</sup> Yoram Lubling, *Twice-Dead: Moshe Y. Lubling, the Ethics of Memory, and the Treblinka Revolt* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 107.

Adding a “religious” dimension, rabbis condemned Poles and “Nazis” (not Germans) in the breath.

Yisrael Meir Lau, Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel (1993–2003), who survived the war in hiding:

The Gentiles ... are interested in one thing only: to see the Jews devastated. ... Take such a big country as Poland before World War II. The Jews made it fruitful and turned it into a blooming country, with a flourishing economy, industry and agriculture. And look at it now, after WWII, after 3.5 million Jews abandoned her. It is an island of destruction, a country failing in all areas, in its economy, its industry, and socially as well. Nevertheless, a great many Poles cooperated with the Nazis in the annihilation, G-d forbid, of the Jewish people. The six largest extermination camps were located on Polish territory. They knew that with the loss of the Jews they would suffer dearly. But it did not deter them, for this is the nature of anti-Semitism—to destroy the Jewish nation, instead of benefiting from them.<sup>2815</sup>

Reb Moshe Shonfeld, prominent Hassidic rabbi:

The Jews in Poland had an expression: if a Pole meets me on the wayside and doesn't kill me, it is only from laziness.

The Poles ... were fanatical Catholics, and all had unsatiable appetites for Jewish blood. Those cruel pythons, the Polish clergy, instigated—after the fall of the Nazis—pogroms of those Jews who'd miraculously survived.<sup>2816</sup>

Rabbi Zev K. Nelson, American rabbi:

The Poles were ready and willing to join the Nazis in the annihilation of three million Jews in their land.<sup>2817</sup>

Rabbi Sholom Klass, co-founder, publisher and editor of Brooklyn The Jewish Press:

Three million Polish Jews died under the hands of the Nazis with the active or silent help of many Poles, including Catholic priests.<sup>2818</sup>

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<sup>2815</sup> An adaptation of a Dvar Torah on Arutz 7. Cited in *The Jewish Press*, August 13, 1993. Elsewhere, Rabbi Lau explains why Poland, the land of the death camps, and the Poles are a ‘cursed’ nation: “There are people who are suitable for a particular country and not for another, and there are lands than can absorb one type of people and not another. A case in point is the Land of Israel. ... It is suitable for the Jewish People. ... This proves there is a bond between the people and the land—to each land its nation. ... The land flourishes only when we dwell here.” Adapted from a Dvar Torah on Arutz 7, cited in *The Jewish Press*, December 22, 1995.

<sup>2816</sup> Shonfeld, *The Holocaust Victims Accuse*, 13, 16.

<sup>2817</sup> Shonfeld, *The Holocaust Victims Accuse*, 13, 16.

<sup>2818</sup> *Jewish Advocate* [Boston], November 4, 1982.

Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka of Ottawa, March of the Living chaperone and chair of the interreligious affairs committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress:

How can one go to Poland, to the country so steeped in anti-Semitism that it eagerly cooperated with the Nazis in the cold-blooded murder of the Jews?<sup>2819</sup>

Rabbi Menachem Levine of San Jose, California, the grandson of Holocaust survivors:

Yad Vashem makes it clear that it was Poles who made the Nazi Holocaust in Poland possible. Without the cooperation of the local citizenry, sometimes passively observing and many times enthusiastically supportive, a program of mass murder would have been impossible. ...

Nearly all of the death camps in occupied Europe were built in Poland. There were no crematoria or gas chambers in occupied France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Norway, Denmark, Czechoslovakia or any other nation invaded by Nazi troops. Auschwitz, Birkenau, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka and others were built in Poland. Why?

The answer is that the Nazis knew that Poland had been anti-Semitic for centuries and the Germans were convinced that the Poles would not protest against the death camps for Jews on their soil. As history shows, they were correct ... Poland ... both allowed and assisted in the Holocaust.<sup>2820</sup>

Rabbi Zev Friedman, dean of Rambam Mesivta for Boys (Lawrence, New York) and Shalhevet High School for Girls (North Woodmere, New York):

Many [Jews] believe that the major killing camps were specifically located in Poland—because it was fertile ground for antisemitism, and it was thought that the murder of Jews would be readily accepted there.<sup>2821</sup>

Rabbi Joseph Polak, director of the Florence and Chafetz Hillel House at Boston University:

While Poland boasts the largest number of righteous Gentiles who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust, it has still not fully embraced the moral challenge of why it did so little to save so many others.<sup>2822</sup>

Rabbi Charles Grysman of Vaughan, Ontario, child of a Holocaust survivor:

True, there were indeed thousands of Righteous Gentiles ... But there were also many Poles who ... watched passively while Jews were disenfranchised, humiliated, abused and confined to

<sup>2819</sup> Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka, "Poles Apart," *The Canadian Jewish News* [Toronto], May 11, 1995.

<sup>2820</sup> Menachem Levine, "Why Poland's New Holocaust Law Is a Mockery," *Washington Times*, February 20, 2018.

<sup>2821</sup> Zev Friedman, "Why Would Any Jews Spend Money in Poland?," *The Algemeiner*, February 25, 2018.

<sup>2822</sup> Joseph Polak, "The Silence lifts on Poland's Jews," *The Boston Globe*, July 28, 2007.

ghettos or simply were able to turn their heads away as entire Jewish populations were deported from towns and villages to labour and death camps.<sup>2823</sup>

On the other hand ...

Rabbi Abraham D. Feffer of Toronto, Holocaust survivor from Drobin:

Yet many fortunate survivors from my own shtetl, remember well and with great fondness and admiration the help of the brave Christian farmers who lived in nearby villages where we worked on cold winter days. (In Poland, hiding a Jew, or feeding him was punishable by death, usually hanging). We remember how these men and women, at great peril, opened their poor "chatkis" [cottages] to share with us warm soup, bread and potatoes.<sup>2824</sup>

Rabbi Icchok Wolgelernter, a survivor from Działoszyce:

The simple peasant did not feel hatred toward us—on the contrary, he always willingly contacted a Jew and trusted him in every matter. ... The peasants sympathized with us in our suffering and misfortune. They demonstrated this by giving us bread and water. To be sure they were afraid to take us into their homes, because in every village notices were put up warning that anyone who takes in a Jew or gives him a piece of bread will pay for it with his life. Despite this, when things quietened down a little, they allowed us to sleep in their barns, and even took women and children into their homes.<sup>2825</sup>

Cantor Matus Radzilover, a survivor from Warsaw:

I never had the tendency to be a nationalist. I am positively devoted to my Jewish brethren and I am proud of my heritage, but I also loved the country of my birth, Poland. I loved my neighbors, the Poles I grew up with and lived with in love and peace. I never accused them of failing to help us because they were in great danger themselves. Hundreds of thousands of them were killed or deported to concentration camps. They paid their price under Nazism, too. Hitler's intentions were to exterminate the Poles after he was done with the Jews.<sup>2826</sup>

David Klin, member of the Jewish underground in Warsaw and liaison officer between the Polish Home Army and Żegota, the Council for Aid to Jews, addressing a meeting of former Israeli servicemen:

"As a whole, the Polish Nation acted heroically in their attitude to the Jews." Immediately he was shouted down that this was not true.

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<sup>2823</sup> Rabbi Charles Grysman, "Not All Poles Were Innocent," *National Post* [Toronto], May 16, 2008.

<sup>2824</sup> Rabbi Abraham D. Feffer, *My Shtetl Drobin: A Saga of a Survivor* (Toronto: n.p., 1990), 22.

<sup>2825</sup> Engelking, *Jest taki piękny słoneczny dzień...*, 52–53, based on Rabin Icchok Wolgelernter, *Dziennik pisany w ukryciu*, JHI, record group 302, no. 46.

<sup>2826</sup> Matus Radzilover, *Now or Never: A Time For Survival* (New York: Frederick Fell, 1979), 82.

“I know it is true because I was there,” he replied. “If the situation was reversed, how many of you would hide a Pole and so risk your life?” asked David Klin. Sudden silence was the answer. “Well! You see for yourselves!” he said and ended his address.<sup>2827</sup>

Hanna Szper Cohen, a native of Lublin, who was rescued by unknown Poles on several occasions:

To this day I say—since Jews have bad feelings about Poles—I assert that we who survived, a small percentage though it be, none of us would have survived if in some moment he did not get help, usually without ulterior motives, from some Pole. It was impossible to survive otherwise.<sup>2828</sup>

Nika Kohn Fleissig, a native of Wieliczka near Kraków, who was saved by a number of Polish Christians:

I learned that one cannot generalize: I was once endangered by a nasty Jewish woman, who sent a policeman to arrest me to free herself. I met a number of Christians who saved my life when they could have turned away. So there were good people and bad ones. In tough times, one discovers the truth about people, and it has nothing to do with religion.<sup>2829</sup>

Szymon Datner, former director of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw and Holocaust survivor:

The Second World War is a period that I have been dealing with for several decades, and I obstinately maintain that one must be very careful in passing judgment. ...

... the Holocaust was such a specific, though unimaginable, crime. But it cannot be charged against the Poles. It was German work and it was carried out by German hands. The Polish police were employed in a very marginal way, in what I would call keeping order. I must state with all decisiveness that more than 90% of that terrifying, murderous work was carried out by the Germans, with no Polish participation whatsoever. ...

... Every form of aid was forbidden under pain of death for oneself and one's whole family. To us today the choice seems altogether clear. And yet I was shocked not long ago by a girl I know, a Jew. She is a person my age, someone I value highly for her honesty and courage. And she told me, “I am not at all sure I would give a bowl of food to a Pole if it could mean death for me and my daughter.”

It was a truly satanic moral trial that Poles were subjected to. I do not know if anyone else would have emerged victorious from it. ...

On the other hand, to speak concretely of the attitude of Poles toward Jews: the majority of Poles behaved passively, but that can be explained by the terror and also by the fact that Poles, too, were being systematically murdered on a mass scale by the Germans.<sup>2830</sup>

<sup>2827</sup> Cited in Chciuk, *Saving Jews in War-Torn Poland, 1939–1945*, 18.

<sup>2828</sup> Julian Cohen, *Escape from Belzec: Saved By a Pair of Heels*, Internet: <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ar/belzec/belzescape.html>.

<sup>2829</sup> Alicia Fleissig Magal, *From Miracle to Miracle: A Story of Survival* (Parker, Colorado: Outskirts Press, 2011), 93.

<sup>2830</sup> Interview with Szymon Datner in Niezabitowska, *Remnants*, 247–49.

Raul Hilberg, preeminent Holocaust historian:

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

As was the case in many European countries, there were also Polish individuals that played extortion games with Jews, but then there were also Poles that helped Jews under risk of facing death penalty from the German occupants. Both categories were relatively small in comparison to the general population, albeit one must take into consideration that most survivors made it through the war by Polish help and protection. A friend of mine, Bronia Klebanski, who is Jewish but lived on the "Aryan" side of society and was an active member of the Jewish underground in the Bialystok [Białystok] area, once told me a story of how she at a time took the train during the war, and was suddenly pointed out by a little girl who yelled "Jew!".

All the Polish passengers sat quietly, and nobody said anything to instigate further interest. This account is a small example of the general practice of non-collaboration among the Poles during the war.

... In Ukraine, contrary to Poland, where the Germans built secluded death camps, Jews were often massacred on the spot. The Nazi death camps in occupied Poland such as Treblinka, Belzec [Bełżec], Sobibor [Sobibór] and Chelmo [Chełmno] were all hidden to the public.<sup>2831</sup>

Israel Gutman, former chief historian at Yad Vashem, editor-in-chief of *The Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Warsaw ghetto fighter, and prisoner of Auschwitz:

This feeling of identification of Poles from all social spheres and their anti-German solidarity is a previously unheard of historical achievement and one of Europe's greatest under Nazi occupation. I should like to make two things clear here. First, all accusations against the Poles that they were responsible for what is referred to as the "Final Solution" are not even worth mentioning. Secondly, there is no validity at all in the contention that ... Polish attitudes were the reason for the siting of the death camps in Poland.

Poland was a completely occupied country. There was a difference in the kind of "occupation" countries underwent in Europe. Each country experienced a different occupation and almost all had a certain amount of autonomy, limited and defined in various ways. This autonomy did not exist in Poland. No one asked the Poles how one should treat the Jews.<sup>2832</sup>

<sup>2831</sup> Interview with Professor Raul Hilberg, June 20, 2005, Internet: [http://www.maxveritas.com/pb/wp\\_1add70b0.html?0.611384753320024](http://www.maxveritas.com/pb/wp_1add70b0.html?0.611384753320024).

<sup>2832</sup> *Polin: A Journal of Polish-Jewish Studies*, vol. 2 (1987): 341. Other well-informed historians have also argued compellingly that the decisive factor in staging the Holocaust in occupied Poland was not native attitudes, but total subjugation of the terrorized population. The Germans had no respect for Polish attitudes, as evidenced by their policy of liquidating Poles. There was nowhere and to no one to object; moreover, any objection would have been counterproductive. As James Hawes pointed out in *The Shortest History of Germany* (London: Old Street Publishing, 2017): "The SS needed somewhere no turbulent priests would interfere, where their work could be kept really secret, where European civilisation had already ceased to exist. By late 1941, with Poland and swathes of western Russia in their hands, they had just the place. When, on 20 January 1942, senior Nazi officialdom gathered to coordinate strategies for the eradication of Europe's Jews (the so-called

Only in Poland did the Germans impose such draconian punishments (i.e., death) for helping Jews. Yet despite that, Poles constitute the largest number of “Righteous.” To a great extent, it is the “Righteous” who have changed the Israelis’ perception of Poland. That is what influenced me. I too, at first, accepted these negative stereotypes as truth. Collaborators, blackmailers, neighbours who wouldn’t help. That’s what was said in all articles, in books. But when Yad Vashem published its Encyclopedia of the Righteous—I was the editor—I was forced to examine this again through the stories told by Jews who were saved. I don’t change my opinions readily, but these testimonies brought about a diametrical change in opinion. ... Gradually, they (i.e., Israelis) are learning about this. It enables them to see Poles as real people, made of flesh and blood. The same as Jews. In the archives of Yad Vashem I found testimonies of such deeds, deeds that I myself would not be able to do. And that disturbs my peace. It was a trial, a test of one’s humanity. Would we pass this test if placed in that situation? All of us—both Jews and Poles—we are only human. We are not saints. Yes, there were blackmailers in Poland. There were also heroes. People like (Irena) Sendlerowa, of whom you may be very proud.<sup>2833</sup>

Sometimes I hear Jews accusing the Poles of deliberately not helping them even though they could have done so. Such observations are expressions of pain, which eclipse a sensible attitude. More could certainly have been done to save Jews, but the Poles in the conditions of the occupation could not fundamentally have changed the fate of the Jews. ... I shall permit myself to say more—there is no moral imperative which demands that a normal mortal should risk his life and that of his family to save his neighbour. Are we capable of imagining the agony of fear of an individual, a family who selflessly and voluntarily, only due to an inner human impulse, bring into their home someone threatened with death? ... The Poles should be proud that they had so many just lights, of whom Ringelblum spoke, who are the real heroes of the deluge. And we can never do enough to thank these rare people.<sup>2834</sup>

The latter selection of moderate comments pales in comparison with the former, of which only a small number is given here to illustrate a massive outpouring that shows no sign of abatement.

The following is a characteristic excerpt from a Jewish memorial book that, unfortunately, informs much of Jewish historiography on Polish-Jewish relations, demonizing Poles and turning them into the primary target of a broad-based assault on Christianity and, in particular, the Catholic Church.

The anti-Semitic propaganda, which was being conducted in Poland before the outbreak of the Second World War, trained the hearts and prepared the ground for the deeds so horrifying in their cruelty and ruthlessness during the war. When Hitler’s minions invaded Poland they found Poles who already agreed with them, for regarding the destruction of the Jews there were Poles

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Endlösung, or Final Solution) at the Wannsee Conference, the SS No. 2 Reinhard Heydrich spoke pointedly of ‘our new prospects in the East.’ In that conquered and shattered wasteland, his words implied, no one was going to object.”

<sup>2833</sup> “Poles Can Be Very Proud of Sendlerowa,” Israel Gutman interviewed by Piotr Zychowicz, *Rzeczpospolita* [Warsaw], May 13, 2008.

<sup>2834</sup> Contribution to the discussion “Ethical Problems of the Holocaust in Poland: Discussion Held at the International Conference on the History and Culture of Polish Jewry in Jerusalem on Monday 1 February 1988,” reproduced in Antony Polonsky, ed., *My Brother’s Keeper? Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust* (London and New York: Routledge, in association with the Institute for Polish-Jewish Studies, 1990), 203–4.

who were of one mind with the Nazis. The Poles were well trained by the fifth column, Hitler's agents, who spread hatred of the Jews. The Nazis found in the Poles not opponents, but loyal assistants in the act of destruction. All circles of Poles participated in this project of mass-murder, from the laborer to the priest. ...

Due to this attitude of the Poles regarding the Jews, can it be surprising that Poland was chosen by the Devil and his demons of destruction to be the arena for the destruction of European Jewry. The ground here had been worked and prepared enough for the task. The Nazi monster was certain that its satanic enterprise would have a one hundred percent success rate here. ...

This is the Christian ethic, which aspired to be the most exalted ethic for all of humanity. With regard to the Jews, Christianity—of which the Poles were considered its most devoted practitioners—was revealed in all of its despicableness and lowliness. Christianity did not purify their souls: they remained wild, blood thirsty, just as they had been a thousand years before when they were still sunk in the ignorance of paganism.<sup>2835</sup> The moral and humane imperative of our prophets: “My refugees shall live among you, hide the refugees and do not reveal the wanderer!” [Isaiah 16/3]—such an imperative was strange and foreign to our Polish neighbors.<sup>2836</sup>

Unfortunately, the poisonous pathology of anti-polonism runs deep and has infected “artistic” pursuits. In a spiteful parody of a “Passion play” titled “Rebbe,” Israeli authors have, contrary to the documented historical record, recast Polish priests as the instigators of the death of a rabbi—a Jesus figure—in the Warsaw ghetto.

At this point the invasion of Poland by the Nazis begins and a series of short scenes with ominous and sad music depict the occupation of the city and the sealing off of the Jewish Quarter which now becomes the Warsaw Ghetto. Now the Nazis lock the Jewish Quarter and force the Czerniakow character to come to them and cut a deal to get the key, which he does by appointing Yehudah as the head of the Jewish police who will co-operate with the Polish police and the German occupation authorities.

The last maamar (Chassidic version of Last Supper Yn 13-17 OJBC) of Rebbe (who is now wearing a Star of David armband, as are the rest of Rebbe's talmidim) comes as a reply to Shimon the Zealot. Shimon the Zealot speaks in the upper room to all the Rebbe's talmidim (disciples) in an impassioned manner about the boxcars leading to a death camp and the need for underground resistance fighters. When the other Shimon (Kefa or Peter) vows his part in protecting the Rebbe (Yn 13:37 OJBC), Rebbe goes to the window and looks out. With a revelatory flutter-cut Rebbe sees the tarnegol (rooster) in the wooden crate cage in the back of the passing truck, and Rebbe announces prophetically the coming betrayal. Yehudah, wearing his Chassidic garb, departs into the Warsaw night.

In the next scene Shimon Kefa and Rebbe pass the security point where Yehudah is able to flag them through, checking their passes, which are “work permits” allowing them to leave the

<sup>2835</sup> Jewish historiography, for the most part, and indeed almost all Jews who write about contemporary Polish-Jewish relations, are tellingly silent on the earliest contacts between Jews (depicted as paragons of virtue and righteousness, consistently oppressed by evil Christians) and Poles (depicted as innately and endemically “despicable,” “lowly,” “wild,” “bloodthirsty,” and “ignorant”). As mentioned earlier, Jews first came to Poland in the 10th century as traders in—among other commodities, but primarily—Christian slaves, which certainly did not augur well for mutual relations between Poles and Jews.

<sup>2836</sup> “Relations Between the Poles and the Jews,” in Pinchas Cytron, ed., *Sefer Kielce: The History of the Community of Kielce. From Its Foundation To Its Destruction* (Tel Aviv: Organization of Immigrants from Kielce in Israel, 1957), 47 ff., translation of *Sefer Kielce: Toldot Kehilat Kielce: Miyom Hivsumudh V'ad Churbanah*.

Jewish Ghetto. Yehudah gives Rebbe a kiss on the cheek. The Polish police at the checkpoint see this and look at each other knowingly. Shimon Kefa accompanies Rebbe to a Cathedral and waits outside while Rebbe goes up to the door to knock.

Inside the Cathedral, a Catholic S.S. officer is leaving the confessional booth where he has been confessing to Father Kayafenski. Father Nikodimski follows him out and ushers Rebbe into the vestibule of the Roman Catholic church to have a meeting with Father Kayafenski. Since it is Pesach season, Father Nikodimski hopes that the senior priest will use his ecumenical influence with a Catholic S.S. officer to have the food rations increased for the Jewish people in the Ghetto. Father Nikodimski leaves Rebbe alone in the vestibule with Father Kayafenski.

In this scene between Rebbe and Father Kayafenski, Rebbe is invited to enter the sanctuary, but he refuses because of the tzelamim (idols, images, any physical object or statue worshiped as deity). The scene that unfolds is similar in some respects to the Grand Inquisitor scene in the Brothers Karamazov. Finally, Father Kayafenski becomes angry and exits the vestibule, going outside through the front door. Rebbe begins to tear down the tzelamim, using a tall white metal candelabrum to shatter the images including that of a San Gennaro statue with the money fastened all over it). Then the Catholic S.S. Officer and Father Kayafenski burst into the sanctuary with other soldiers and police and Rebbe is bound and taken out of the Catholic church.

On the steps outside a Nazi soldier seizes Shimon Kefa, shouting, "You were with him!" Shimon Kefa curses Rebbe, and just then a truck goes by with a tarnegol (rooster) in the wooden crate cage in the back of the passing truck. Then Kefa stares at Rebbe in shock and remorse.

At the railroad terminal, in front of several empty boxcars, the Nazi soldiers cut Rebbe's payos with their bayonets and beat him up, shouting, "You killed our G-d, we kill you." They force Rebbe to put on a striped Holocaust death camp prison uniform, then take him to the top of a gallows, then pierce his wrists and feet with their bayonets and put him on a gallows with two other Jews in stripped Holocaust death camp prison uniforms where they leave him hanging in the middle. As a shot of Warsaw reveals the horrific evil going on throughout the city, the body of Rebbe is tossed in the boxcar with the other two Jews. We see the boxcar slowly going into the dusk of the approaching night toward the death camps.

Then, in their death camp uniforms, the talmidim (minus Yehudah as in Yn chp 21 OJBC) awaken in a boat near the shore in Lake Galilee to find themselves amazingly no longer in the Polish ghetto but now in modern Eretz Yisroel (previewed in the wedding vision earlier). The talmidim have a sense of the presence of the Moshiach. As they see Rebbe in his kaftan with his Star of David armband, standing on the seashore, they follow his instructions and throw out their net. The fish we saw at the beginning are seen again, symbolizing the world-wide fishing expedition (fishing for lost unredeemed men) of Moshiach's Kehillah. For the camera pulls up from the fish in the giant net in an aerial shot which becomes a satellite shot of Israel and then a space station shot of the whole world as the music swells.<sup>2837</sup>

The black legend (demonization) of Poles and the Polish Catholic clergy has also made its way into American mainstream television.

Aired on the NBC television network in November 2001, the war drama miniseries "Uprising"—directed and written by Jon Avnet (co-authored by Paul Brickman, with Michael Berenbaum as historical consultant)—is bursting with anti-Polish content. A particularly disturbing scene shows a mass, with blasphemous Catholic religious imagery in the background, at Warsaw's cathedral during the 1943 ghetto uprising. While the ghetto was burning, smoke came in through the church window during Easter services, and the only visible concern expressed was to close the window. (This even though stained windows did not open in historic churches.)

<sup>2837</sup> "Rebbe," Artists For Israel International (2002), Internet: <https://afii.org/rebbe.txt>.

The message is crystal clear: Christian beliefs were allegedly responsible for what was happening, and hostile Polish Christians—led by their clergy—were completely indifferent to what was happening around them.

The November 14, 2007 episode of the sitcom “Back to You” contained a crude “joke” of the kind that is quite acceptable in Hollywood,<sup>2838</sup> the virtue-signalling capital of the world, provided it targets a suitably vulnerable constituency “Bowling is in your Polish blood, like kielbasa, and collaborating with the Nazis.”

Remarkably, Dana Bash, CNN’s chief political correspondent, saw fit to use the unfolding tragedy in Ukraine and the Poles’ generosity in welcoming millions of Ukrainian refugees, as an occasion to suggest that that response “is somehow a way to make up for some of [Poland’s alleged] wrongs.” Among those wrongs, she listed “concentration camps during World War II,” supposedly part and parcel of Poland’s historical legacy of anti-Semitism.<sup>2839</sup>

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<sup>2838</sup> Hollywood has played a detrimental role in casting Poland—unlike other wartime Allies—uniformly in a negative light in numerous movies produced in the 1930s and 1940s. See M. [Mieczysław] B. B. Biskupski, *Hollywood’s War with Poland, 1939–1945* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2010); Mieczysław B. Biskupski, “Poland and the Poles in the Cinematic Portrayal of the Holocaust,” in Cherry and Orla-Bukowska, *Rethinking Poles and Jews*, 27–42. This tradition of contempt reemerged in the 1970s when the Holocaust began to be featured in films such as *QB VII*, *Holocaust*, *Sophie’s Choice*, *Schindler’s List*, *Uprising*, and others. In *Sophie’s Choice*, Zbigniew Biegański, a fictitious Fascist professor at Kraków’s Jagiellonian University, is credited with writing a pamphlet advocating the extermination of the Jews that allegedly inspired the Final Solution.

<sup>2839</sup> Interview with President Andrzej Duda, CNN, April 6, 2022, Internet: <https://transcripts.cnn.com/show/cnnt/date/2022-04-06/segment/01>.



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This work of painstaking scholarship is a major contribution to the history of the Catholic Church in the twentieth century, to modern Polish history, and to Holocaust studies. It is also inspiring reading, as the book bears witness to immense human courage, spiritually inspired, under the most draconian of circumstances.

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Ethics and Public Policy Center*

All nations on earth consist of the good, the bad and the indifferent, and Ryszard Tyndorf's voluminous volume amply demonstrates the truth of this assertion in regard to the Nazi-occupied parts of wartime Poland. Through exhaustive documentation, Tyndorf paints a convincing picture of self-denying compassion, which counteracts the widespread promotion of exclusively negative stereotypes, and helps to build, as is necessary, a multifaceted panorama of historical reality.

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