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Ordinary Men?

The Polish Police and the Holocaust in the Subcarpathian Region

“Policemen Ratajczak, Gawel, and Kuczek discovered that a local peasant was hiding a certain Jew – once very wealthy, still a young man, a very rare type, as he was exceptionally brave. They arrested both of them, that is, the Jew and the 60-year-old peasant, who gave him shelter. Both were beaten in an inhuman way – a bucket of water was poured on the peasant’s head, who kept fainting during the beating, and then was forced to wipe everything with his own coat. On Ratajczak’s orders, they were sentenced to death. The peasant was not strong enough to walk on his own to the execution site, so a horse-drawn cart was used; the Jew walked on foot and shouted through the city: ‘Poland has not perished yet!’”¹

I. The Many Shades of Blue

In the fall of 2012, a monument dedicated to the memory of Polish policemen executed during the German occupation was quietly unveiled on the grounds of former Płaszów concentration camp. Commissioned by the Kraków branch of the National Association of the Police Family of 1939 (Ogólnopolskie Stowarzyszenie Rodzina Policyjna 1939 r.),

¹ Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie [Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw] (AAN), 203/VIII-2, Komenda Główna Armii Krajowej [High Command of the Home Army] (KG AK), Kierownictwo Walki Podziemnej [Directorate of Underground Resistance] (KWP), Monthly situational report to the KWP regarding the personal details of particularly zealous or cruel representatives of the occupation authorities and Poles serving the enemy, No. 2, November 30, 1943, Section 3 (“Various”), “Niepołomice – From the navy-blue swamp”, 9. The town of Niepołomice was located in District Kraków. The shouted words refer to the refrain of the Polish national anthem, *Poland Is Not Yet Lost* (also known as *Dąbrowski’s Mazurka*).

the monument identifies ten of approximately 40 members of the Blue Police,² who were also members of the Home Army (Armia Krajowa – AK) executed by the Gestapo for underground activity in 1943 and early 1944 and buried in the camp. Among them were Major Franciszek Erhardt, commandant of the Polish Police for the city of Kraków, and his deputy, Major Ludwik Drożański, shot for providing Jews with ‘Aryan papers’ and legalization documents to Poles. The president of the Kraków Association saw the monument as part of a larger effort to overturn the predominantly negative view of the Blue Police and to restore their “good name” by wiping away the “blank spots” of their service by unearthing their “heroic deeds and struggle against the occupier”.³

In contrast, historian Jan Grabowski has characterized the involvement of the Blue Police vis-à-vis the Holocaust as driven primarily by antisemitic hatred of the Jews, with all other motivations as secondary: “the murder of Jews drew upon deeper layers of hatred. This hatred sprang like weeds from the toxic soil of antisemitism, which had grown deep over time, enriched and cultivated by centuries of the teachings of the Church and decades of secular, nationalistic indoctrination. Greed, opportunism, and fear were therefore powerful but secondary motivations for the Gentile killers of their own Jewish neighbors.”⁴ In this interpretation, greed and theft of Jewish property are regarded as another demonstration of antisemitism.

The polarized nature of the ongoing understanding of the Blue Police in both public and academic spheres is reminiscent, if not reflective, of the contentious historiography of the Polish resistance in relation to the Shoah, which, according to historian Joshua D. Zimmerman, proceeded for decades along “two mutually exclusive lines of interpretation”.⁵ In fact, Zimmerman’s *The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939–1945* is the only monograph to date that has provided an analytical framework for understanding the extraordinarily varied response of the Polish Underground State (Polskie Państwo Podziemne) to the Jews by viewing the pro-London underground as an umbrella organization that represented a “cross-section of Polish society as a whole”,⁶ drawn from a wide range of all social and political elements, including socialists, liberals, peasants, and nationalists. Therefore, the answer to the question of antisemitism in its ranks was in turn a varied one.

2 During the German occupation, the officially named *Polnische Polizei im Generalgouvernement* became popularly known as the ‘navy-blue police’ (*policja granatowa*) due to the color of their uniforms. In this article, I adopt the designation ‘Blue Police’ or ‘Polish Police’ with the understanding that these terms are not synonymous with the prewar Polish State Police (*Policja Państwowa*) from 1919–1939, but denote the forces subordinated to the German police from 1939–1944.

3 W Krakowie odsłonięto pomnik policjantów zabitych przez Niemców [A monument to policemen killed by the Germans unveiled in Kraków], in: *Dzieje.pl*, November 13, 2012; <http://dzieje.pl/aktualnosci/w-krakowie-odslonieto-pomnik-policjantow-zabitych-przez-niemcow> (March 20, 2019).

4 Jan Grabowski, *The Polish Police: Collaboration in the Holocaust*, Washington D.C., 2016, 28; https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20170502-Grabowski_OP.pdf (March 20, 2019).

5 Joshua D. Zimmerman, *The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939–1945*, New York 2015, 4–11, 414.

6 *Ibid.*

Yet a major lacuna of Zimmerman's otherwise powerful synthesis is precisely the relationship between the Home Army and the Blue Police in the shadow of the Holocaust.

The subject of the Blue Police straddles two historiographical trends: studies of German policemen or perpetrators and studies of collaborators. No published work has sought to place the Blue Police within the established categories and broader debates of studies on perpetrators, the so-called *Tätergeschichte*.⁷ This article will therefore attempt to take initial steps in that direction. As the Blue Police was subordinated to the German Order Police (Ordnungspolizei – Orpo), it is fitting to view it in relation to studies of the German Police Battalions. Christopher R. Browning set the stage for these debates with his groundbreaking study of the *Ordinary Men* of Reserve Police Battalion 101 in the Lublin district of the General Government (Generalgouvernement). Employing a social-psychological model, he argued that the policemen were motivated primarily by group situational dynamics, such as the effects of brutalization, careerism, conformity to the group and obedience to authority. Most were middle-aged men who came from Hamburg, one of the least Nazified cities in Germany and from a social class that had been anti-Nazi in its political culture. They had been exposed to political standards and moral norms prior to the Nazi takeover. Despite these facts, the policemen of Battalion 101 were still capable of the mass murder of Jewish men, women, and children. Browning concluded his study with the words: “If the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 could become killers under such circumstances, what group of men cannot?”⁸

The main point of criticism of Browning's explanation has been the way it downplays ideologically based motivation, in particular the role of antisemitism. Historian Daniel Goldhagen rejected Browning's multi-layered argument in favor of a mono-causal explanation based on a deep-seated German “eliminationist antisemitism” as the sole motivating factor.⁹ As Ian Rich aptly pointed out, subsequent studies have sought to mediate between these polarized positions on perpetrator motivation, “that of immediate situational context and more long-term ideological impulses”.¹⁰ The most influential work to examine the influence of ideology is Edward B. Westermann's pathbreaking study of Police Battalion 310 in Russia, which he later broadened to encompass the organization of the Uniformed Police as a whole.¹¹ Westermann argues that the organ-

7 For an overview of perpetrator scholarship, see: Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann, *Perpetrators of the Holocaust. A Historiography*, in: Olaf Jensen/Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann (ed.), *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers. Perpetrators in Comparative Perspectives*, Basingstoke 2014, 25-54.

8 Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, New York 1992, 44-48, 189.

9 Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners. Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, New York 1996.

10 Ian Rich, *Holocaust Perpetrators of the German Police Battalions. The Mass Murder of Jewish Civilians, 1940-1942*, London 2018, 6.

11 Edward B. Westermann, “Ordinary Men” or “Ideological Soldiers”? *Police Battalion 310 in Russia, 1942*, in: *German Studies Review* 21 (1998) 1, 41-68; Idem., *Hitler's Police Battalions. Enforcing Racial War in the East*, Lawrence (KS) 2005.

izational culture of the police created ‘ideological soldiers’, who were consciously prepared for a war of atrocity through ideological training. Ian Rich’s innovative study of Police Battalions 314 and 304 in Poland and Ukraine has found a way to bridge these positions by identifying an ideological ‘vanguard’ group made up of young junior officers, who had “disproportionate influence on the actions of the battalions as whole units”.¹² The rank and file of these battalions thus resembled ‘ordinary citizens’ rather than ‘ideological warriors’; in contrast, the junior officers were more ‘Nazified’ than some historians have allowed and less ‘ordinary’ than Browning’s reserve policemen. In subsequent years, Browning himself updated his argument by pointing to the existence of a minority of “ideologically motivated men” within the ranks of the battalions, who formed a “crucial nucleus in the killing process” independent of the situational factors.¹³

In contrast to the scholarship on German perpetrators, the subject of collaboration in Eastern Europe requires a greater engagement with the local and political context, beyond the internal group dynamics of police units. The subject has seen to a number of important contributions.¹⁴ Some of these works have tried to integrate their findings within the typology of German perpetrator studies, particularly in relation to Ukraine. Martin Dean’s model study of the Auxiliary Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, which was also subordinated to the German Order Police, concluded that the motives of the policemen for participation in anti-Jewish actions were highly diverse and that most of the collaborators were ordinary men, like those described by Browning.¹⁵ In a study of the Ukrainian police, the late Alexander Prusin argued that the primary motivation of the Ukrainian policemen was conformism. He developed a social-psychological typology in Generalbezirk Kiev: “political-ideological activists”, “creative conformists”, and “ordinary enforcers”.¹⁶ Yuri Radchenko applied this typology in his important study of the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police in the Generalbezirk Charkow. Radchenko found that the policemen

12 Rich, *Holocaust Perpetrators*, 1, 171.

13 Christopher R. Browning, *Nazi Policy, Jewish Labor, German Killers*, Cambridge 2000, 175; Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, Revised Edition, New York 2017, 225-291.

14 For a broader discussion of collaboration in Eastern Europe, see: David Gaunt/Paul A. Levine/Laura Palosuo (ed.), *Collaboration and Resistance during the Holocaust. Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania*, Bern 2004; Martin Dean, *Poles in the German Local Police in Eastern Poland and their Role in the Holocaust*, in: *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry* 18 (2005), 353-366; Gabriel Finder/Alexander V. Prusin, *Collaboration in Eastern Galicia. The Ukrainian Police and the Holocaust*, in: *East European Jewish Affairs* 34 (2004) 2, 95-118; Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk/Leonid Rein/Andrii Bolianovskiy/Oleg Romanko, *Eastern Europe. Belarussian Auxiliaries, Ukrainian Waffen-SS Soldiers and the Special Case of the Polish “Blue Police”*, in: Jochen Böhler/Robert Gerwarth (ed.), *The Waffen-SS. A European History*, Oxford 2017, 165-208.

15 Martin Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust. Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941-44*, New York 2003, 75-77.

16 Alexander Prusin, *Ukrainskaia politsiia i Xolokost v General’nom okruge Kiev, 1941-1943. Deistviia i motivatsii* [The Ukrainian Police and the Holocaust in Generalkommissariat Kiev, 1941-1943. Actions and motivations], in: *Xolokost i suchasnis’* [Holocaust and modernity] 1 (2007) 2, 30-59.

who killed Jews out of ideological conviction – the “political-ideological activists”, similar perhaps to Rich’s “ideological vanguard” – were a minority. The vast majority of policemen who took part in the genocide of the Jews were either “ordinary enforcers” or “creative conformists”, many of whom switched their allegiance to the Soviet side in 1943, once it became obvious that Nazi Germany was going to lose the war.¹⁷ The penetration of auxiliary police formations by Ukrainian nationalist groups raises the additional question of the extent to which the killing of Jews was also an expression of a nation-building project aimed at the creation of an ethnically homogenous Ukrainian geopolitical space.

Straddling these two historiographical trends, the question of the Blue Police appears as fundamentally multivariate. While the Blue Police was an extension of the Order Police, it had to contend with a powerful resistance movement answerable to an Allied government-in-exile and the local population. Many of the policemen had ties to the underground movement. After the war, they were accused of a whole array of crimes in addition to anti-Jewish actions, including crimes against the Polish population and prisoners of war. It is impossible to understand the actions of the policemen without integrating them into the broader scope of their tasks. I suggest that three key factors shaped the behavior of the Blue Policemen: the German Order Police, the Underground State, and the local population. This triangular matrix of pressures represents the structure within which the agency of the policemen must be placed. I argue that the behavior of the Polish policemen was far more situational than it was ideological in nature. In particular, the case of the Blue Police points to a less determinate role of antisemitism – especially understood in terms of ‘hatred’ – in the spectrum of motivation. This does not negate the presence of antisemitism in its ranks or the deadly role the policemen played in relation to Jews in hiding, but it does question the “attitude-behavior consistency” as a sufficient explanation for participation in murder.¹⁸ The men of the Blue Police emerge here as far more ‘ordinary’ than the men of Police Battalion 101. In fact, arguably much less is required to explain their behavior. Further, it also makes little sense to cast the policemen in one-dimensional categories of perpetrators, collaborators or heroes, as individual policemen often embodied these contradictions in one person, dictated by

17 Yuri Radchenko, “We Emptied Our Magazines into Them”. The Ukrainian Auxiliary Police and the Holocaust in Generalbezirk Charkow, 1941–1943, in: *Yad Vashem Studies* 41 (2013) 1, 63–98, here 88, 98.

18 Browning, *Ordinary Men*, Revised Edition, 233. For a critical discussion of antisemitism in relation to the Holocaust in Eastern Europe, especially in terms of ‘hatred’, see: Raz Segal, *Genocide in the Carpathians. War, Social Breakdown, and Mass Violence, 1914–1945*, Stanford 2016, 9–13, 47–50, 124. For the challenges of understanding antisemitism during the war, see: Doris L. Bergen, *Antisemitism in the Nazi Era*, in: Albert S. Lindemann/Richard Simon Levy (ed.), *Antisemitism: A History*, Oxford 2010, 196–211; Jeffrey S. Kopstein/Jason Wittenberg, *Intimate Violence. Anti-Jewish Pogroms on the Eve of the Holocaust*, Ithaca 2018, 61–65, 130–131. For a more wide-ranging reassessment of antisemitism in the scholarship, see: David Engel, *Away from a Definition of Antisemitism: An Essay in the Semantics of Historical Description*, in: Jeremy Cohen/Moshe Rosman (ed.), *Rethinking European Jewish History*, Oxford 2009, 30–53; Jonathan Judaken, Introduction, *AHR Roundtable: Rethinking Anti-Semitism*, in: *The American Historical Review* 123 (2008) 4, 1122–1138.

the dynamic situation of the police under occupation. One goal of this approach is to contribute to a social history of wartime behavior in the Polish context beyond the binary of resistance and collaboration.¹⁹

The main source base used in this analysis consists of approximately 30 postwar investigations and trial proceedings of former members of the *Polnische Polizei* and others tried before communist courts on the basis of the so-called August Decree²⁰ of August 31, 1944, the majority of whom were accused of participating in crimes against the Jews and others. Any attempt to seek explanations for behavior on the basis of trial proceedings faces an inherent problem of primary sources and the danger of reproducing the self-exculpatory logic of the accused or of diffusing responsibility. The testimonies given by the former policemen must therefore be handled with great care, especially in the politically loaded context of Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe and Poland's Stalinist era from 1948–1956. The challenge in such studies is probably never fully surmountable, but certain steps can be taken to reduce the interpretive danger. The trial material is too fragmentary to permit the reconstruction of a single Blue Police post or several posts in one county to be analyzed as a unit of microhistory. This analysis therefore employs a broad, regional “thick description”²¹ that touches on approximately 70 named Polish Policemen in the eastern half of District Kraków of the General Government,²² drawn from interrogations of the policemen and witness testimonies, combined with Jewish survivor testimonies and postwar memoirs. Importantly, the fact that many policemen accused of crimes against Jews were almost always accused of crimes against Poles and other groups provides a comparative dimension, which this study tries to integrate. District Kraków consisted of twelve counties (*Kreise*). Its eastern half corresponded to the Subcarpathian region of historic Western Galicia, which more or less covered the following seven counties: Dębica, Jasło, Rzeszów (‘Reichshof’), Krosno, Jarosław, Przemyśl, and Sanok. If each county counted 25 to 30 Polish Police posts, the total number of posts in these seven counties was between 175 and 210, with an average of six to eight policemen per post.²³ Though the number of policemen examined in this study is relatively small, the thick

19 Vesna Drapac/Gareth Pritchard, *Beyond Resistance and Collaboration. Towards a Social History of Politics in Hitler's Empire*, in: *Journal of Social History* 48 (2017) 4, 132-162.

20 For more on the August Decree trials, see Gabriel N. Finder/Alexander V. Prusin, *Justice Behind the Iron Curtain: Nazis on Trial in Communist Poland*, Toronto 2018, 18-24, 26-29.

21 Clifford Geertz, *Thick Description. Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture*, in: *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays*, New York 1973. The methodology is employed by Jan T. Gross and Irena Grudzińska-Gross in *Golden Harvest. Events at the Periphery of the Holocaust*, New York 2012.

22 The General Government was divided into four districts: Warsaw, Lublin, Radom, and Kraków, with Galicia added in August 1941 following the German invasion of the Soviet Union. The Blue Police was only established in the first four districts. For an overview of the General Government, see: Martin Winstone, *The Dark Heart of Hitler's Europe. Nazi Rule in Poland Under the General Government*, London 2015.

23 The southern counties bordering with Slovakia and eastern counties bordering District Galizien often included Ukrainian police posts, which meant fewer Polish policemen.

description applied to the sources permits some exploratory observations, which it is hoped further studies will corroborate or correct.

Before we proceed, however, a brief outline of the historiography and history of the Blue Police is necessary.

II. The Blue Police and the Historiography of the Holocaust

The first historian to draw attention to the Blue Police was Emmanuel Ringelblum, who headed the effort to document life in the Warsaw ghetto under the code-name *Oyneg Shabbos*. Writing from the confines of the ghetto, Ringelblum drew on Jewish eyewitness accounts that described the prominent role of the Blue Police in blackmailing Jews and of their participation in ‘resettlement actions’ in other parts of Poland. Though he described the Jewish Order Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst – OD) as having “behaved no better from the ethical point of view than their Polish opposite numbers” during the so-called liquidation actions of ghettos, he pointed to the role of the Blue Police in subsequent searches: “It is difficult to estimate the number of Jews in this country who fell victim thanks to the Blue Police; it must certainly amount to tens of thousands of those who had managed to escape the German slaughter.”²⁴ Yet Ringelblum’s wartime study also reproduced the fog-of-war ambiguity about the real scope of the actions of both “uniformed police” formations: “The blood of hundreds of thousands of Polish Jews, caught and driven to the ‘death vans’ will be on their hands.”²⁵ While the historian was previously rescued twice by the Underground State (the second time from a labor camp in Trawniki), his capture in March 1944 – including his wife and son and some thirteen other Jews – and subsequent death in Warsaw’s Pawiak prison was itself the work of a Polish Criminal Police detective force (Polnische Kriminalpolizei – Kripo) subordinated to the Sicherheitspolizei.²⁶

24 Emanuel Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations during the Second World War*, Evanston (IL) 1992, 135-136. The Jewish Order Police was lower in rank than the Blue Police. The first commander of the Warsaw Ordnungsdienst was Józef Szeryński, a Jewish lieutenant-colonel of the prewar Polish state police. For the Jewish ghetto police of Warsaw, see: Katarzyna Person, *Policjanci. Wizerunek Żydowskiej Służby Porządkowej w getcie warszawskim* [Policemen. A picture of the Jewish Order Police in the Warsaw ghetto], Warsaw 2018. For the Jewish ghetto police of Kraków, see: Alicja Jarkowska-Natkaniec, *Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst in Occupied Kraków during the Years 1940–1945*, in: *Scripta Judaica Cracoviensia* 11 (2013): 147-160.

25 *Ibid.*, 135. The Blue Police was established only within the General Government and had no jurisdiction in the Wartheland, where gas vans were used.

26 Jan Grabowski, *Tropiąc Emanuela Ringelbluma. Udział polskiej Kriminalpolizei (Kripo) w “ostatecznym rozwiązaniu kwestii żydowskiej”* [Hunting down Emanuel Ringelblum. The role of the Polish Criminal Police (Kripo) in the “Final Solution of the Jewish question”], in: *Zagłada Żydów* 10 (2014), 27-57.

Postwar Holocaust historians placed much less emphasis on the significance of the Blue Police. “Of all the native police forces in occupied Eastern Europe,” wrote political scientist Raul Hilberg, “those of Poland were least involved in anti-Jewish actions [...] The Germans could not view them as collaborators, for in German eyes they were not even worthy of that role. They in turn could not join the Germans in major operations against Jews or Polish resistors, lest they be considered traitors by virtually every Polish onlooker. Their task in the destruction of the Jews was therefore limited”, adding only that the Blue Police “tracked down Jewish escapees” in the countryside.²⁷ Hilberg’s view was echoed by historian Szymon Datner, a Holocaust survivor and former director of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, who stated that the Holocaust “cannot be charged against the Poles. It was German work and 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 percent of the terrifying, murderous work was carried out by the Germans, with no Polish participation whatsoever.”²⁸ Datner echoed a view expressed by Ringelblum that the Polish people and the London government-in-exile “were incapable of deflecting the Nazi steam-roller from its anti-Jewish course”.²⁹

Studies that explore the question of ethnic Polish collaboration under German occupation in a sustained fashion are almost entirely a product of the last two decades.³⁰ Despite these developments, the subject of the Blue Police largely remains a blank spot in the history of modern Poland and the Holocaust.³¹ The only monograph on the Blue

27 Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders. The Jewish Catastrophe 1933–1945*, London 1995, 92–93.

28 Szymon Datner, *No Fear in Me*, in: Małgorzata Niezabitowska/Tomasz Tomaszewski (ed.), *Remnants. The Last Jews of Poland*, New York 1989, 231–260, here 247.

29 Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish Relations*, 7.

30 For collaboration in Poland, see: Klaus-Peter Friedrich, *Collaboration in a “Land without a Quisling”. Patterns of Cooperation with the Nazi German Occupation Regime in Poland during World War II*, in: *Slavic Review* 64 (2005) 4, 711–746; John Connelly, *Why the Poles Collaborated So Little. And Why That Is No Reason for Nationalist Hubris*, in: *idem.*, 771–781; Jan Tomasz Gross, *O kolaboracji [On Collaboration]*, in: *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 2 (2006), 407–416; Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Pomiędzy współpracą a zdradą. Problem kolaboracji w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie – próba syntezy [Between cooperation and treason. The problem of collaboration in the General Government – an attempt at synthesis]*, *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 1 (2009), 103–132; Jochen Böhrer/Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, *Collaboration and Resistance in Wartime Poland (1939–1945). A Case for Differentiated Occupation Studies*, in: *Journal of Modern European History* 16 (2018) 2, 225–246; Mikołaj Kunicki, *Unwanted Collaborators. Leon Kozłowski, Władysław Studnicki, and the Problem of Collaboration among Polish Conservative Politicians in World War II*, in: *European Review of History* 8 (2001) 2, 203–220; Stanisław Salmonowicz, *The Tragic Night of Occupation. On “Collaboration from Below” in the General Government 1939–1945*, in: *The American Association for Jewish Studies. New Views*; <http://www.aapjstudies.org/index.php?id=232> (January 31, 2019); Ryszard Kaczmarek, *Kolaboracja na terenach wcielonych do Rzeszy Niemieckiej [Collaboration in territories annexed to the “Third Reich”]*, in: *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 1 (2008), 159–181; Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, *Collaborating Enemies. Forms of German-Polish Collaboration during the Second World War*, forthcoming in 2020.

31 For a historiographical overview of recent trends in scholarship on Poland, see: Padraic Kenney, *After the Blank Spots Are Filled. Recent Perspectives on Modern Poland*, in: *The Journal of Modern History* 79 (2007) 1, 134–161.

Police by Adam Hempel, *Pogrobowcy klęski* (The heirs of defeat) published in 1990 – though at times hampered by Marxist categories, an overriding focus on big cities like Warsaw, and inattention to the role of the police in rural areas in the crucial period of mid-1942 to mid-1944 – still remains the authoritative work on the Blue Police.³² A number of articles and chapters dealing with aspects related to the police under German occupation have been published,³³ though only a handful deal directly with the participation of the police in anti-Jewish actions and the Holocaust.³⁴ Sylwia Szymańska-Smolkin's dissertation, which deals with the Blue Police in the entire General Government, is poised to serve as the most authoritative work on the subject to date.³⁵

The number of personal accounts by former policemen is in even shorter supply. The two known published accounts by members of the Blue Police include a memoir by Franciszek Banaś, who guarded the Kraków ghetto, and Tadeusz Krasnodębski, who served in rural police posts of Dąbrowa Tarnowska and Otfinów (Kreis Tarnów).³⁶ Both had ties to the Underground State. Additional accounts are available of members of Schutzmann-

32 Adam Hempel, *Pogrobowcy klęski. Rzecz o policji "granatowej" w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie, 1939–1945* [The heirs of defeat. The case of the "navy-blue" police in the General Government, 1939–1945], Warsaw 1990.

33 Marek Getter, *Policja Polska w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie 1939–1945* [The Polish Police in the General Government 1939–1945], in: *Przegląd Policyjny* 1-2 (1996), 171-186; Marcin Kania, *Losy funkcjonariuszy policji II Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Polsce Ludowej* [The fate of police officers of the Second Polish Republic in People's Poland], in: *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 1 (2012) 19, 421-451; Andrzej Czop/Mariusz Sokołowski, *Historia polskich formacji policyjnych od II wojny światowej do czasów współczesnych* [The history of Polish Police formations from the Second World War to the present], in: *Kultura Bezpieczeństwa. Nauka–Praktyka–Refleksje* 13 (2013), 28-47; Tomasz Domański/Edyta Majcher-Ociesa (ed.), *Polnische Polizei im Generalgouvernement. Policja "granatowa" w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie w latach 1939–1945* [The Polish "navy-blue" police in the General Government in the years 1939–1945] (forthcoming).

34 Sylwia Szymańska-Smolkin, *Rola policji granatowej jako pośrednika w utrzymywaniu łączności między gettem a stroną aryjską* [The role of the blue police as an intermediary in maintaining communication between the ghetto and the Aryan side], in: August Grabski/Artur Markowski, *Narody i polityka. Studia ofiarowane profesorowi Jerzemu Tomaszewskiemu* [Nations and politics. Studies dedicated to Professor Jerzy Tomaszewski], Warsaw 2010, 215-226; Jan Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews. Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland*, Bloomington 2013, 105-119; Ewa Wiatr, "Zdawanie Żydów" – udział policjantów granatowych w wysiedlaniu Żydów na przykładzie powiatu radomskiego [“Delivering Jews” – The participation of Blue Policemen in the deportation of Jews on the example of Radomsko county], in: *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 10 (2014), 495-510; Jan Grabowski/Dariusz Libionka, *Meldunki Obwodu "Praga" Policji Polskiej o zatrzymaniu Żydów w Warszawie w okresie maj–lipiec 1943 r.* [Reports from the Praga precinct of the Polish Police regarding the apprehension of Jews in Warsaw May–July 1943], in: *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 10 (2014), 592-621.

35 Sylwia Szymańska-Smolkin, *Fateful Decisions. The Polish Policemen and the Jewish Population in Occupied Poland, 1939–1944* (PhD Thesis), Toronto 2017. Inaccessible at time of writing (March 20, 2019).

36 Franciszek Banaś, *Moje wspomnienia* [My reminiscences], Rzeszów 2009. For an early testimony of Banaś, submitted under his Home Army pseudonym, see: *Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego w Warszawie* [Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw] (AŻIH), testimony collection 301 (1945–1947), File 2058, testimony of "Stefan"; Tadeusz Stefan Krasnodębski, *Policjant konspiratorem. Szesnaście lat na muszce Gestapo i bezpieki* [An underground policeman. Sixteen years in the crosshairs of the Gestapo and the (communist) security forces], Kraków 2008. Yad Vashem recognized Franciszek Banaś as Righteous Among the Nations in 1980.

schaft Battalion 202, who volunteered in response to announcements in the spring of 1942 to join the ranks of the Blue Police, such as an unpublished memoir by Władysław Piotrowski,³⁷ a lengthy testimony given by an anonymous policeman in March 1944,³⁸ and interrogations of former members conducted in 1949–1950.³⁹ Incidentally, the experiences of Banaś, Krasnodębski, and Piotrowski pertain to District Kraków.

The period of communist rule ushered in by the Polish People's Republic (1945–1989) was hardly favorable to an honest reckoning with the question of the Blue Police and the attendant question of collaboration, especially following the Polish October of 1956, when the communists increasingly drew on nationalist discourse to legitimate their authority.⁴⁰ The case of Stanisław Rembek, a writer regarded as not sufficiently aligned with the artistic values of Socialist Realism, is a case in point. In 1947, Rembek published a novel that dealt with the subject of the Blue Police, *Wyrok na Franciszka Kłosa* (The judgment of Franciszek Kłós).⁴¹ The story behind the book is based on a real policeman by the name of Franciszek Kłós in Grodzisk Mazowiecki (District Warsaw), where Rembek lived during the occupation and had ties with the underground. In the novel, the policeman is a morally conflicted anti-hero, who kills Jews and members of the resistance, ultimately sentenced to death and executed by the underground. The book first appeared in 1947 with the help of a small private publisher, then was republished with state support in 1956 during the Polish thaw, but remains largely forgotten today.

The turn in scholarship following the Jedwabne debate in the early 2000s⁴² has given rise to a new wave of scholarship on Polish-Jewish relations during the Second World War. Though it tends to bracket the experience of Jewish fugitives in relation to other targeted groups, in all emerging studies the role of the Blue Police has been firmly anchored.⁴³

37 AAN, 231/II-1 & 231/II-2, Dzienniki, kroniki, pamiętniki [Diaries, chronicles, memoirs], Władysław Piotrowski, *Przeżycia i wspomnienia partyzanta Władysława Piotrowskiego* [The experiences and recollections of Władysław Piotrowski, a partisan]. For more on this battalion, see: Michał Wenklar, *Polacy w niemieckiej policji pomocniczej. Schutzmannschaftsbataillon 202 w świetle zeznań jego członków* [Poles in the German Auxiliary Police. Schutzmannschaft Battalion 202 in light of testimonies of its members], in: *Studia nad Autorytaryzmem i Totalitaryzmem* 34 (2012) 4, 35–50.

38 Grzegorz Motyka, *Polski policjant na Wołyniu* [A Polish policeman in Volhynia], in: *Karta* 24 (1998), 126–128; Grzegorz Motyka/Marek Wierzbicki (ed.), *Relacja policjanta* [Testimony of a policeman], in: *Ibid.*, 129–140.

39 Excerpts of selected testimonies of eight policemen are reproduced in: Wenklar, *Polacy w niemieckiej policji pomocniczej*, 39–49. Original file: AIPN Kr, 075/209, case code name “Battalion 202”.

40 Marcin Zaremba, *Komunizm, legitymizacja, nacjonalizm. Nacjonalistyczna legitymizacja władzy komunistycznej w Polsce* [Communism, legitimacy, nationalism. The nationalist legitimization of communist authority in Poland], Warsaw 2005.

41 Stanisław Rembek, *Wyrok na Franciszka Kłosa* [The judgment of Franciszek Kłós], Warsaw 1947. The novel was turned into a television film, see: Andrzej Wajda, *Wyrok na Franciszka Kłosa*, Warsaw 2000.

42 Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors. The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*, Princeton 2001. For an overview of the Jedwabne debate, see: Antony Polonsky/Joanna B. Michlic, *The Neighbors Respond. The Controversy Over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland*, Princeton 2004.

43 Barbara Engelking, *Such a Beautiful Sunny Day ... Jews Seeking Refuge in the Polish Countryside, 1942–1945*, Jerusalem 2016; Barbara Engelking/Jan Grabowski (ed.), *Zarys krajobrazu. Wieś polska wobec*

III. An Overview of the Blue Police

The circumstances of Poland under German occupation led to a unique situation among states in German-occupied Europe. Political collaboration in the style of Vidkun Quisling, Marshal Phillipe Pétain, or Emil Hácha was never an option for Poland. Polish authority was permitted only over local public institutions and the civilian administration – in essence, no higher than the level of the town and the village. Neither was the possibility of a purely military or paramilitary collaboration an option. Ethnic Poles were the only group under German rule from which no voluntary SS units or uniformed auxiliary forces were formed.⁴⁴ The main avenues of collaboration available to ethnic Poles were service in the Blue Police, various cultural and artistic outlets serving German propaganda, and individual denunciations to German authorities, while the majority of the shattered society adopted forms of cooperation and accommodation.⁴⁵

The evolution of the Blue Police occurred in stages. To many patriotic policemen, Polish defeat was likely met with a profound sense of demoralization and disillusionment. For example, a Jewish gymnasium student in Łódź recorded an episode during the evacuation of the city on September 5, 1939, involving an older police sergeant by the name of Kaczmarek, who stepped out of his post and exclaimed that he “would rather die than see the German army in Łódź”,⁴⁶ after which he put his gun in his mouth and shot himself. Initially, in the aftermath of the German attack, the Polish government ordered the dissolution of all police departments. But as German police forces on Polish territory were short on manpower,⁴⁷ Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger, Higher SS and Police Leader (Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer – HSSPF) for the General Government, issued an order on October 30, 1939 calling on all policemen and officers of the Polish state police to report back to service by November 10, 1939 under threat of the “harshest punishment”.⁴⁸ On December 17, 1939, Gov. Hans Frank approved the establishment of the Polish Police (Polnische Polizei im Generalgouvernement – Polish Police in the General Govern-

zagłady Żydów 1942–1945 [A landscape in outline. Polish village society and the Holocaust 1942–1945], Warsaw 2011; Barbara Engelking/Jan Grabowski (ed.), *Dalej jest noc. Losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski* [Night without end. The fate of Jews in selected counties of occupied Poland], Vol. I-II, Warsaw 2018.

44 Młynarczyk et al., *Eastern Europe*, 167.

45 Młynarczyk, *Pomiędzy współpracą a zdradą*, 103-132; Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets: Occupation Politics in Poland, 1939–1947*, Lanham 2004.

46 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), Accession Number 2008.321.1, Fryderyk Winnykamien (later Frederick Weinstein) papers, diary 1943–1944, 17. A day prior, Winnykamien was given a gun and was assigned to the post.

47 In October 1939, Hitler decreed that the Order Police could recruit 26,000 undrafted volunteers: 17,000 from the age groups 1909 to 1912, 9,000 from 1918 to 1920, and 6,000 ‘ethnic Germans’, see: Rich, *Holocaust Perpetrators*, 25.

48 *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs für die besetzten polnischen Gebiete* (*Dziennik rozporządzeń Generalnego Gubernatora dla okupowanych polskich obszarów*), November 2, 1939, 16.

ment) – soon to be commonly known as the Blue Police – which was placed under the supervision of the German Order Police a few weeks later.

The dual German-Soviet invasion and subsequent assault on Poland's political and cultural elites played a role in shaping the Blue Police. Prior to the outbreak of war, Polish Police corps numbered approximately 33,000.⁴⁹ During the September Campaign, some 2,500-3,000 policemen died fighting, while in April 1940 the NKVD shot over 6,000 policemen of various stripes in Kalinin (Tver), previously held by the Soviets in the Ostashkov prisoner of war (POW) camp near Miednoye, and another 6,000 held in various prisons of western Ukraine and Belorussia (formerly Poland's Eastern Borderlands).⁵⁰ This left an available pool of approximately 18,000 policemen. By January 31, 1940, the Blue Police counted 8,630 members, 11,291 by April 1, 1942, and approximately 12,500 men between 1943 and 1944.⁵¹ As a result, nearly 35 percent of prewar Polish policemen appear to have entered the ranks of the Blue Police. The Polish Police was purged and gradually racialized. All higher officers were removed or demoted and replaced by German policemen. By mid-1941, the Germans expanded their recruitment campaign by seeking candidates between the ages of 20 and 30, then from 18 to 45 in March 1943. German language skills, 'Aryan' ancestry, and pro-German political convictions were particularly welcome. On October 1, 1941, the Germans established a police academy for the Polish Police in Nowy Sącz (District Kraków), which trained approximately 3,000 new recruits, though National Socialist indoctrination was not a major component of their three to four-month curriculum.⁵² It is difficult to establish the numerical strength of the Blue Police at its peak in 1943–1944, though estimates range from 15,000-20,000.⁵³

The primary role of the Blue Police was to continue its prewar function of maintaining law and order, but as the occupation lengthened, its role was expanded into other duties, including assisting in the collection of food and labor quotas, anti-partisan, and anti-Jewish activities, such as guarding ghettos and checking for Jewish armbands. At the same time, the Polish resistance continued to penetrate German police structures via the Blue Police and the Polish Kripo. The Underground State even created its own underground civilian police called the State Security Corps (Państwowy Korpus Bezpieczeństwa – PKB). Of 8,400 PKB members in October 1943, 2,040 had been regular police-

49 Hempel, *Pogrobowcy klęski*, 29.

50 Kania, *Losy funkcjonariuszy policji*, 423, fn. 8; Czop/Sokołowski, *Historia polskich formacji policyjnych*, 36-39; Witold Wasilewski, *The Destruction of the Polish Elite. Operation AB-Katyn*, Warsaw 2009, 42-47.

51 Młynarczyk et al., *Eastern Europe*, 171.

52 *Ibid.*, 169-172; Czop/Sokołowski, *Historia polskich formacji policyjnych*, 33.

53 Marek Getter notes that German authorities often counted both Polish and Ukrainian policemen under the same rubric. As such, the Polish Police counted 13,437 in January 1943 and approx. 17,000 in May 1944, see: Getter, *Policja Polska*. Browning points to a figure of 14,297 by the end of 1942, see: Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 7. Grabowski estimates more than 20,000 in late 1943, see: Grabowski, *The Polish Police*, 2.

men and 100 officers from the ranks of the Blue Police.⁵⁴ Suspended between German demands from above and underground pressures from below, as an institution the Blue Police was a house divided. According to Adam Hempel, the Germans may have executed or sent to concentration camps at least ten to 15 percent of the Blue Police, while the underground regarded ten percent of the Polish Police and Polish Kripo as collaborators.⁵⁵

In terms of the Holocaust, the policemen became most active in assisting in liquidation actions of ghettos and subsequent hunts for Jewish escapees ('Judenjagd'). Yet, mostly limited to their regional posts, they were for the most part not mobile like other non-German auxiliary police forces and were never used as guards in concentration camps or killing centers. The exception here were the special operations, such as manhunt commandos (Jagdkommandos) or patrol groups (Streifenkommandos), which launched expeditions from a temporary police stronghold (Stützpunkt) into surrounding villages and forests, aimed at partisans, 'bandits', Jews, and Roma.⁵⁶ Perhaps the most infamous Jagdkommando headed by German gendarmes and comprised of Polish Policemen operated in Kreis Miechów for a period of three months in early 1943. Its deputy commandant, Sergeant Kazimierz Nowak, was its de facto leader and, according to underground reports, the unit claimed the lives of as many as 300 Poles, Jews, and Roma.⁵⁷ Closer to the Subcarpathian region, a Jagdkommando comprised of 20 German policemen and ten Blue Policemen and led by gendarme Engelberdt Guzdek carried out a massacre, among others, of the majority of Roma inhabitants (130 in total) in the village of Szczurowa (Kreis Tarnów) in the summer of 1943.⁵⁸

As the Soviet front neared in mid-1944, many policemen abandoned their posts to join the partisan movement. Others went into hiding. Those who had bound their fortune with the occupation authorities went westward with the retreating Germans. When the Red Army arrived, some joined the ranks of the Polish People's Army fighting alongside it, while others were regarded with suspicion and sent to internment camps in the

54 Młynarczyk et al., *Eastern Europe*, 177. For the PKB Government Delegation in Kraków, see: Waldemar Grabowski, *Polska tajna administracja cywilna 1940–1945* [The secret Polish civil administration 1940–1945], Warsaw 2003, 343–371. The first commander of the PKB was Marian Kozielski, brother of Jan Karski. Some of the policemen shot in Płaszów were PKB members.

55 Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski*, 93; Młynarczyk et al., *Eastern Europe*, 179.

56 Dawid Golik calls these "provocation units" (oddziały prowokacyjne) and documents over a dozen cases in District Kraków, including two cases of killing Jews. See: Golik, *Prowokacja w walce z "bandami."* Wybrane przykłady niemieckich akcji prowokacyjnych z terenu dystryktu krakowskiego General Government [Provocation in the fight against "gangs". Selected examples of German provocation actions in the Kraków District of the General Government], in: *Prace Historyczne* 144 (2017) 4, 691–711.

57 Nowak was resettled from the Poznań region in 1940 and subsequently became a 'volksdeutsch'. Nowak quickly earned the reputation of a zealous collaborator and was executed by the Home Army in June 1943. For more on this Jagdkommando, see: Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski*, 186–188; Dariusz Libionka, *Powiat miechowski* [Miechów county], in: *Dalej jest noc*, 145–153.

58 Adam Musiał, *Krwawe Upiory* [Bloody phantoms], Tarnów 1993, 199–206. Guzdek did most, if not all, of the killing.

Soviet Union, though most appear to have been allowed to return in 1947 and 1948. The communist puppet government, known as the Polish Committee of National Liberation (Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego – PKWN), formally dissolved the Blue Police by decree on August 15, 1944, which regarded the Polish Police as a ‘fascist’ formation and its members as ‘class enemies’.⁵⁹ Some 600 of the approximately 15,000 former Blue Policemen were tried before communist courts on the basis of the so-called August Decree of August 31, 1944.⁶⁰

Let us now examine the triangular set of forces that shaped the dynamics of the Blue Police in the eastern half of District Kraków.

IV. The Blue Police and the Germans

The primary factor that shaped the actions of the Polish policemen was the German Order Police. In the lands of historic Galicia, members of the Polish state police born prior to 1900 usually served in the Austro-Hungarian army during the First World War, where many picked up a working knowledge of German. During the Second World War, District Kraków was not only home to the major school for the Polish Police in Nowy Sącz, but also contained smaller places of training in Rabka and an army base in Pustków (SS Truppenübungsplatz Heidelager) near Dębica. New recruits were often posted in Stützpunkte, or supporting bases established in areas known for partisan activity. Prewar Polish police uniforms underwent some modification, introduced gradually by the Germans. The changes included replacement of the Polish eagle on their caps with county crests. In the countryside, the Germans armed Blue Policemen with long rifles and a limited number of bullets, which had to be accounted for to the gendarmerie.⁶¹

Joining the Polish Police in the General Government

For the majority of its members, the Blue Police was not a voluntary formation. Most of the policemen examined in this article reported entering the ranks of the Polish Police by returning to their prewar posts in 1939/1940 in response to the German threat of death or imprisonment in a concentration camp. This does not mean that many did not

⁵⁹ Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski*, 396.

⁶⁰ Młynarczyk et al., *Eastern Europe*, 179; Hempel, *Pogrobowcy kłęski*, 397-400.

⁶¹ Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Rzeszowie [Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Rzeszów] (AIPN Rz), file 359/30, trial of Stanisław Krasoń, interrogation of Krasoń, Dębica, November 12, 1951, 9v-10; AIPN Rz, 34/64, Vol. 2, trial of Michał Strzępka, deposition of former Polish Policeman Jan Pielach, Mielec, September 29, 1965, 24.



German police file of sergeant Władysław Malawski (Kreis Jasło). Official confirmation of a return to service in Kreis Jasło in response to Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger's announcement.


(Archives of IPN Rzeszów, 358/5, 523)

derive certain benefits from their positions, as others joined voluntarily at a later date and for a variety of motives. Some refused and went into hiding.⁶² Unlike the Order Police, however, the Blue Police was fundamentally more constrained. Members of the Order Police could refuse orders and had the option to leave one unit for another. Polish policemen, by contrast, operated under a consistent threat of punishment. Many pointed to the fundamental compromises of life under occupation and the narrow range of choices available to them. For example, Edmund Czajka faced the prospect of being sent to Germany for forced labor, so he drew on his prewar experience in the Border Protection Corps (Korpus Ochrony Pogranicza – KOP) to enter the Nowy Sącz academy – two weeks after being delegated to a Polish Police post in the fall of 1942, he shot an alleged Soviet partisan.⁶³ Prewar policeman Marian Lenartowicz ignored the call to return to

⁶² For example, three policemen from Tuszów Narodowy (Kreis Dębica) are known to have gone into hiding: Jakób Felis (or Flis), Jan Dudzik, and Józef Dudzik, see: AIPN Rz, 055/24, Vol. 3, 90.

⁶³ AIPN Rz, 358/173, trial of Edmund Czajka, interrogation of the accused, Jasło, April 26, 1956, 8-11; interrogation of Czajka, Rzeszów, July 25, 1957, 161-163. While serving in Brzozów (Kreis Krosno), Czajka was drawn into the ranks of the communist People's Army (Armia Ludowa – AL) as an informant for Andrzej Szczepkowski.

4 20



Personalbogen

des polnischen Polizeibeamten

Posten der Polnischen Polizei

Dienstort Jaslo

Kreis Jaslo

Name MALAWSKI, Vornamen Wladislaus

Wohnort Jaslo, Straße Rynekstr., Hs.-Nr. 16

Geburtsort Lemberg, Tag 3, Monat 6, Jahr 1897

Sprachkenntnisse polnische und russische

a) in Wort poln. u. russisch, b) in Schrift polnische und russische

In welcher Armee gedient österreichische und polnische

Von wann 1.12.1915 öster. bis wann 31.10.1918
1.11.1918 poln. 22.12.1920

Letzter militärischer Dienstgrad sergenant

Wann in die polnische Polizei eingetreten 22.7.1921

Durch welche amtliche Bescheinigung kann die Zugehörigkeit zur polnischen Polizei nachgewiesen werden keine

Dienstorte mit Kreisangabe innerhalb der letzten 2 Jahre Kamionka Strumigwa

Letzter Dienstgrad Hauptwachtmeister

Verheiratet, ledig, verwitwet, geschieden (zutreffendes unterstreichen), Zahl der Kinder 3, Wohnort und Anschrift der Ehefrau oder der nächsten Familienangehörigen Józefa MALAWSKA Jaslo, Ryng Nr 16.

Ich versichere hiermit, daß die von mir gemachten Angaben der Wahrheit entsprechen. Ich bin darüber belehrt worden, daß wissentlich falsche Angaben zu meiner sofortigen Entlassung führen.

Ort Jaslo, Datum 15 Juni 1940.

Wladislaus Malawski
Vor- und Zuname

Hauptwachtmeister
Dienstgrad

Waffen-Nachweisung.

Gewehr (Karabiner) Nr. 2157-V Scharfe Patronen 10 Stück

Pistole Nr. _____ " " _____

Seitengewehr _____

Gummiknüppel 1

Many senior policemen in District Kraków, like Malawski, served in the Austrian army during World War I. (Archives of IPN Rzeszów, 358/5, 520)

service and took up smuggling instead. Arrested for his activities in December 1942, he was given a choice – by his own account – of service in the Polish Police or face imprisonment as a prisoner of war, which would have meant the arrest of his family.⁶⁴ For some Polish POWs imprisoned in German camps, like Władysław Piotrowski in Stalag V-B Villingen near Stuttgart, when the Germans announced in June 1941 that prewar policemen would be freed, making false claims about previous police training served as a way to secure release.⁶⁵ Piotrowski and others were sent for training in Dębica, given two weeks of vacation, and told that they would be employed to combat the black market in the General Government. When in January 1943 these recruits were dispatched in Lithuanian uniforms to Belorussia in order to combat partisans, he and a few others fled and joined the partisan movement instead.

Others joined on instructions from the government-in-exile and the underground. The same Lenartowicz recalled being encouraged in his decision by a radio broadcast issued on December 28, 1940 by Gen. Władysław Sikorski, the Prime Minister of the Polish government-in-exile and the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces, calling on former state employees to return to their positions in order to help protect the population.⁶⁶ Another former policeman, Bronisław Stafin, stated that he returned to his prewar police post in Szerzyny (Kreis Jasło) on orders from the Union of Armed Struggle (Związek Walki Zbrojnej – ZWZ), the precursor of the Home Army, and was later instructed to remain in service on the recommendation of the Peasant Battalions (Bataliony Chłopskie – BCh).⁶⁷ Similarly, Teodor Bieniewski received direct orders from his underground commander to return to service in Wadowice Górne (Kreis Dębica), as doing so was regarded as of greater benefit to the organization.⁶⁸

Ethnic Poles resettled from western Poland to the General Government form a prominent cohort in the ranks of the Polish Police. For example, Edward Grzyb, resettled from the Poznań region, joined voluntarily without any prior experience and was delegated to the Jedlicze Polish Police post (Kreis Krosno) in mid-1943 after five months of training in the Nowy Sącz academy.⁶⁹ Among the reasons for joining, he cited difficult material conditions and the fact that in 1940 the Gestapo had placed two of his brothers

64 AIPN Rz, 107/1783, Vol. I, trial of Władysław Malawski, Marian Lenartowicz, and Hubert Kuczera, interrogation of the accused Lenartowicz, Gdańsk, October 13, 1948, 158-158v.

65 AAN, 231/II-1, memoir of Władysław Piotrowski, 1-2. Piotrowski was a prewar photographer and was released after his friend amended Piotrowski's form to state that he was a police photographer.

66 AIPN Rz, 107/1783, Vol. I, interrogation of Marian Lenartowicz, 158v.

67 AIPN Rz, 353/258, trial of Bronisław Stafin, interrogation of the accused, Jasło, March 15, 1950, 23; letter to the Appellate Court in Rzeszów by the legal defense, September 26, 1950, 137.

68 AIPN Rz, 353/248, trial of Teodor Bieniewski, interrogation of the accused during the main hearing, Rzeszów, October 1, 1950; deposition of witness Stanisław Dolin, pseudonym Ignac, Rzeszów, October 1, 1950, 279-280. The commander's pseudonym was Garbus. When the Germans learned of his underground activity in 1944, Bieniewski deserted his post and joined the partisans, while his family went into hiding.

69 AIPN Rz, 358/109, trial of Edward Grzyb, interrogation of the accused, Krosno, October 4, 1952, 76-78.

in Auschwitz, where one of them died a year later.⁷⁰ In other instances, promising candidates were accepted directly into Polish Police posts, where they received training. For example, Mieczysław Ożga first began as a member of the Construction Service (*Baudienst*), followed by employment as a German informer helping to capture escaped POWs, before entering the Jarosław Polish Police post in 1944 at the age of 20.⁷¹

The Blue Police and the 'Judenjagd'

The use of the Polish Police in executions of Polish prisoners in Warsaw began in 1941. The first case of employing the Blue Police in shooting Jews took place on November 17, 1941 in Warsaw, where 32 policemen executed Jews who had fled the Warsaw ghetto.⁷² The head of the Order Police in the General Government, Gerhard Winkler, officially prohibited using the Polish Police in executions on March 21, 1942, though such actions continued to take place.⁷³ It is not entirely clear when the Polish Police was under precise orders to pursue and shoot Jews on the spot, but it seems that the practice evolved from the period of ghetto liquidations in mid-1942 on the level of the district, as opposed to a centralized General Government-wide order, as regional differences can be observed.⁷⁴ But there is little doubt that the policemen were practically under such orders throughout the General Government by early 1943,⁷⁵ as the killing had become fairly regularized by this time. By then, the Blue Police was also actively deployed in actions against local Roma and all partisan formations.

The Blue Police was especially dangerous to locals when co-opted into various espionage, provocation, and false flag operations usually spearheaded by the German police and Jagdkommandos. For example, policemen from the Brzostek Polish Police (*Kreis Jasło*) – which included Władysław Malawski, whose German police file is shown in this article – set up *Stützpunkte* in the villages of Oparówka and Wiśniowa, from which they carried out various operations headed by German gendarme Karl Perschke. In one operation, they roamed nearby villages for five days dressed as partisans and spent the night with local peasants claiming they were American partisans. Those who were fooled into

70 Ibid., letter of the accused to the State Council of the People's Republic of Poland, Nowy Wiśnicz prison, February 14, 1954, 248.

71 AIPN Rz, 352/2, trial of Mieczysław Ożga, verdict by the Special Penal Court in Jarosław, January 16, 1945, 84-87. Ożga was sentenced to death and executed by hanging in Rzeszów on February 28, 1945.

72 Młynarczyk, *Pomiędzy współpracą a zdradą*, 115. There was some outrage when it was discovered that one of the policemen, Wiktor Ząłek, participated voluntarily.

73 Ibid.

74 For example, the Radomyśl Wielki Polish Police allegedly received instructions from the county command only to arrest escaped Jews and to hand them over to the gendarmerie, as in the words of one policeman: "There was no order to shoot the Jews." See: AIPN Rz, 34/64, Vol. 1, interrogation of Michał Strzępka, Mielec, June 8, 1965, 205.

75 Młynarczyk et al., *Eastern Europe*, 176.

joining their ranks were led to a manor in Błażkowa, where they were shot.⁷⁶ The same expeditionary force targeted fugitive Jews in 1943 from the Wiśniowa Stützpunkt by using Polish households known for selling food to Jews as a trap: When the Jews appeared at the scheduled time, they were ambushed and shot.⁷⁷ The Polish underground was aware of the combined forces of the gendarmerie, Kripo, and the Blue Police in such actions across the General Government and warned locals in underground publications.⁷⁸

Individual Blue Policemen were capable of ruthless murder just like members of any police force under German command. Antoni Balaryn, a member of the Home Army in Radomyśl Wielki (Kreis Dębica), witnessed numerous instances of murder by the Blue Police, including Jewish children. At times, even Jewish children that had been baptized and adopted by Polish families were taken away and shot in the Jewish cemetery.⁷⁹ In the summer of 1943, when a Jewish couple was brought before the Polish Police commandant of Borowa (Kreis Dębica) Józef Słaby, the “Jewish woman begged and kissed the Blue Police commandant on the hands to spare her life”, all to no avail.⁸⁰ Such incidents are rife in the August Decree trial record.

In Jan Grabowski’s assessment of Blue Policemen in Dąbrowa Tarnowska (Kreis Tarnów), the act of killing Jews functioned as a form of initiation and the strengthening of professional bonds.⁸¹ He cites the example of Polish Policeman Jan Szewczyk and another young recruit in the Otfinów post, who were reproached by their commandant Lewandowicz for failure to participate in shootings. The commandant therefore ordered both policemen to shoot two young Jewish women, Salomea Süß and her sister. “I told him [Lewandowicz] that since I hadn’t shot anyone yet, I didn’t want to shoot the Jewesses now. So then he told me that I was an arse and not a policeman”, replied Jan Szewczyk, before caving in to the pressure and carrying out the assigned task with his colleague.⁸² The use of alcohol as an agent of lowering inhibitions in such actions is evident in some police posts. When locals captured a Jewish fugitive in Łąki Górne, Polish

76 AIPN Rz, 107/1783, Vol. 3, interrogation of Władysław Malawski, Jasło, October 22, 1948, 105; investigative report by the Jasło Department of Security (Urząd Bezpieczeństwa – UB), November 4, 1948, 108.

77 Ibid., Vol. 3, interrogation of Malawski, 105-106; deposition of Eugeniusz Niedziela, Rzeszów, September 8, 1948, 49-49v. The Jews who were known to have been killed in these operations included Leon Apfelblum, Maria Birman, Rozalia Janas, and two others.

78 Prowokacja, Łatwowierność i Nieszczęścia [Provocation, gullibility, and misfortune], in: Wieści [Tidings] 8, March 13, 1943, 2-3.

79 Antoni Balaryn, *The Martyrdom of the Jewish Population of Radomyśl Wielki and the Surrounding Area during the Second World War*, Radomyśl Wielki 1989, 17-18. Specifically, Balaryn writes about the childless Stefanowicz family, who had adopted a three-year old boy from a Jewish woman by the name of Czarna. Though baptized by the parish priest Jan Curyłło (with ties to the AK), the child was shot by Polish Policeman Stanisław Górecki sometime in 1943.

80 AIPN Rz, 358/145, trial of Tadeusz Mysoń and Stanisław Adamczyk, deposition of Jan Krawczyk, 23.

81 Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews*, 114-115.

82 Ibid. and the document cited in: APK, SAKr, 1055 IV K 344/50, interrogation Jan Szewczyk, 25-26. Cf. Musiał, *Krwawe Upiory*, 197.

Policeman Władysław Ryciak, who arrived on the scene with another Blue Policeman and a gendarme from the Pilzno post (Kreis Dębica), the “gendarme turned in our direction asking us to bring vodka, because he would be shooting a Jew”.⁸³ Ryciak ordered a villager to bring “a quart of vodka, because they have a Jew who has to be shot, and shooting a Jew dry – without vodka – will make it hard to shoot”.⁸⁴ The documentary record is replete with stories of alcoholism in police outposts and policemen waking up in peasant homes after nights of heavy drinking.⁸⁵ Among the Polish Police, the use of alcohol emerges not only as an agent of lowering inhibitions, but in dealing with the psychological consequences of face-to-face killing, as was the case more broadly among auxiliary policemen.⁸⁶

The actions of the policemen vis-à-vis the Jews were circumscribed by the specific ‘culture’ that dominated each post. The increased authority granted to them by German authorities, combined with little impunity for misdeeds against locals, led to a profoundly corrupt police force. The picture of Blue Policemen characterized by a culture of bribery is almost uniform across the sources.⁸⁷ Little accountability also led to the normalization of police brutality. Prior to the implementation of the Holocaust, such violence was hardly aimed mainly at the Jews. For example, in July 1941, Saul Holländer and David Hirschfeld of Łuzna (Kreis Jasło) lodged several complaints with the Blue Police, because the calf belonging to their Polish neighbors, the Rafa family, kept grazing on Holländer’s property.⁸⁸ When on July 31, 1941 policemen Adam Kurowski and Piotr Januchowski of the Łuzna post arrived at the Rafa household, they quickly resorted to

83 Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie [State Archive in Kraków] (APKr), Kraków Appellate Court (SAKr), File 1011, IV K 102/50, trial of Władysław Ryciak, interrogation of the accused, Tarnów, March 16, 1949, 32v-33. Ryciak was a prewar policeman from Pilzno and a sworn member of the ZWZ-AK since 1940, who was encouraged to return to service by his underground liaison Stefan Janusz, pseudonym Dymin, with the hope that he would be promoted to commandant of the Polish Police.

84 *Ibid.*, deposition of Stanisław Podraża, Pilzno, January 11, 1949, 7. Cited in: Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews*, 118.

85 Two reports of the Radomyśl Wielki Polish Police written by the AK in the later stage of the occupation identified three cases of alcohol abuse: Polish Policeman Stanisław Górecki, an “alcoholic” and “useless as a policeman” (died in July 1943), and two others with a “weakness for alcohol”. See: AIPN Rz, 055/48, “Kadra”, Vol. 6, 385-392.

86 For a discussion on the use of alcohol by policemen during the Holocaust, see: Edward B. Westermann, *Stone-Cold Killers or Drunk with Murder? Alcohol and Atrocity during the Holocaust*, in: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 30 (2016) 1, 1-19.

87 A Mielec county AK report evaluating the competence Blue Policemen for service after the war noted: “The moral ethics of the policemen in terms of bribery has fallen completely – every policeman is compromised by bribes and as such would be useless in the region.” See: AIPN Rz, 055/48, “Kadra,” Vol. 6, 387-388.

88 Archiwum Państwowe w Rzeszowie [State Archive in Rzeszów] (APRz), Sondergericht in Reichshof [Special Court in Rzeszów], collection 26, file 209, investigation of Polish Policemen Adam Kurowski and Piotr Januchowski, 1941–1943, interrogation of the accused Piotr Januchowski, Municipal Court of Gorlice, September 24, 1941, 19-19v; interrogation of the accused Adam Kurowski, September 24, 1941, 20-20v; deposition of witness Chaim Hirschfeld, September 29, 1941, 21-21v.

violence against the family members for “doing damage to the Jew”.⁸⁹ Characteristically, policeman Kurowski responded: “You think these are prewar times? There is a war now, we are allowed to do everything.”⁹⁰ In the commotion that followed, three members of the Rafa family had sustained severe injuries with a fourth having fled the scene.⁹¹

Accustomed to abusing and taking from locals during searches with little impunity, by the time the policemen were drawn into the ‘Judenjagd’ in mid-1942, many seized an opportunity that now carried *no* impunity: Stripping captured Jews of all wealth, a practice that often became an end-in-itself. The Blue Policemen thus frequently became the primary beneficiaries of valuables discovered on Jewish fugitives, fueling the self-fulfilling prophecy of fabled ‘Jewish gold’ during the war.

Still, it is hard to deduce from these facts a monolithic understanding of the Polish Police as the foot soldiers of a hateful antisemitism. Nazi German indoctrination does not appear as a major motivational factor among the policemen. The most frequently recurring ideological refrain among the Blue Policemen was that ‘Poland is no more’ and that the local population should accept the new German reality, as confirmed by numerous witness testimonies.⁹² When Franciszek Banaś, who was stationed in the one of the four guard-houses that made up the Polish Police post in the Kraków ghetto, appealed to a younger colleague by stating that “a Polish policeman is not permitted to shoot Jews”, he was mocked as a “Jewish uncle” by his colleagues.⁹³ Banaś shared some of the anti-semitic assumptions typical of prewar Poland, but he nonetheless actively helped the ghetto inhabitants and was beaten by gendarmes for allowing Jews to smuggle meat into the ghetto.⁹⁴ In another case, Kajetan Paprocki, the head of the Rzeszów Kripo, had bad relations with his wife and took up a Jewish lover (surname Bajbach), whom he had taken out of the Rzeszów ghetto. After the war they settled down in Łódź.⁹⁵ Similarly, Blue

89 Ibid., deposition of Anna Rafa, Jasło, August 2, 1941, 3-3v; deposition of Stefania Rafa, Gorlice, September 24, 1941, 17v.

90 Ibid., deposition of Stefania Rafa, Gorlice, September 24, 1941, 17v.

91 Ibid., Medical certificates for Stefania Rafa, Władysław Rafa, Anna Rafa, Bobowa, July 31, 1941, 5-7. In the course of the investigation, the policemen changed their story to state that Holländer and Hirschfeld had notified the police that Ludwika Rafas had “defamed the authorities” by insulting the policemen of the Łuźna post and that the bodily harm was the result of resisting arrest and their “falling on walls” (sic), statement by the legal defense, District Court of Jasło, November 17, 1941, 34v.

92 Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Krakowie [Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Krakow] (AIPN Kr), File 502/101, trial of Władysław Rzepa, deposition of Aleksander Rydza, Lisia Góra, March 8, 1948, 4-5; note by the Citizen’s Militia to the Tarnów county command, Lisia Góra, March 8, 1948, 3.

93 Banaś, *Moje wspomnienia*, 131.

94 Ibid., 122-123. Banaś took a bribe of 80 zloty in exchange for allowing the cart to enter the ghetto. He was denounced by a fellow policeman but was spared arrest due to the intervention of the commandant.

95 AIPN Rz, 042/2126, investigation of Kajetan Paprowski, report filed on the basis of information provided by informant “Otto”, Rzeszów, July 16, 1956, 14. Paprocki’s wife Stefania had a lover in Rzeszów with whom she stayed after the war, while Paprocki left Rzeszów with his Jewish partner together with the retreating Germans and initially both moved into the Bajbach household in Kraków. Paprowski first worked as a Polish Policeman in Rzeszów before entering the ranks of the Kripo.

Policeman Józef Chlebek in Dynów (Kreis Krosno) sheltered a Jewish woman by the name of Chana Szrajer in the home of his brother. Chlebek was engaged to Izabela Kędzierska, but when she became pregnant, he allegedly broke off the relationship and made plans with Szrajer to escape to Lwów with her, even using his fiancée's identity papers for the purpose. However, sometime in the summer of 1943 Kędzierska learned about the plans and denounced them to the police. Szrajer was arrested and shot the next day, Chlebek was arrested but managed to escape prison and survive the war.⁹⁶ Even if antisemitism was dominant in police outposts, the behavior of individual policemen toward individual Jews could vary significantly.

The Blue Police and *Handlungsspielraum* – Room for Maneuver

The field of perpetrator studies within German historiography often employs the notion of *Handlungsspielraum* in relation to orders from above.⁹⁷ What was the relationship between orders and voluntarism for the Blue Police under German authority? At a bare minimum, all policemen had to conform to an outside appearance of subservience to the Order Police. Those who wanted to act in the interest of the local population could not telegraph such intentions. For example, at the beginning of his service Marian Lenartowicz decided not to report the possession of a gun he found during a search of a Polish soldier, who had just returned from fighting. The policeman's 'good opinion' spread quickly among locals, eventually reaching the Jasło Gestapo, which placed him under arrest as a result and launched an investigation into his failure to report a weapon.⁹⁸ Similarly, Wincenty Dudek, the Polish Police commandant in Piwniczna (Kreis Nowy Sącz), was placed under arrest for two months for giving advance warning to a Polish woman about her impending arrest, which raised suspicions of his potential membership in the underground.⁹⁹

For policemen with a similar disposition toward locals, a pose of acting for the 'sake of appearances' (dla pozorów) had to be adopted. Abraham Peller recalled how the commandant of Łużna (Kreis Jasło), Bednarz, received an order to organize a hunt for Jews in

96 AIPN Rz, 353/31, trial of Izabela Kędzierska, deposition of Wojciech Chlebek (father of Józef Chlebek), Dynów, July 19, 1949, 13-13v; deposition of Izabela Kędzierska, Dynów, July 24, 1949, 22-23. Szrajer was executed by the commandant of the Dynów gendarmerie by the name of Krämer.

97 Jan Philipp Reemtsma/Ulrike Jureit/Hans Mommsen (ed.), *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht. Dimensionen des Vernichtungskrieges 1941–1944*, Hamburg 2002, 579-581.

98 AIPN Rz, 107/1783, Vol. 1, interrogation of Marian Lenartowicz, 160. Lenartowicz allegedly advised him to "continue being a soldier and to hold on to his weapon for the future Poland, which will be in great need of it".

99 APK, SAKr 1008, K 83/50, trial of Wincenty Dudek, interrogation of the accused, Nowy Sącz, April 11, 1949, 187v. Dudek was not a sworn member, but cooperated with the Peasant Battalions by supplying its liaison Stanisław Kalina, pseudonym Kasztan, with information, see: deposition of Stanisław Kalina, 140-140v.



Polish Police post in Kreis Jasło.

(Archives of IPN Rzeszów, trial of Piotr Januchowski, 353/170, 2/19)

the village of Moszczenice. Bednarz first warned Peller and others and on the following day – to keep up appearances – he “gathered 70 peasants and ordered them to search for Jews in attics using pitchforks”, which did not yield a single Jew. However, such a façade combined with no results could not last for very long. As a result, Bednarz was subjected to blackmail, removed from his post by the county commandant and transferred to Jasło.¹⁰⁰ Police patrols in the countryside usually included two to three policemen, including a designated patrol commandant that were either mixed with gendarmes or carried out independently by Blue Policemen. The latter allowed for a degree of independence: “In terms of participation in roundups, when I was with the Germans I was

¹⁰⁰ AŻIH, 301/1649, testimony of Abraham Peller, 2-3.

restricted (skrępowany) by their presence, but if I was with the Polish Police, I tried to settle things in such a way as not to harm anybody and avoid taking responsibility myself.”¹⁰¹ However, acting ‘for the sake of appearances’ during the war often led to misperceptions or exaggerated accusations by members of the local community after the war. For the historian, it adds to the challenge of accurately interpreting policemen’s actions in the trial source material.

Each police post was at the mercy of its own internal dynamics of professional ambition, loyalty and rivalry. The presence of appointed German or ‘volksdeutsche’ gendarme supervisors (Aufseher) in some counties undoubtedly set the tone, though they were frequently rotated between different posts within a county in order to “avoid fraternization” with the policemen.¹⁰² A high turnover rate of commandants, ongoing shuffling of policemen between posts, and the arrival of new recruits often meant that the nucleus of a Polish Police post came down to about three to four policemen, which served as the basis for long-term camaraderie. Those more loyal to the Germans often renounced their status as ‘Poles’ in favor of ‘volksdeutsche’ status, which brought additional privileges to the policemen and their families. Thus, at the end of 1943, Wincenty Wątorowski of the Biecz Polish Police post became a card-carrying member of the ‘volksdeutsche’ community, and such decisions often paved the way for subsequent forms of cooperation with the occupation authorities.¹⁰³ Policemen known to be particularly loyal to the Germans – usually ‘volksdeutsche’ or those with a reputation as German informants – appear to have held some sway over the group dynamics of each post. The interaction between German police structures and personal ambition could play out in multiple ways. In one instance, an ambitious deputy formed an alliance with other policemen to remove the commandant, Antoni Sroczyński, from his Polish Police post in Krzywca (Kreis Przemysł) by filing a report with the gendarmerie, accusing him of “hatred” and “disloyalty toward the Germans” in the form of refusal to comply with the mandatory practice of speaking German in the police station. The report led to a public denunciation during a briefing of Polish Police commandants:

“On the basis of this accusation, in the presence of about 30 policemen, I was maltreated by a German ‘lieutenant’, disarmed, stripped of my belt and placed in the corner of the room under the supervision of four armed policemen, while the German lieutenant threatened me several times with his fists and revolver above my head – shouting over me that he will shoot me like a dog.

101 APK, SAKr 1011, IV K 102/50, interrogation of Władysław Ryciak, 32v.

102 BAL, B 162/7478, interrogation of Walter Thormeyer, former head of the Mielec Gestapo, 73. According to Thormeyer, the Polish Police posts of Dębica county were staffed by supervisory gendarmes, who were rotated “around-the-clock”.

103 AIPN Rz, 354/9, Part I, trial of Wincenty Wątorowski (Wontorowski), verdict by the District Court of Jasło, August 29, 1947, 575. Wątorowski was sentenced to death for collaboration and executed by hanging on April 23, 1948.

Woźniak, Karolewski and Gałuszko [the conspiring policemen] laughed at this spectacle, while other policemen looked on with horror.”¹⁰⁴

This was the second disciplinary measure taken against the commandant. He found himself in Krzywca after being removed from a post in Kańczuga (Kreis Jarosław) for excessive “tolerance toward the population and insufficient results”. This time, however, Sroczyński was demoted from the rank of commandant and relocated to yet another post, where he served out the rest of the war. We find similar demotions in documents produced during the war, as in an underground report for the Krosno region, where the commandant of the Brzozów Polish Police post was downgraded to the rank of senior police officer (*starszy posterunkowy*) as punishment for the “mild treatment of the Polish population” and replaced by a more stridently anti-Polish Ukrainian commandant.¹⁰⁵

The internal pressure on members of each Polish Police post came from both the top by officers in supervisory roles and the bottom by lower-ranking policemen. Most commonly, policemen faced pressure from their superiors, as in the case of Bronisław Regner of the Przeclaw Polish Police (Kreis Dębica), whose commandant threatened him with arrest and imprisonment in a concentration camp for “neglecting his duties”.¹⁰⁶ As a result, policemen, who did not earn the full trust of their superiors, were often kept on a short leash. Others felt restrained by some form of compromised relationship with the German police. Stanisław Krasoń, a policeman in Dębica, came under the watchful eye of the gendarmerie, after the Germans placed his brother under arrest in Mielec for underground activity. When in March of 1943 partisans broke into the prison and freed its inmates, the German police responded by placing Krasoń under 32-hour arrest and limiting his activity to desk work and painting assignments for the rest of the occupation, while placing his 60-year-old mother under arrest in Pustków, then Auschwitz, where she lived out the occupation.¹⁰⁷

A number of policemen made attempts to quit or evade service, which the Germans almost always denied. The above-mentioned Regner, who was also a member of the Peas-

104 AIPN Rz, 359/15, trial of Antoni Sroczyński, statement by the accused, Wrocław, July 29, 1949, 49-51. According to Sroczyński, his deputy commandant Czesław Karolewski, who spoke fluent German and wished to rise to the rank of commandant, conspired against him with two other policemen Leon Gałuszko and Woźniak.

105 Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe [Central Military Archives] (CAW), II.33.44, Peasant Battalions, Rzeszów District [Obwód] IV, Regional communication from Gbur to Bez [Krosno], June 4, 1944, 26-27. Commandant Kubiak was replaced by Strużyński.

106 AIPN Rz, 358/23, trial of Bronisław Regner, statement by Rzeszów voivodeship judge Franciszek Woleński to the county court of Przemyśl, March 23, 1951, 233.

107 AIPN Rz, 359/29, trial of Stanisław Krasoń, deposition of Michał Dąbrowa, Dębica, August 9, 1951, 62-62v; AIPN Rz, 359/30, main hearing, interrogation of Stanisław Krasoń; Dębica, November 12, 1951, 7; sentence by the Voivodeship Court of Rzeszów, Dębica, November 13, 1951, 44. The prisoners in Mielec were liberated by the AK “Jędrusie” partisans. Krasoń was released due to the intervention of Dębica gendarme Heinrich Süßdorf, who had previously commissioned Krasoń to paint his portrait.

ant Battalions, requested permission from his underground commander to leave the Polish Police to join the partisans in the forest. But when the underground liquidated the police commandant, Regner was encouraged to remain and seek promotion to commandant, which he succeeded in doing in the summer of 1943.¹⁰⁸ Others turned to the tried-and-tested method of draft dodging by feigning or overstating health problems. Thus, Piotr Zemla tried to leave his Polish Police post in Brzozów (Kreis Krosno) on multiple occasions by using his poor health as a pretext, but the Germans denied all requests.¹⁰⁹ As the occupation deepened, the Germans took steps to discourage desertions from service. A former policeman who landed a desk job in the Jasło Polish Police on account of poor eyesight noted that as the Germans began to use the Blue Police for “very difficult assignments”, they kept a register of all family members, who could then be used as hostages in the event of escape.¹¹⁰ True to conscripts attempting to avoid the more unpleasant tasks of service throughout history, some policemen adopted various forms of evasion. Edmund Czajka, who was drawn into a ‘provocation unit’ made up of gendarmes and Blue Policemen posing as partisans in the Brzozów region (Kreis Krosno), feigned a sudden inflammation of the appendix during the expedition, which allowed him to return home and warn locals in the area.¹¹¹

Disobeying German Orders

What were the consequences for disobeying German orders? The examined cases of policemen in the Subcarpathian region show a spectrum of punitive measures. As seen above, in most cases failure to meet German expectations or projecting a pro-Polish stance could result in a demotion and removal from one post to another, usually within the same Kreis. This relative leniency was probably due to the general understaffing of German police forces on Polish territory. In more pronounced cases of direct disobedience, the consequences were obviously more severe. When a number of new recruits escaped the police school near Dębica, they were captured after a few weeks and sent to

108 AIPN Rz, 358/23, interrogation of Bronisław Regner, Mielec, January 31, 1951, 35; main hearing, deposition of Jan Błachowicz, Rzeszów, May 10, 1951, 278-279. The former commandant of the Przecław Polish Police, Jan Czaja, was liquidated by the BCh in 1943. Błachowicz, pseudonym Kropidło, was the regional commander of the BCh in the Mielec region, while Regner, pseudonym Kamiński, provided information to the Roch intelligence network, which had ties to the London government-in-exile.

109 AIPN Rz, 353/110, trial of Piotr Zemla, interrogation of the accused, Otmuchów, August 18, 1949, 13; deposition of Dr. Stanisław Pilszak, 29-30. Dr. Pilszak testified to providing Zemla with a number of fictitious certificates attesting to his poor health.

110 AIPN Rz, 352/177, trial of Adam Ptaszek, statement by the accused to the Rehabilitation Committee in Warsaw, Wołczyn, September 23, 1945, 18.

111 AIPN Rz, 358/173, interrogation of Edmund Czajka, main hearing, Rzeszów, July 25, 1957, 166. The Germans suspected that Czajka was simulating appendicitis, so he persuaded a doctor in a hospital in Gorlice to operate on him in order to keep up the pretense.

Kraków, where German authorities tried and executed them.¹¹² In another instance, a policeman by the name of Brzozowski in the Trześć Polish Police (Kreis Dębica) had moved into a formerly Jewish-owned home, where he sheltered seven Jews in the attic. When word got around to the Germans, gendarme Albert Alscher arrived and shot the Jews on the spot, while Brzozowski was placed under arrest in Tarnobrzeg.¹¹³ Bronisław Stafin of the Szerzyny post claimed that a gendarme threatened to arrest him for failing to shoot at fleeing Jews running past him, presumably during a manhunt, but he managed to temporarily silence him with a bribe.¹¹⁴

Yet a clear line can be drawn between cases of refusal to participate in the persecution of Poles and Jews. In Jedlicze (Kreis Krosno), Polish Policeman Ludwik Ostrowski refused to obey his commandant's order to fire on a Polish man fleeing from a forced labor roundup to Germany, which led the Polish Police commandant to tear the rifle from his hands and shoot at the man himself. Such actions and Ostrowski's generally lenient disposition toward locals led his superiors to avoid including him in more important actions.¹¹⁵ The more prevalent refusal to participate in anti-Polish as opposed to anti-Jewish actions was reflective of the national or ethnic cleavages of the Second Polish Republic and a sense of the communal solidarity that grew out of these divisions, which only contracted and hardened under a genocidal and racist regime. Thus, cases of peasants refusing to capture fellow peasants are part of this broader continuum and are more prominent in the trial record. An emblematic case is that of Karol Lech, who, upon receiving his village militia (*samoobrona*) identity card from a Polish Police commandant – a status that would require him to participate in various searches and roundups – refused to take part in such actions on the basis of principle.¹¹⁶

Although the threshold to participation in anti-Jewish actions was much lower, it was nonetheless part of the same system of pressures placed on the policemen. In most cases, disciplinary measures included demotion and removal from a post (accompanied by shaming) and arrest. The net effect of these measures functioned as a deterrent. For

112 AAN, 231/II-2, memoir of Władysław Piotrowski, 2. Piotrowski was assigned to the 2nd company of Schutzmannschaft Battalion 202 headed by Karol Lesek, stationed in the SS Heidelager army base.

113 Jan Sokół, *Konspiracja nad Wisłą i Sanem* [The underground on the Vistula and the San], Warsaw 1976, 129-130. The subsequent fate of Brzozowski is unknown.

114 AIPN Rz, 353/258, letter of Bronisław Stafin to the Supreme Court in Warsaw, November 15, 1953, 486. Stafin added that subsequently the underground passed a death sentence on Kosman (Gossmann?) for the murder of Poles. As a member of the Home Army, Stafin personally devised a plan carry out the sentence. See: testimony of the village head Stanisław Gotfryd, 93.

115 AIPN Rz, 353/243, trial of Ludwik Ostrowski, main hearing, deposition of Edward Gorzyc, Krosno, November 6, 1950, 128; deposition of Wojciech Kłosowicz, 128.

116 AIPN Rz, 353/170, trial of Piotr Januchowski, deposition of Karol Lech, Jodłowa, August 9, 1948, 53. Lech stated: "I did not want to accept the identity card, because my conscience did not allow me to capture other Poles [for forced labor] to Germany and I told him that I would not accept it." The commandant of the Jedlicze Polish Police, Piotr Januchowski, threatened Lech at gunpoint, carried out a search of his property, and fined him for various infractions. In a subsequent encounter, Januchowski arrested Lech for failing to participate in roundups, while making threats that he would be sent to Germany.

example, in 1940 the German police removed the commandant of Czarna (Kreis Jarosław), Jan Krupa, from his post as a disciplinary measure after one of his subordinates – a ‘volksdeutsch’ policeman and translator by the name of Kolman (resettled from the Poznań region) filed a report to the gendarmerie about Krupa’s “reluctance” to take part in roundups of Poles.¹¹⁷ Next, by 1942, as commandant of his new post in Wola Żarczycka (Kreis Jarosław) in the same county, he participated in the shooting of six Jewish men and women whom local farmers had brought to the police station. Though the Polish Policemen shot the Jews “in accordance with the regulations of the gendarmerie,” one of the shooters – another ‘volksdeutsch’ policeman, Marian Nowak, who was responsible for filing all reports with the gendarmerie – noted Krupa’s “procrastination and resistance” in carrying out the order.¹¹⁸ In addition, when sometime in 1942 local farmers brought a Jewish boy and his grandfather to the station, Krupa was allegedly reluctant to “personally shoot these Jews” and asked Nowak to notify the gendarmerie that the Jews would be transferred to the German gendarmerie post instead.¹¹⁹ Nowak followed suit, but also informed the German police of Krupa’s continued straying from protocol, and in early 1943 his poor track record resulted in a demotion from commandant and a transfer to Jarosław, where he spent the remainder of the occupation as a doorman for the gendarmerie and a security guard at a bank. Thus, while commandants played an important role in setting the general tone of a police post, German regulations had the potential of playing a panoptical function in policing the behavior of all policemen.

In the Subcarpathian region under examination, I have only been able to identify one case in the trial material of alleged failure to act on information of a Jew in hiding that led directly to the arrest and placement of a policeman in a concentration camp, followed by his execution. This was the case of policeman Stanisław Dubłaga of the Leżajsk post (Kreis Jarosław). The incident is mentioned in the trial of Jan Krupa, in which it is described as feeding into the broader atmosphere of fear and anticipatory obedience toward German orders. In the fall of 1942, a county-wide briefing of all Polish Police commandants was held in the city of Jarosław to address the question of police responsibility for escaped Jews. The Polish Police in Kreis Jarosław was under clear orders “to shoot Jews on the spot”, but more specifically: “We were warned that if a station had received reports about some Jew hiding in its vicinity, but the station failed to take any steps to capture and shoot this Jew, then that policeman, who [initially] received such a report, would be taken to Oświęcim [Auschwitz] or would even be shot.”¹²⁰ Krupa

117 AIPN Rz, 358/170, trial of Jan Krupa, interrogation of the accused, Rzeszów, November 16, 1955, 67.

118 Ibid., interrogation of Jan Krupa, 68; interrogation of Krupa, Łańcut, September 19, 1956, 85. The county commandant of the Polish Police, Walerian Hahn, privately warned Krupa that he was under German observation.

119 Ibid., interrogation of Krupa, 85.

120 Ibid., main hearing, interrogation of Jan Krupa, Rzeszów, December 17, 1956, 113.

recalled policeman Stanisław Dubłaga from the Leżajsk post (Kreis Jarosław), who disregarded such a denunciation, so the Germans sent him to Pustków concentration camp, where he was shot. The Polish policemen then received official notice that Dubłaga was shot as a “hostage”.¹²¹ Another policeman, Bolesław Waściński, from Grabów nad Wisłą (Radom District), was arrested in February 1943 for sheltering a Jewish woman who had escaped from the ghetto; some five months later, he was placed in the Pustków camp.¹²² Similar, if vague, references to Blue Policemen punished by the Germans can be found in the archival record. An eyewitness spoke of a Blue Policeman from Kraków placed in the Pustków camp around August 1943, who was tortured and hung in the lavatory.¹²³ Likewise, the first commandant of Polish Police Rzeszów by the name of Ziemia did not last very long: The Gestapo arrested him and sent him to Auschwitz.¹²⁴

IV. The Blue Police and the Polish Underground

The second factor that placed constraints on the actions of the policemen was the Polish resistance movement, especially the official Polish Underground State and its military arm, the Home Army. The relationship between the Blue Police and the underground remains poorly understood. In general terms, the resistance was in no position to make a frontal assault against German power. It could, however, soften the blow of German terror by neutralizing known informers and reducing acts of repression, especially the ‘pacification’ of villages. It therefore adopted a policy of satisfying the minimum German demands placed on villages with the minimal sacrifices on the part of locals. The policemen were of key value to the underground in gathering intelligence. Stefan Dąbski, a former executioner of underground courts in the Rzeszów region, recalled in his memoir the importance of moles among the Blue Policemen: “In most cases, we were warned by these men about impending roundups to Germany or denunciations. These people had the value of gold to us.”¹²⁵ Among his unit’s most valued agents was the commandant of the Blue Police in Tyczyn (Kreis Rzeszów). Such intelligence became a precious war-time commodity and an important survival mechanism of the village collective.

121 Ibid. 85, 113. I have not been able to corroborate the case of Stanisław Dubłaga in other sources.

122 Archiwum Państwowe w Radomiu [State Archive in Radom] (APR), Akta Więzienia Radomskiego, W-741, the case of Bolesław Waściński, 1-5. I thank Sylwia Szymańska-Smolkin for bringing this case to my attention.

123 Okręgowa Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu w Rzeszowie [The regional commission for the prosecution of crimes against the Polish nation in Rzeszów] (AIPN Rz, OKŚZpNP), S 2/00/Zn, investigation of crimes carried out in Pustków, Vol. 4, deposition of Jan Maksymilian Gaca, 722.

124 AIPN Rz, 042/2126, report regarding Kajetan Paprowski, Rzeszów, September 25, 1965, 33. Gaca added: “I personally witnessed his persecution, and everyone was discussing his death.”

125 Stefan Dąbski, *Egzekutor* [Executioner], Warsaw 2010, 18.

Recruiting and Punishing Blue Policemen by the Underground

The push factor of mandatory return to service was combined with the pull factor of the Polish government-in-exile and early underground structures encouraging policemen to re-enlist for the purpose of gathering intelligence and acting as a buffer of Polish society under occupation. For policemen with ties to a resistance organization, underground liaisons often coordinated some of their actions, such as the initial decision of whether to enlist or to later seek promotion. The underground could also exert pressure on unwilling policemen by threatening them with a death sentence for refusal to cooperate. This introduced the dimension of divided loyalties to the existing dynamics within Polish Police posts: between pro-German and pro-resistance informants. For example, the commandant of Wadowice Górne (Kreis Dębica) with ties to the AK, Brunon Mrowiński, claimed that he discovered a list of members of the Peasant Battalions and the Communist Party (KPP) compiled by fellow policemen Adam Szumski and Teodor Bieniewski.¹²⁶ In other instances, policemen who exhibited excessive ‘enthusiasm’ in carrying out their assigned duties could be brought in line by punishments doled out by underground courts of justice, which took on momentum in the spring of 1943. In some instances, even policemen who were members of the Home Army were not spared from punishment.¹²⁷ Others used the fact that they were not executed by the underground as evidence in postwar trials that they did not cross the threshold into collaboration. Doling out punishment to local informers and Polish policemen may have also been preferable, as it generally did not result in collective reprisals against the population. Polish policemen were an easier target for the underground. When three Blue Policemen made the mistake of asking Stefan Dąbski and his colleagues, mentioned earlier, for identification, all three policemen were shot on the spot. Two weeks later, Dąbski learned that one of the men was the very commandant and agent of the Home Army so valued by his unit.¹²⁸ When the underground received news that an infamous Jewish informer by the name of Diamant would be making his appearance in the town of Przeworsk (Kreis Jarosław), the local Home Army execution unit not only shot Diamant but also killed a Blue Policeman and wounded a German policeman in his company.¹²⁹ The confluence of German pressures and punishment by the underground for participation in terrorist actions aimed at the local population, anti-partisan actions, and Jew hunts meant a high

126 AIPN Rz, 358/162, trial of Brunon Mrowiński and other Polish Policemen of Wadowice Górne, interrogation of Mrowiński, main hearing, Rzeszów, February 8, 1955, 116. Szumski was subsequently liquidated by the underground.

127 Policeman Bronisław Stafin, pseudonym Bocian, was tried by an underground court for ongoing “excesses” and sentenced to 40 lashes. The order was received by Józef Miłoraj, pseudonym Sawiński, of AK Tarnów on July 31, 1944, but was postponed, as the unit began engaging the Germans in August.

128 Dąbski, *Egzekutor*, 18.

129 Piotr Szopa, “W imieniu Rzeczypospolitej...” Wymiar sprawiedliwości Polskiego Państwa Podziemnego na terenie Podokręgu AK Rzeszów [“In the name of the Republic...” The justice system of the Polish underground state on the territory of sub-district AK Rzeszów], Rzeszów 2014, 379.

fatality rate among the Blue Police, the highest of all police bodies in the General Government.¹³⁰ The eastern half of District Kraków overlapped with four inspectorates of the AK Rzeszów sub region. According to the most recent calculations for the Subcarpathian region, five percent of the approximately 500 documented death sentences passed by the courts of the Underground State were issued against members of the Polish Police and Kripo (see Table 1).

Table 1: Home Army Death Sentences on Members of the Polish Police and Kripo in the Rzeszów Sub-District.¹³¹

	AK Jasło	AK Mielec	AK Przemyśl	AK Rzeszów	Total
All	96 [100%]	87 [100%]	130 [100%]	186 [100%]	499 [100%]
PP and Kripo	6 [6%]	7 [8%]	6 [5%]	7 [4%]	26 [5%]

While the position of the official Polish underground as an organization was largely unresponsive to the specific plight of Jews who escaped from ghettos, variation in individual attitudes played a determining role at the local level. In examining the cases of anti-Jewish actions carried out by Home Army units, Joshua Zimmerman found that in the Kraków, Kielce and Radom regions – and perhaps most of the General Government – culpability could be traced back to the sub district command – i.e., local units without the approval of the district leadership.¹³² The same could be said for cases where units occasionally helped the Jews.¹³³ The crucial variable, Zimmerman concluded, was “individual leaders”. The same rule applies to policemen, who were simultaneously members of the underground. Such policemen appear more likely to have offered help to Jews, though these initiatives came from below. For example, upon learning of the impending liquidation of the Gorlice ghetto, the head of the Gorlice Kripo (Kreis Jasło), Jan Fereński, with the pseudonym Sęp, notified his district commander, the head of the Judenrat and others, which allowed many Jews to escape.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Młynarczyk et al., *Eastern Europe*, 179.

¹³¹ Raw data taken from Szopa, “W imieniu Rzeczypospolitej,” 464-542.

¹³² Zimmerman, *The Polish Underground and the Jews*, 267-298, 416-417. Zimmerman contrasts this with eastern and north-eastern parts of Poland, such as the Białystok and Nowogrodek regions, where the conflation of Soviets, communists and Jews led to anti-Jewish orders issued by the district command.

¹³³ For example, see: Zimmerman, *The Polish Underground and the Jews*, 314-317, regarding the formation of a Jewish platoon under local AK command in Hanaczów (Kreis Złoczów), which protected an estimated 250 Jews; Simon Lavee, *Jewish Hit Squad. The Łukawiecki Partisans Unit of the Polish Armia Krajowa, 1941–1944*, Jerusalem 2015, about a Jewish platoon operating in the Lubaczów region (Kreis Rawa Ruska).

¹³⁴ Michał Kalisz/Elżbieta Rączy, *Dzieje społeczności żydowskiej powiatu gorlickiego podczas okupacji niemieckiej 1939–1945* [The history of the Jewish community of Gorlice county during the German occupation 1939–1945], Rzeszów 2015, 97. Fereński initially served as commandant of the Gorlice Polish Police.

23

I CZARNA LISTA

POLICJI GRANATOWEJ

Kierownictwo Walki Cywilnej rozesłało do wszystkich posterunków policji granatowej wezwanie, w którym przypomniało funkcjonariuszom policji ich obowiązki względem Narodu i Państwa Polskiego. Ponieważ nie wszyscy policjanci zastosowali się do powyższego wezwania, ogłaszamy pierwszą czarną listę przestępców policyjnych, którzy czynami swymi okryli się hańbą.

Są wśród nich zaprzędani wrogowi zdrajcy, którzy jak psy gestapowskie, tropią członków organizacji niepodległościowych.

Są podli mordercy, którzy z zimną krwią strzelają do niewinnych obywateli Państwa Polskiego i rodaków.

Są zwykli złodzieje, którzy na dworcach kolejowych, kolejach i drogach okradają nas ze środków żywności.

Są szantażyści, wymuszający od Polaków okupy są łapownicy, opryszki, zbiry, katy i wrzelkiego rodzaju kanalie od których społeczeństwo polskie odwraca się ze wzgardą.

Andrzejewski Stefan Kraków	Kuczek Stanisław Niepołomice
Bergmann Czesław Łososina Dolna N. S.	Madej Stanisław Tuchów
Cieślak Wojciech Kraków	Madej Walerian Kraków
Dziedziak Stanisław Kraków	Malinowski Alojzy Trzecciana
Dziurła Stanisław Borek Fałęcki, Kraków	Nowak Kazimierz Ojców Miechów
Forlewacki Józef Radomyśl	Piątek Paweł Skrzydlana
Gąsiorek Ignacy Kraków	Ratajczak Jan Niepołomice
Guzik Kazimierz Zarnowiec, Miechów	Resner Marian Bienczyce
Grochal Feliks Kraków	Rocznik Wojciech Skawina
Gwóźdź Jakób Bienczyce, Kraków	Rop Antoni Tarnobrzeg
Grott Franciszek Łososinan Dolna N. S.	Rychłowski Andrzej Kraków
Hyłko Józef Kraków	Sklarz Edward Tarnów
Hoffman Jan Tarnów	Smolen Józef Jakubkowice, Łososina D.
Januszewski Paweł Mędrzechów, Dąbrowa	Sobon Kazimierz Bobowa
Karłowicz Piotr Limanowa	Sroczyński Józef Kraków
Kluczyński Mieczysław Sybne	Suchowiak Stanisław Tarnobrzeg
Kłęk Jan Jasło	Szmando Ignacy Wiśnicz pow. Bochnia
Krzyszowski Wojciech Grybów	Wilczek Emil Lętownia,
Kubala Jzef Grybów, Skrzydlana	Wilk Kazimierz Lisia Góra, Tarnów

Spółeczeństwo polskie z niezmierną ulgą przyjmie wszelkie wiadomości o wyrokach śmierci wykonanych na zbrodniarzach w imieniu Rzeczypospolitej przez Sądy Specjalne, a wykonywanych karnie przez plutony egzekucyjne polskich sił podziemnych. Spółeczeństwo polskie wie doskonale, którzy policjanci służą Narodowi i Państwu Polskiemu, ale o łotrach wie tylko jedno — Służcie wiernie jak psy hitlerowskiemu panu, okradajcie matki i dzieci z resztek żywności — ale ani we dnie ani w nocy wam nie wolno o tym zapomnieć że karząca i sprawiedliwa dłoń Rzeczypospolitej dośięgnie was.

Kierownictwo Walki Cywilnej

A leaflet entitled "The First Black List of the Polish Blue Police" sent to all Polish Police posts in District Kraków in early 1943 by the Directorate of Civil Resistance of the Polish Underground State. It lists 38 policemen sentenced to death by underground courts. Note the names of

Stanisław Kuczek and Jan Ratajczak found in the article's epigraph.

(Central Archive of Modern Records, Home Army collection, AAN, 203/III-117, 23)

A Tale of Two Police Posts

However, individual membership in the underground represents but one dimension. A more focused analytical framework for understanding the interaction of the Blue Policemen and the Holocaust on the help-harm spectrum requires considering additional factors that worked in tandem with others. Some of these distinctions include:

- policemen who were part of the prewar state police, resettled, or newly recruited;
- primarily anti-Jewish, anti-Polish impulses, or both;
- ties to the Polish underground (sworn membership vs. forced cooperation) or no ties;
- the attitude toward Jews of specific underground formations in the vicinity of Polish Police posts;
- the relative strength of the local underground.

The case of Gorlice county is a good example of the remarkable variation between two posts separated by 30 kilometers within a single county.

The Blue Policemen of Biecz were among the most active participants in both anti-Polish and anti-Jewish actions. Only two prewar state policemen served in the ranks of the Biecz Polish Police post. The commandant in Biecz, Ignacy Fornalik, was an outsider resettled from the Pomerania region. No documents have been found that suggest any ties of Biecz policemen to the resistance or pressure to recruit them.¹³⁵ The policeman to earn the worst reputation among the civilian population – especially as an enthusiastic Jew-killer – was Wincenty Wątorowski, a prewar policeman who applied for and received the status of ethnic German ('volksdeutsch') while in service. After the war, Polish authorities tried, convicted and executed Wątorowski as a collaborator.¹³⁶

By contrast, the Bobowa Polish Police station, under the command of Józef Laska, pseudonym Orlicz, was composed almost entirely of members of the Home Army active in helping persecuted Poles and Jews, many of whom were sheltered in the police building. It was largely due to Laska's leadership role in the underground that the Bobowa station stands apart in a league of its own. Laska held various leadership roles in the ZWZ-AK organization, including command of both the State Security Service (PKB) and the security intelligence division of the Gorlice AK.¹³⁷ Among Laska's many operations was coordinating the transfer of Jews to Hungary, an attempt to transport 25 Tarnów Jews from Bobowa during the liquidation action and the procurement of false identity papers (Kennkarte) for Jews. A notable figure sheltered by Laska's group and incorporated into its structures was the Lwów mathematician and game theorist Dr. Hugo Steinhaus, who

135 Krzysztof Przybyłowicz, *Żydzi Biecza. Historia i zagłada* [The Jews of Biecz. Their history and destruction], Tuchów 2015, 150-153.

136 AIPN Rz, 354/9, sentence of Władysław Wątorowski by the District Court of Jasło, August 29, 1947, 574-583. The sentence was carried out by hanging in 1948.

137 For more on Laska, see: Michał Kalisz, Józef Laska – policjant i żołnierz konspiracji [Józef Laska – policeman and soldier of the underground], in: *Rocznik Sądecki* 39 (2011), 243-253; Kalisz/Rączy, *Dzieje społeczności żydowskiej*, 98-101.

praised Laska and his associates.¹³⁸ The strength of the underground in the region also meant that punishment against certain Blue Policemen was carried out more effectively, as Steinhaus noted in his memoir. It was thus the attitude of individuals in leadership positions that played a key role in the variation of responses. The comparative case of Biecz and Bobowa police posts in Gorlice county is not meant to suggest a broader dichotomy in patterns of behavior, but to demonstrate the potential for a remarkable level of variation within a small geographical space, even in the same county.

The Preservation of the Polish Nation and the Killing of Jews as 'Collateral Damage'

Yet Steinhaus himself had no illusions about the depravity that many other of the policemen sank to: "In the annals of evil done by mankind a large chapter will be devoted to the behavior of the Polish police during the German occupation, which was such as to make one think they were trying to outdo their masters in perfidy."¹³⁹ One should therefore not overestimate the role of Blue Policemen with ties to the underground in impeding the 'Judenjagd'. Polish Police posts like Bobowa were the exception, rather than the rule. No documents have been found to suggest that the murder of Jews was sanctioned by the district command of the AK Rzeszów Subregion, who were in theory to be regarded as Polish citizens. On the contrary, at the height of 'liquidation actions' of ghettos in District Kraków, an underground publication issued by the Home Army warned against enlisting in the Polish Police, as new recruits were being incorporated into a "special German auxiliary service" in a camp near Dębica, where they were often "trained" to shoot Jews.¹⁴⁰ In practice, however, the protection of ethnic Poles was given far greater priority over the protection of ethnic Jews. As Carla Tonini has argued in her survey of the Polish underground press, "resistance against the Nazis was only concerned with the preservation of the Polish nation", while the fate of minorities "was of no interest to the majority of the Poles".¹⁴¹ This implicit national or ethnic bias, combined with the prerogative to protect the underground organization, often informed decisions of local leadership in relation to Jews in hiding. In fact, killing Jews did not always contradict the ethos of protecting the "citizens of the Polish nation". For example, the commandant of the

138 Hugo Steinhaus, *Mathematician for All Seasons. Recollections and Notes*, Vol. 1 (1887–1945), ed. Robert G. Burns/Irena Szymaniec/A. Weron, Cham 2015, 338, 342–343.

139 *Ibid.*, 339. Steinhaus noted the execution of Polish Policemen Kubala and Krzeszowski by the underground. A death sentence was also issued for Polish Policeman Proszek, who managed to avoid execution. See: 345–346.

140 *Nakazy chwili* [Injunctions of the moment], in: *Biuletyn Informacyjny małopolski* [Information bulletin of Lesser Poland] 23, August 13, 1942, 4.

141 Carla Tonini, *The Polish Underground Press and the Issue of Collaboration with the Nazi Occupiers, 1939–1944*, in: *European Review of History – Revue Européenne d’Histoire* 15 (2008) 2, 202.

Blue Police post in Radomyśl Wielki, Jan Pielach, pointed to specific instructions by the local Home Army in this regard. Pielach was resettled with his family from the Poznań region in 1940 and enrolled in the Nowy Sącz police academy, becoming a policeman trusted by the gendarmerie. He only agreed to cooperate with the underground after he was threatened with death. In his trial proceedings, he stated that he had received “appropriate instructions from the leaders of the underground to liquidate the Jews in the likely event that they would accuse [betray] Poles who had previously helped them”, presumably under duress.¹⁴² Thus, the struggle for Polish ‘national’ survival represented a thread that ran through the history of the ‘Judenjagd’. In the case of policemen who in one way or another were tethered to a resistance organization, indifference to Jewish death was in part related to the overriding prerogative of infiltrating German police structures and acceptable levels of ‘collateral damage’ relative to the benefits of the organization. In practice, this sometimes meant tolerating unsavory characters or using policemen as a dull instrument of the underground.

This can be demonstrated in three underground attempts to recruit ethnic German policemen in different parts of the Subcarpathian region. The first case deals with 20-year-old Rudolf Probst, who was approached by the head of the district command of the Home Army to sign the *Volkliste* and apply for work in the Sanok Gestapo. Probst, pseudonym Weksler, succeeded in finding employment as a translator and accessing the Gestapo’s informer card index, which allowed him to reveal practically the entire local spy network to the AK command.¹⁴³ This operation was a major success, which brought significant protection to the surrounding community. In the second case, underground intelligence tried to do the same with the translator in the Mielec Gestapo, Rudolf Zimmermann, though without success. Zimmermann turned out to be the most infamous butcher of Poles and Jews in the Mielec region, subsequently receiving two death sentences from the AK and one attempt on his life by means of poisoning.¹⁴⁴ The underground’s tactic was understandable, because successfully flipping a policeman could produce powerful results, as in the case of Probst. But as the case of Zimmermann demonstrates, underground leadership was often prepared to deal with shady characters and to tolerate a level of collateral damage, which generally increased relative to rank in the police hierarchy.

In the third instance, the case of Polish Policeman Wilhelm Jaki, pseudonym Korab, who rose to the rank of gendarme, we see the underground tolerating the sacrifice of

142 AIPN Rz, 32/1, trial of Jan Pielach, main hearing, interrogation of the accused, Rzeszów, March 20, 1950, 30.

143 Szopa, “W imieniu Rzeczypospolitej,” 87-91. Probst went into hiding after his cover was blown in June 1944.

144 Krempa, *Zagłada Żydów mieleckich*, 25-26. Tadeusz Dusberger, pseudonym Topór, carried out the observation of Zimmermann in an attempt to turn him into an AK informant.

Jews in hiding on the altar of protecting the Polish village collective. Jaki had ties with the underground as a Blue Policeman in Warsaw since 1940 and became a valued asset when he was transferred to rural Poland in the Dębica region and promoted to the gendarmerie. He was particularly useful in liquidating known German informers or those regarded as dangerous elements by the local Home Army, all disguised as police actions. In the fall of 1943, the deputy of the Dębica gendarmerie, Emil Buchholz, proposed a plan to carry out ‘pacification actions’ with the help of the local Waffen-SS troops in Pustków against two villages near Wielopole Skrzyńskie reported for sheltering Jews and a high number of robberies. Jaki intervened with a counter-proposal to delegate him to the Wielopole outpost, assign one Blue Policeman under his command and allow him to operate independently in order to target individual Jews in hiding – and in so doing, the logic went, spare the destruction of local villages.¹⁴⁵ What Jaki in fact did was to form a Jagdkommando aimed at the liquidation of Jews in hiding.¹⁴⁶ His tactic included targeting Poles hiding Jews and flipping them to become informers by means of physical violence and threats, allowing him to form a small network of informers in this way.¹⁴⁷ At the same time, once Jews were killed on the properties of local peasants – in order to preclude further German repressions – Jaki falsified his reports by stating that the fugitive Jews were in fact a “Jewish robbery group” and the shelterer himself an ‘informer’ (‘konfident’).

In co-opting various functionaries of the German police and administration, the underground did take into account its reputation as an organization, but this, too, was conditioned by local circumstances and the character of local leadership. For example, after the head of the Peasant Battalions in Mielec, Jan Błachowicz, had recruited the deputy head of the German Labor Office (Arbeitsamt), Tadeusz Zwierz, he was reproached by the AK and members of his own organization for drawing into the ranks of the underground “a man with such a bad reputation”. Błachowicz responded that Zwierz “must keep up appearances and [in this way] will be of more benefit to the organization”.¹⁴⁸ In fact, at their urging, Zwierz subsequently managed to secure a position in the Mielec Kripo. Due to the limited number of archival sources for AK Dębica, it is not clear if Jaki’s actions caused any controversy in the ranks of the underground, but by his own account, the local command was aware of his actions. In one instance, Jaki claimed to

145 AIPN Rz, 353/278, trial of Wilhelm Jaki, interrogation of the accused, Rzeszów, August 31, 1950, 72-73; interrogation of Jaki, September 5, 1950, 90-91.

146 Ibid., deposition of Jan Chmura (former village head of Brzeziny), Wielopole Skrzyńskie, September 14, 1950, 148-149.

147 Ibid., interrogation of Jaki, 73; deposition of Stanisław Wodzisz; Rzeszów, September 2, 1950, 83-84; deposition of Józef Piontek, Wielopole Skrzyńskie, September 14, 1950, 131. Both Wodzisz and Piontek sheltered Jews and were forced to cooperate with Jaki.

148 AIPN Rz, 363/6, trial of Tadeusz Zwierz, main hearing, deposition of Jan Błachowicz; Mielec, May 11, 1951, 171; deposition of Antoni Anuszewski, member of the People’s Party (SL) during the war, 168v-169.

have received an order from his unit leader Stanisław Lachman, pseudonym Zan, in Brzeziny to liquidate a Jewish woman and her ten-year-old child, because she “knew too much about the AK organization”.¹⁴⁹ More generally, Jaki did state that he made a request to the head of AK Dębica, Ludwik Marszałek, pseudonym Zbroja, to remove him from conspiratorial work as a policeman, as it caused him a great deal of stress and anxiety, but Marszałek “categorically” denied his request on the grounds that he was too valuable as a source of information and his ability to “liquidate dangerous elements to the nation and the organization”.¹⁵⁰ As with most trial material, it is difficult to locate the line between the truth and the tendency of the accused to conveniently blame the dead.

Still, we can see that Jaki’s own antipathy toward Jews became all the more deadly when combined with other factors, such as the willingness of local underground leadership to look the other way in the murder of fugitive Jews perceived as dangerous to the local community and his value as a secret agent in the ranks of the German police. If anything, his activity in anti-Jewish actions likely made him free of suspicion in the eyes of the German police. The case of Jaki, who is known to have killed at least 17 Jews from 1943/1944 in the Dębica region, represents one end of a broader continuum in which Polish and Jewish lives were assigned different values in the evolving logic of national survival under occupation. Polish policemen with ties to the underground, who killed fugitive Jews they regarded as harbingers of German repressions against local communities, appear to have interpreted such actions as a form of collateral damage. In such instances, the murder of Jews by a member of the Polish underground did not register as a contradiction of fighting against the German occupation and for Polish national survival.

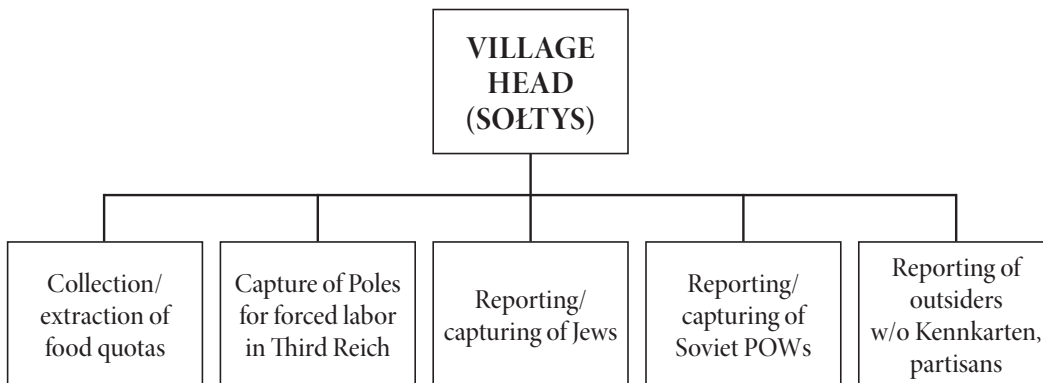
V. The Blue Police and the Local Population

The third factor to condition the actions of the policemen was the local population. In the world turned upside down under German occupation, did the majority of the policemen abandon their prewar commitment to protect the local population? Whatever the Order Police had done to alter the character and role of the Blue Police as an auxiliary

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, interrogation of Wilhelm Jaki, September 5, 1950, 213-214. Jaki claimed that the deputy commander of AK Dębica Adam Lazarowicz, pseudonym Klamra, approved the execution of the Jewish mother and child. It is possible that Jaki was shifting blame on underground leadership, though Lazarowicz was himself executed in Warsaw’s Mokotów prison on March 1, 1951 after an investigation by the Department of Security (UB). According to Jaki, this was part of a string of killings Jaki had carried out on orders from the underground, such as the shooting of an AK member, who was allegedly part of a “robbery group”, which led to concerns on the part of the leadership that he would reveal information about the organization if arrested by the German police.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, letter of Wilhelm Jaki to the Ministry of Justice, December 1956, 502-503. Ludwik Marszałek was executed by the Department of Security in Wrocław on November 27, 1948.

Primary responsibilities of village heads under German occupation.



force and despite its visible moral deterioration under occupation, some measure of the prewar ethos to protect the local population had remained in place. I suggest this capacity underwent a transformation. A postwar judgment expressed the fundamental dilemma of villages in the following terms: “During the occupation, village heads, because of their position, oscillated between the interests of the occupier and the interests of the civilian population of the village. The absence of any authority that would defend the Polish population and protect it from repressions by the occupier forced village heads, as well as the population, to carry out unlawful regulations in order to avoid even worse consequences.”¹⁵¹ Despite the central role assigned to the Polish underground in the postwar period, with the dismantling of the Polish state all legal protection had been lifted from the local population. As the occupation deepened, large sections of Polish society began to adapt to the status quo and the underground’s role was a matter of forestalling this social disintegration, or what at the time was labeled ‘demoralization’. In reality, the Polish police often stepped into the power vacuum left by the removal of legitimate state authority as the ‘problem solvers’ and ‘protectors’ of local communities. However, this role could be played out in a variety of ways.

The Polish Police as Communal Protectors

In this schema, advance warnings about roundups and search operations were a key element of the safety net that the Blue Police could provide. Policemen with ties to the underground played a leading role in this respect, but even those without clear ties often embodied the role of communal ‘protectors’. When policeman Bronisław Stafin of the Szerzyny post found a way to be removed from service by feigning illness, a delegation of villagers appeared in his home asking him to return to work, because in his absence Ger-

151 AIPN Rz, 353/1, trial of village head Michał Gesing and others, sentence by the District Court of Tarnów, February 11, 1949, 411.

man repressions had risen.¹⁵² “I asked him [Stafin] not to do it, because the population would lose an informant”, testified a villager.¹⁵³ Stafin’s record of mitigating the effects of the occupation was indeed noteworthy. By one account, by giving villages advance warning about various German “expeditions”, some 200 inhabitants (across seven villages) marked for forced labor in camps or Germany were said to have been spared.¹⁵⁴ The village head recalled two to three incidents when Stafin organized help for the poor by collecting food from among “trusted people” and later redistributing it in a discreet fashion.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, the mayor and priest of the same village pressured policeman Mikołaj Leszega – who enjoyed a good reputation as a policeman of eight years – to return to service in the interest of the local community.¹⁵⁶ Other policemen are known to have used their position to support the Central Welfare Council (Rada Główna Opiekuńcza – RGO), the main social welfare organization for ethnic Poles permitted to operate under German occupation.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, a left-leaning prewar policeman from Żyrardów, Marian Lenartowicz, was transferred to the Jasło region, where sent food packages to prison inmates in Auschwitz, Łódź and Żyrardów¹⁵⁸ – in the last case, packages were sent at the request of Jewish acquaintances in Żyrardów, who had been resettled to the Warsaw ghetto.¹⁵⁹

The Blue Police could also act as a force of moderation during police patrols or round-ups, especially in those that included gendarmes. After a mixed patrol of German and Polish policemen executed two villagers in Jamy (Kreis Dębica), policeman Brunon Mrowiński “intervened with the Germans not to shoot people”, stating that “you are shooting innocent people”, while discreetly encouraging local children to “scream and cry”.¹⁶⁰ As a result, the Germans left the village with two Polish captives, but without further violence. Such interventions were no guarantee of mitigating violence, of course. During the second ‘pacification’ of the village of Róża (Kreis Dębica) in June 1944, in

152 AIPN Rz, 353/258, letter by the legal defense to the Special Court of Rzeszów, 140.

153 Ibid., main hearing, deposition of Józef Kluz, January 23, 1951, 323.

154 Ibid., main hearing, deposition of Fr. Jan Ślązak, 321; letter by the legal defense, 139. The witnesses also noted that Stafin was known to have sheltered Jews and Soviet POWs in his home.

155 Ibid., main hearing, deposition of Stanisław Gotfryd, March 7, 1951, 394.

156 AIPN Rz, 354/73, trial of Mikołaj Leszega, sentence by the District Court of Jasło, October 24, 1949, 291; main hearing, deposition of Fr. Jan Ślązak, July 29, 1948, 133-135. Ślązak added that Leszega allowed the Parizer family of three to escape from arrest by giving them a nail used to pick the lock on the prison door.

157 AIPN Rz, 359/30, deposition of RGO employee Włodzimierz Gardziel, November 13, 1951, 33v; interrogation of Stanisław Krasoń, 9v. Krasoń deposited bread ration stamps with Gardziel, which were sent to camp inmates.

158 AIPN Rz, 107/1783, Vol. 4, main hearing, deposition of Aniela Izycka (sister of Lenartowicz), 378-379; deposition of Marian Leczysłowski (postman in Brzostek), 379-380; idem., Vol. 1, interrogation of Lenartowicz, 162v. The postman noted that Lenartowicz sent two to three packages or more a week.

159 The Żyrardów Jews turned for help to Lenartowicz’s father, who was a member of an unnamed left-wing party. The policeman’s father and sister repackaged the food in Żyrardów and sent it to the Warsaw ghetto.

160 AIPN Rz, 358/162, main hearing, deposition of village head Jan Syper, Mielec, February 11, 1955, 125.

which over a dozen people were shot, Blue Policeman Sierak turned to a ‘volksdeutsch’ gendarme by the name of Węgrzyn, telling him to “give it a rest already and stop shooting”, to which the latter responded that the “Polish police is under his command” and continued to shoot locals. Other Blue Policemen are said to have walked around discreetly telling people to flee.¹⁶¹ On February 10, 1943, in the village of Jawornik Polski (Kreis Rzeszów), the underground assassinated Józef Baran, a known German informer, especially involved in denouncing Jews. The next day, the Rzeszów gendarmerie arrived on the scene and demanded a list of 15 villagers, who would be shot in reprisal for the killing of ‘their man’, but after Polish Policeman Józef Spaltenstein interceded, the Germans settled on shooting ‘only’ three inhabitants.¹⁶²

The reality of the occupation had created a world in which the average policeman came into contact with more infractions against German regulations and fugitives than he could prosecute. Situational factors – such as fear in the presence of a German policeman, the offer of a bribe, or pre-existing relations – often played a crucial role in whether and how a ‘crime’ would be handled within a policeman’s limited autonomy. Among the factors that determined the outcome once Jews came into contact with the Blue Police was prewar acquaintance and timing. After arresting the family of Szaje Altman on suspicion of being Jewish, German gendarmes turned the prisoners and the case over to the Polish Police for investigation. “The commandant turned out to be a decent human being and told us to specify witnesses that would confirm that they are Catholics”, wrote Altman. His sister-in-law remembered an acquaintance, a policeman in Dębica, whom they called on the telephone: “Upon hearing her voice, he confirmed that they were Catholics.”¹⁶³ As a result of the combined effort of both policemen, the family was released. In another case, Rywka Schenker, captured and brought to the police station in Dąbrowa Tarnowska (Kreis Tarnów), was given an opportunity to escape and hide with a Polish policeman by the name of Janisław, who recalled the goodness her grandmother had shown him before the war. Schenker refused, believing that he only “wants to take advantage of me and then shoot me”, but learned after the war that the policeman was earnest, as he had sheltered a rabbi’s daughter in his home.¹⁶⁴

161 AIPN Rz, OKŚZpNP, S 52/12/Zn, Vol. 2, investigation into the pacification of the village of Wiewiórka, deposition of Józef Buch, 1946, 219-222.

162 AIPN Rz, 358/53, Vol. 1, trial of Józef Spaltenstein, sentence of the Voivodeship Court of Rzeszów, 12 November 1951, 61-69; deposition of Spaltenstein, Rzeszów, March 19, 1950, 110-111; deposition of Spaltenstein, April 18, 1950, 126-129; deposition of Spaltenstein, July 27, 1950, 205-207. The informer was allegedly shot by a Jewish partisan, Munio Langsam, pseudonym Kościuszko, for his denunciation of Jews hiding in villages.

163 AŻIH, 301/2973, testimony of Szaje Altman, Wrocław, October 17, 1947, 10.

164 Memoir of Rywka Schenker [later Regina Goldfinger], in Jan Grabowski (ed.), *Szczęście posiadać dom pod ziemią ... Losy kobiet ocalałych z zagłady w okolicach Dąbrowy Tarnowskiej* [It is luck to own a home underground ... The fate of women who survived the Holocaust in the Dąbrowa Tarnowska region], Warsaw 2016, 191-192.

Tema Herskowitz (Ashenberg) recalled that the commandant of Jarocin in Nisko county, Władysław Cieśla, a prewar acquaintance, was committed to saving “many Jews” from death and harm during the occupation by giving them advance notice of visits by the German police. But once Herskowitz, her mother, and brother were captured by locals and brought to the police station, Cieśla, who had ties to the Home Army, had to act in such a way as to not endanger his own life. He and another policeman “took us to the forest, telling people in the village that they were taking us to the Gestapo in a nearby city, where the execution would take place. Next, he let us leave, warning us that we have to be careful and to not let ourselves be captured, otherwise their lives would also be in danger. It was true.”¹⁶⁵ The decision to break from German protocol and offer help to fugitives had to be weighed against the potential consequences for one’s life. Jews who had so-called Aryan looks likely found themselves on the preferential end of the help spectrum, as they would be less likely to be singled out as Jews, captured, and made to reveal their helpers. It was probably for this reason that all the policemen of an unnamed rural post near Rzeszów were more willing to free a young boy, Zelman Birenfeld, after a local farmer delivered him to the police: “The police was Polish. A good policeman asked me if I wanted to die. I wanted to die, because I believed that my parents were no longer alive and nothing mattered to me. At the police station, they advised me to go over to the next village, because I did not look like a Jew. They taught me how to cross myself, how to go about work, and sent me off. They saved my life.”¹⁶⁶ In a more daring case, Kraków policeman Stanisław Śliżewski sheltered Zofia Korngold in his home. When Korngold asked the policeman to try to free her younger brother, Zygmunt Żabner, from the Rzeszów ghetto, Śliżewski travelled the 170 kilometers to the Rzeszów ghetto and arranged a plan with another Polish policeman to facilitate the brother’s escape at night.¹⁶⁷ In another instance, family resemblance was grounds for offering help. In Kolbuszowa (Kreis Rzeszów), the fact that young Norman Salsitz had reminded police commandant Patek of his only son who died in battle in 1939 served as a call to protect the young man. Patek, who was resettled from the Poznań region in 1940, notified Salsitz of a

165 Letter of Tema Herskowitz to Shmuel Krakowski, Brooklyn, January 11, 1984, in: Elżbieta Rączy, *Pomoc Polaków dla ludności żydowskiej na Rzeszowszczyźnie 1939–1945* [Help offered by Poles to the Jewish population of the Rzeszów region 1939–1945], Rzeszów 2008, 260. In 1988, Yad Vashem recognized Cieśla as Righteous Among the Nations.

166 AŻIH, 301/2745, testimony of Zelman Birenfeld (b. 1933), Chorzów, August 26, 1947, 2.

167 Yad Vashem Archives (YVA), M.31, Collection of the Righteous Among the Nations Department, File 7399, Stanisław Śliżewski, testimonies of Zygmunt and Adolf Żabner; testimony of Zygmunt Kraus, not paginated. Śliżewski was one of the policemen held in the Ostashkov camp in the Soviet Union, who managed to escape. According to Kraus, Śliżewski entered the Rzeszów ghetto pretending to be a Jew and located Żabner, while a fire was simulated by another policeman to create chaos. A Polish maid in Kraków subsequently denounced Śliżewski and Korngold. Korngold perished in Bełżec, Śliżewski was imprisoned in Kraków, but was released after the intervention of an Austrian policeman, Busko Oswald, an acquaintance who worked in the Krakow ghetto and himself sheltered a Jewish woman.

scheduled liquidation of the Kolbuszowa labor camp, allowing 55 Jews to escape on November 18, 1942.¹⁶⁸

However, the same logic that informed decisions of who to help played a role in decisions of who to kill, if it came to that. When the Lichtig family from Mielec fled the Połaniec ghetto prior to its liquidation in October 1942, they tried to cross the Vistula River back to Mielec (Kreis Dębica), at which time they were shot by the Polish Police of Mielec from the other side of the river. One of the shooters was policeman Ignacy Ortyl. When the policemen crossed the river to examine the bodies, Ortyl was allegedly surprised to find his prewar acquaintance Mechel Lichtig among the victims. According to witness testimonies, upon returning to Mielec Ortyl claimed that he “probably would not have shot him, if he knew it was Lichtig”.¹⁶⁹ Under different circumstances, the same police station could be both a source of death or survival for Jews. For example, Jakób Schenker recalled that the Gestapo arrived in the village of Jodłowa (Kreis Jasło) on August 12, 1942 to consult with the Polish Police regarding the impending *Aktion*. The police warned the Jewish community, which allowed 100 Jews to escape on the same day. However, in March 1943, policemen from the same station shot Schenker’s brother, who was brought to the station by local farmers, and also killed a Jewish woman and two children betrayed by a Pole.¹⁷⁰

The Polish Police as Communal Killing Squad

One could go on at length with smaller and larger examples of willingness to protect the local community. But by late 1942, the business of the police was to capture and kill Jews – and more frequently, the precarious balance gave way to their institutional role as policemen under German authority. One of the striking aspects in the story of the Blue Police is the transformation of notions of protection and security vis-à-vis the Holocaust as embodied by an auxiliary police force in the colonial space of the General Government. The dividing line between Poles and Jews around which these notions hardened was not only the result of the pre-existing ethno-religious cleavage and antisemitism found in the former Second Polish Republic, but was made more profound by the unequivocal genocidal assault against the Jews by the Germans and its consequences for

168 Norman Salsitz/Amalie P. Salsitz, *Against All Odds. A Tale of Two Survivors*, New York 1990, 253-255; Norman Salsitz/Stanley Kaish, *Three Homelands. Memories of a Jewish Life in Poland, Israel, and America*, Syracuse 2002, 133; Norman Salsitz/Richard Skolnik, *A Jewish Boyhood in Poland. Remembering Kolbuszowa*, Syracuse 1999, 295. In the last account, Salsitz noted that during the escape, as the Polish Police was forming a cordon around the area, two policemen stopped Salsitz and his companion but let them pass.

169 AIPN Rz, 357/119, trial of Ignacy Ortyl and Jan Kutyba, deposition of Stanisław Wystąpek, 17-18; statement given before the Polish Consulate General in New York by Anna Lichtig (daughter of Mechel Lichtig), 1949, 123-140.

170 AŻIH, 301/1694, testimony of Jakób Schenker, Kraków, 1.

the Polish population. With Jews left largely outside of the institutional protection of the Underground State, it was not only help that became privatized, but also violence.¹⁷¹

In terms of the 'Judenjagd', Blue Policemen appear in the sources as the 'problem-solvers'. Locals regarded the presence of Jews in the village as extremely dangerous for the village. In contrast to the German police, who were much more likely to respond with violence against those who sheltered Jews or even the entire community, the Polish Police often were able to act less predictably, sometimes more moderately. When policeman Zdzisław Sarnowski of the Mielec post (Kreis Dębica) discovered Ita Weissmann during a house search for Polish laborers, the collective pressure of the sheltering family on Sarnowski prevented her arrest: "I was only saved by the determined posture of the entire family, who appealed to Sarnowski's conscience, his Polishness, his prewar acquaintance with the family, [and] pushed him out the door."¹⁷² More frequently, however, in the crucible of the occupation, collective pressure pushed Jews out from their places of hiding into direct danger.

A more representative dilemma was one in which Poles faced a choice – real and imagined – between their own survival and that of fugitive Jews, and it was in the light of this predicament that the Blue Policemen presented themselves. Thus, when a mixed patrol of two gendarmes and Polish Policeman Stanisław Koziół of Gawłuszowice (Kreis Dębica) received reports that Józef Mądry was sheltering someone in the village of Chorzelów, they turned his property upside down in a search, but found no one. Policeman Koziół then took Mądry to the side and said: "I know that you're hiding someone. If it's a Pole, then it's nothing, but if it's a Bolshevik or a Jew, then nod your head in his direction. You don't even have to say anything, we will take him behind the barn and take him out [kropniemy] – you will have peace and so will we."¹⁷³ When Mądry refused to betray the two women he and his wife were sheltering – Sara Kanarek and her daughter Miriam – in a hideout previously used for sheltering a Polish soldier, he was ordered to report to the Mielec Kripo by midnight. Mądry left the house believing he would not return, but was spared due to an intervention of a member of the Peasant Battalions.¹⁷⁴ A more typical response when faced with this dilemma, however, was to take Blue Police offer of 'peace' for both parties.

This fundamental duality informed a seemingly inconsistent behavior toward fugitive Jews among the policemen. For example, under different circumstances, the same

171 Timothy Snyder, *Black Earth. The Holocaust as History and Warning*, New York 2015, 206.

172 Private archive of Stanisław Wanatowicz, testimony of Irena (Ita) Buś-Weissmann, undated, 3. Weissmann subsequently married Tomasz Buś, who after the deportation of Mielec Jews had traveled to a village near Belz and brought her back. Buś and Weissmann married after the war.

173 *Ibid.*, testimony of Józef Mądry, Chorzelów, 1980, 5.

174 *Ibid.*, testimony of Józef Mądry, 5; testimony of Miriam Cooper (Kanarek), June 1989, 4. Mądry believed he would face torture and be sent to a concentration camp. "I don't know if I will come back alive, but I assure you I will never confess", he informed the two women. Władysław Dobrowolski, a military instructor of the BCh who was also sheltering Jews in the same village, persuaded Polish Policeman Koziół to disregard the matter.

Koziół saw Mozes Horn being hidden in the home of Julia Gnida in the village of Kliszów. He made nothing of this fact and even gave her advance warning of searches to enable Horn to continue hiding and survive the war.¹⁷⁵ A more striking embodiment of this duality is the emergence of the ‘perpetrator-rescuer’ among the policemen. Thus, Michał Strzępka, Radomyśl Wielki policeman and member of the Home Army, is known to have killed over a dozen of Jews in the course of the search operations, but in his postwar trial it was revealed that the Strzępka family was active in coordinating the shelter of the Berl family since 1940, all of whom survived the war, while oblivious to the deadly side of the policeman’s activities.¹⁷⁶

Another remarkable example is that of policeman Karol Stachak, pseudonym Róża, commandant of the Czudec Polish Police (Kreis Rzeszów) and commander of AK Czudec. Stachak was a valued member of the Home Army in executing informers, bandits, and other elements deemed as dangerous to the organization and the local population – all under the cover of police actions. He was also regarded as a reliable helper by Jews in hiding – himself having sheltered a Jewish girl during the liquidation of the Czudec ghetto in his home that no one would take in – and looked the other way when locals sheltered Jews and Soviet POWs.¹⁷⁷ However, when in the spring of 1943 locals brought a Jewish man by the name of Mendel Apfelbaum to the police station, who during his interrogation allegedly listed the names of eight families, who had given him shelter, Stachak believed that handing him over to the gendarmerie would result in the murder of those families and made the decision to shoot the man behind the police station.¹⁷⁸ On May 8, 1944, the Gestapo arrested Stachak for his ties to the Home Army and imprisoned him in Rzeszów, where he was subjected to torture. Afraid that he would reveal information about the organization, he tried to commit suicide in the Gestapo prison.¹⁷⁹ The case of Stachak, who was decorated with the *Virtuti Militari* award for his underground activity, had confounded the legal and political understanding of collaboration by the court, which described him as “a man of two faces” and sentenced him to death.¹⁸⁰

175 AIPN Rz, 353/256, trial of Stanisław Koziół, deposition of Julia Gnida, Mielec, November 10, 1950, 316-317. Gnida added: “We gave nothing to Koziół in exchange and never even tried to give him anything, as he would not have accepted it.”

176 AIPN Rz, 34/64, Vol. I, deposition of Wiktoria Wolińska (Berl), Tarnów, May 25, 1965, 183-187. “During my stay in the Radomyśl Wielki region and nearby villages, I never heard of or saw Strzępka persecuting Jews”, added Wolińska, noting that the policeman’s help was not based on a material reward.

177 AIPN Rz, 353/18, trial of Karol Stachak, main hearing, deposition of Chaskiel Wiesenfeld, August 5, 1948, 235-236; deposition of Edward Brydek, Rzeszów, July 28, 1948, 116-117.

178 *Ibid.*, interrogation of Stachak, Rzeszów, March 4, 1948, 39.

179 Stachak cut his stomach open with a knife, only to wake up sown up in a hospital in Rzeszów, later transferred to a hospital in Tarnów. He escaped on July 27, 1944.

180 AIPN Rz, 353/19, sentence by the District Court of Rzeszów; March 12, 1949, 117-123; AIPN Rz, 353/20, sentence by the Appellate Court of Rzeszów, October 24, 1949, 35-46. The sentence was commuted to ten years in prison by the Supreme Court in Warsaw; September 6, 1954 (AIPN Rz, 353/20, 108-119).

The case of Stachak is emblematic of the broader paradox of the Blue Policemen as the ‘men of two faces’ when it came to the arithmetic of communal survival that grew out of the occupation. The drive for collective self-preservation was often reinforced by the position of the underground. Confronted with the question of what actions to take as a Blue Policeman and a member of the AK vis-à-vis Jews in hiding, Brunon Mrowiński turned to his local commander and priest, who advised him to “organize gatherings with village inhabitants in order to warn people against sheltering Jews, and if someone is sheltering Jews, to chase them away, otherwise searches would be carried out”.¹⁸¹ Locals recalled these gatherings, in which they were encouraged to turn over Jews in order to avoid the burning down of their homes, which had recently taken place in the neighboring village of Podborze. Policeman Edmund Czajka justified the shooting of a Soviet partisan before the court – and perhaps to himself – in a similar light: “I shot the individual out of fear that he would denounce to the German authorities the majority of people, who gave him shelter [...] I believe that I did a good deed by saving at least 15 people from being sent to Oświęcim [Auschwitz].”¹⁸² True, arguments about killing fugitive Soviet POWs and Jews to prevent further German repressions against locals were exploited in defense strategies during trials, where they were given a ‘patriotic’ veneer. But a close examination shows that in a number of instances acts of fugitives revealing those who had given them help, did take place during the war, usually under duress. Documents created during the war, like underground reports, also registered this danger.¹⁸³

Such logic became powerfully mobilized in the aftermath of major repressions against locals for the shelter of Jews. It was primarily in such moments of existential communal crisis and hysteria that the population looked to the Blue Police as the most immediate go-to intermediaries and protectors. When a villager in Podleszany, Ludwika Kolisz, discovered two Jewish women hiding on her property, locals began to panic and surrounded the barn in which the Jewish women were locked. The village head, Wiktor Czekaj, was thrown into a day-long dilemma of how to protect the village, the Jewish women (sisters Chana Keil and Malka Keil from Mielec, whom he had known and himself protected), and the life of his family, not to mention his own life. When he turned to a nearby ‘volksdeutsch’ with some clout among the Germans to intervene on behalf of

181 AIPN Rz, 052/239, investigation of Brunon Mrowiński, interrogation of the accused, Mielec, June 21, 1954, 39-40. The individuals in question were Leon Kobzdej, pseudonym Leśnik, and Fr. Chałas. Kobzdej was executed by AK Mielec in an unrelated matter on May 31, 1944. Most likely Mrowiński had in mind Fr. Franciszek Hachaj.

182 AIPN Rz, 358/173, interrogation of Edmund Czajka, Jasło, April 26, 1956, 10.

183 One report reads: “There has not been a single incident in which a captured Jew did not denounce everyone who offered them help. In many cases, they maliciously give surnames [of individuals] who are completely uninvolved. All are shot on the spot. We have borne many losses because of this. Therefore, I forbid any contact with and help to fleeing Jews.” See: AIPN Rz, 105/7, Order No. 3, Point 21 of instructions issued by the commander of district AK Rzeszów-South, Col. Józef Maciołek pseudonym Żuraw, March 12, 1943, 120.

the village, the latter responded that he was helpless and stated that Czekaj's only option was to turn to the Blue Police.¹⁸⁴ The most dramatic case in the Subcarpathian region to be reconstructed in which the Polish police emerged as the 'willing executioners' on behalf of the community concerns the so-called pacification action for the shelter of Jews on April 23, 1943 in the nearby village of Podborze, where in the subsequent two weeks over 30 Jews were captured by locals and killed primarily by Polish policemen from two outposts.¹⁸⁵ In the toxic aftermath of German repressions, violence became collectively privatized. "I would like to note that the villagers wanted to lynch the Jews themselves, but I did not allow this", stated the commandant of Radomyśl Wielki.¹⁸⁶ When the policemen were dispatched to surrounding villages, they encountered a recurring scene of peasants pleading with them not to hand the Jews over to the German police for fear of denunciation, but to shoot them on the spot. The Blue Police often obliged.

The Human Stain

Yet some of the policemen were not without inner conflict. Mary Berg (Miriam Wattenberg), who kept a diary inside the Warsaw ghetto, noted an incident in which the Germans ordered the Blue Police to shoot 110 people in the Gęsia Street prison, among them ten Jewish policemen, allegedly as an attempt to intimidate smugglers. On June 3, 1942, she wrote: "The Polish police were ordered to do the shooting, but refused. They were, however, compelled to attend the execution [...]. One of the eyewitnesses told me that several Polish policemen wept, and that some of them averted their eyes during the execution."¹⁸⁷ In the cases examined in the Subcarpathian region, we find similar evidence of regret, shame, pangs of conscience, and the toll of killing catching up with them. Abraham Peller noted that when the Schutzpolizei from Gorlice arrived in Biecz and ordered the Blue Policemen to assist them in the shooting of a group of Jews, Peller noticed a certain policeman by the name of Zima, who was "writing down our names and crying".¹⁸⁸ The prewar educator Franciszek Kotula, who kept a daily chronicle of all local news items from his perch in Rzeszów, noted the rumor of a Polish Policeman, who

184 AIPN Rz, 353/61, trial of village head Wiktor Czekaj, statement of Wiktor Czekaj to the Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza – PZPR) in Mielec, 1949, 93-97. The German police threatened Czekaj with execution and the burning down of the village and shot the Keil sisters on the way to the gendarmerie station.

185 Tomasz Frydel, *The Pazifizierungsaktion as a Catalyst of Anti-Jewish Violence. A Study in the Social Dynamics of Fear*, in: Frank Bajohr/Andrea Löw (ed.), *The Holocaust and European Societies. Social Processes and Dynamics*, London 2016, 147-166.

186 AIPN Rz, 32/1, trial of Jan Pielach, main hearing, interrogation of the accused, June 3, Rzeszów, 1950, 96.

187 S.L. Schneiderman/Susan Lee Pentlin (ed.), *Mary Berg, Diary of Mary Berg. Growing Up in the Warsaw Ghetto*, Oxford 2006, 148.

188 AIPN Rz, 354/9, trial of Wincenty Wątorowski, deposition of Abraham Peller, Biecz, March 15, 1946, 15. Peller was among a group of 14 Jews shot on February 17, 1942. Wounded by a bullet, he was able to crawl out of the grave and escape.

witnessed the ‘resettlement action’ of the Jews in Mielec on March 9, 1942 – the first of such actions in the General Government – and allegedly “lost his mind.”¹⁸⁹ In another instance, when Polish Policeman Józef Gancarczyk of the Wadowice Górne Polish Police was dispatched to the hamlet of Trzciana, he encountered a dying Jankiel Goldklang, who had earlier been shot in the stomach by a forester, and allegedly asked the policeman to put him out of his misery. A psychological vignette following the killing is captured in the following witness testimony:

“The blue policeman Gancarczyk entered the home of W[ładysław] Sypka, washed his hands, and in this way told us that he was not guilty of shooting the Jew. ‘It’s because he had to do it, as someone reported the Jew to him’ [he said]. Next, citizen Koziół entered the home of Wł. Sypka after having buried the Jew. After Koziół [...] entered the house, Wł. Sypka brought out vodka and we began to drink together with the said blue policeman. While drinking, the policeman kept on saying that he was innocent of shooting the Jew, he only shot him, because someone had reported it to him and he received an order from his commandant to report and shoot the Jew [...]. Wł. Sypka gave him so much vodka that the policeman got drunk to the point of losing consciousness and leapt at each of us with his rifle ready to shoot.”¹⁹⁰

After the war, policeman Stanisław Koziół, mentioned previously, now divorced, drank moonshine “in order to poison his bad conscience”. Fearful of the new communist authorities for his record of crimes against local Poles and Jews, villagers observed that he “could not sleep at night, woke up, and wandered around outside in his underwear”.¹⁹¹ No matter how some of the policemen justified their actions in the trial proceedings, Pontius Pilate-like attempts to wash their hands and minds of the blood of their victims likely persisted long after the occupation.

IV. Conclusion

Genocide scholar Donald Bloxham has written that “understanding perpetrator and perpetration is *the* essential element to understanding genocide”, with all other perspectives as ancillary.¹⁹² In terms of the Blue Police and the Holocaust, the perpetrator per-

189 Franciszek Kotula, *Losy Żydów rzeszowskich 1939–1944. Kronika tamtych dni* [The fate of the Jews of Rzeszów 1939–1944. A chronicle of those days], Rzeszów 1999, 86. Entry on March 14, 1942.

190 AIPN Rz, 052/239, investigation of Brunon Mrowiński, deposition of witness Tadeusz Róg, Mielec, August 5, 1954, 75.

191 AIPN Rz, 353/256, report by the Tarnobrzeg Voivodship Office of Public Security (Wojewódzki Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego – WUBP), May 10, 1949, 68.

192 Donald Bloxham, *From Streicher to Sawoniuk. The Holocaust in the Courtroom*, in: Dan Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, Basingstoke 2004, 401–423, 414.

spective lay dormant for decades under the People's Republic, together with the postwar trial records that would make such a reconstruction possible. One major consequence of a delayed discussion of collaboration on Polish lands is that a typology of perpetrators in the Polish context remains largely undeveloped in the historiography. This article has analyzed the involvement of the Blue Police in the Holocaust in light of a triangular matrix of pressures that was crucial to shaping their actions within the broader context of the occupation.

How should the Blue Police be understood within the established categories of scholarship on perpetrators and collaboration? As a formation subordinated to the German Ordnungspolizei, the Blue Police found itself in the lowest cadres of the German police hierarchy. Like the Order Police, its members represented the grassroots perpetrators of the Holocaust. However, a broad examination of the policemen in relation to the above pressures and the various victim groups they targeted makes less obvious the place that ideology, especially antisemitism, held in the spectrum of motivation. The Blue Policemen were thus far from the 'ideological warriors' operating within a defined institutional culture identified by Westermann. It is not clear how the Nazi racial agenda, in which Poles were by definition implicated as 'slawische Untermenschen', was absorbed by the policemen beyond the most superficial level.

The powerful contextual forces examined here highlight the importance of situational as opposed to dispositional factors. The murder of Jews by the policemen appears to have varied according to time and place. There is no doubt that the policemen had inherited the antisemitic clichés and stereotypes of the prewar period. These undoubtedly helped them to think more easily of Jews in negative terms and as distinct from Polish citizens. However, such a broad cultural antisemitism suggests a tenuous link between ideas or beliefs and actions in relation to murder. By the same token, the issue is limited by the nature of the postwar investigations and trials, in which the question of antisemitism remains largely opaque. Only a broadened chronological focus that encompasses the interwar years will be able to shed more light on ideological and institutional continuities.

Further, the initial findings do not point to the existence of a 'vanguard' group that was as homogenous and ideologically distinct as that of the young junior officers found in Ian Rich's study. However, with some caution, it is possible to begin to differentiate committed pro-German policemen – predominantly those who adopted 'volksdeutsche' status, especially in the person of the commandant – who could be seen as forming a 'crucial nucleus' of more committed, enthusiastic perpetrators with disproportionate influence in police posts. One can also point to a majority of "creative conformists" and "ordinary enforcers" among the rank-and-file of the Blue Police, identified by Prusin and Radchenko in their studies of collaborators. However, a crucial distinction is the relative absence of party-affiliated political activists in the ranks of the Blue Police for whom the

murder of Jews overlapped with a political program for an ethnically homogenous state. A similar programmatic nation-building dimension was missing from the actions of policemen with ties to the Polish underground, for whom the priority was Polish national survival and the destruction of its Jewish minority of secondary concern.

In his study, Rich pointed to the cultivation of a colonial mindset in the training of the Order Policemen and in their experiences once deployed, especially in occupied Poland, which served as a transformative staging ground of their 'colonial training' from 1939 to 1941.¹⁹³ Given its empowered status and enlarged scope of duties beyond anti-Jewish actions, it is worth reflecting on the Blue Police as a junior partner to the Order Police in this broader colonial dimension of German rule in the General Government.¹⁹⁴

On the whole, the Polish policemen emerge as far more 'ordinary' than the men of Police Battalion 101. In *Black Earth*, Timothy Snyder uses the Blue Police as a case study of what happens when a state institution is separated from a state that is destroyed from the center. Arguably, the behavior of such collaborators requires less explanation than that of the German police, since they had little autonomy and no rights as citizens to fall back upon. It is probably no accident that the most consistent ideological claim made by the policemen was that Poland was gone forever. Similar conclusions regarding agency are reached by historian Lynne Viola in her study of NKVD investigator-interrogators, who carried out Stalin's murderous policies during the Great Purge of 1936–1938 and were themselves purged in secret trials between 1939 and 1942. The investigators represented the lower- and middle-level operatives within the NKVD apparatus. Viola notes that "it is important to avoid exaggerating the role of individual or dispositional factors in settings of extreme violence". They followed "orders from above" and exercised a "constrained or limited agency" within a specific context, even if they were "anything but ordinary men in the eyes of their victims".¹⁹⁵ It is even more relevant to say of the Blue Policemen, as Mark Roseman said of low-level German policemen and soldiers, that they were not "in any sense makers of their own destiny".¹⁹⁶

At the same time, as this article has tried to show, members of the Blue Police were not simply dutiful functionaries who followed orders, even if they justified their actions in this way. Given the complex set of relations that framed their actions, they found them-

193 Rich, *Holocaust Perpetrators*, 54-55, 85, 159.

194 David B. Furber's dissertation began as a study of the German Order Police as a colonial police force before it took on a larger scope, see: David B. Furber, *Going East. Colonialism and German Life in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (PhD Thesis), Buffalo 2003. For a broader discussion of colonialism, see: David Furber and Wendy Lower, *Colonialism and Genocide in Nazi-Occupied Poland and Ukraine*, in: A. Dirk Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide. Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, New York 2010, 372-400.

195 Lynne Viola, *Stalinist Perpetrators on Trial. Scenes from the Great Terror in Soviet Ukraine*, New York 2018, 171, 177.

196 Mark Roseman, *The Lives of Others – Amid the Deaths of Others: Biographical Approaches to Nazi Perpetrators*, in: *Journal of Genocide Research* 15 (2013) 4, 446.

selves in a far more *dynamic* situation. Timothy Snyder has also described the Blue Police as the “Polish Order Police”.¹⁹⁷ Though such a label was never applied to the police during the war, it is a useful reminder to think of the Blue Police not only in relation to the German Order Police but to the Jewish Order Police as well, much as Ringelblum had done during the war. Genocide scholar Max Bergholz has written about the ability of wartime violence to produce “far-reaching transformations in social relations, forms of categorization, and configurations of power” and create “new forms of communities” along an “ethnic axis”.¹⁹⁸ Bergholz found that violence was thus not simply the result of nationalism, but a cause, something that Doris L. Bergen had discovered earlier in her research on ethnic German communities.¹⁹⁹ The research path opened up by Bergholz may be useful to better understand the dynamic forces that the policemen stepped into and that they themselves shaped, particularly as periods of catastrophe do not to unite people in the expected ways, but create distance and give rise to social disintegration.

Historical empathy as a crucial hermeneutic tool in understanding the past does not appear to sit well with studies of Holocaust perpetrators. Mark Roseman has pointed to the “inadmissibility of empathy” in ongoing studies of German perpetrators and how such “moral constraint” ultimately leaves the perpetrator “impenetrable”.²⁰⁰ One way of ensuring that the Blue Policemen remain impenetrable as perpetrators is to think of them in reductive and mutually exclusive categories of heroes, collaborators, and hateful antisemites and to ignore the many shades of blue .

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197 Snyder, *Black Earth*, 204.

198 Max Bergholz, *Violence as a Generative Force. Identity, Nationalism, and Memory in a Balkan Community*, Ithaca (NY) 2017, 6, 312-321.

199 Doris L. Bergen, *The Nazi Concept of “Volksdeutsche” and the Exacerbation of Anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, 1939–45*, in: *Journal of Contemporary History* 29 (1994), 569-582.

200 Roseman, *The Lives of Others*, 457.

Appendix
Selected Members of the Polish Police and Kripo in the Eastern Part of
District Kraków

	Name	Police Post(s)	Pre-1939 Experience	PP Rank	
1.	Jan Pielach (b. 1906)	Gawłuszowice, Radomyśl Wielki	Resettled from Poznań; wartime training in Nowy Sącz police academy	Policeman (<i>posterunkowy</i>); commandant (1941–VII. 1944)	
2.	Michał Strzępka (b. 1895)	Borowa, Radomyśl Wielki (Kreis Dębica)	Local prewar police (Radomyśl Wielki)	Police corporal (<i>plutonowy</i>) (1939–VII. 1944)	
3.	Brunon Mrowiński (b. 1910)	Mielec, Padew, Gawłuszowice, Wadowice Górne (Kreis Dębica)	Local prewar police (Radomyśl Wielki)	Policeman; commandant (promoted VIII. 1943) (1941–IV. 1944)	
4.	Józef Gancarczyk (b. 1899)	Wadowice Górne (Kreis Dębica)	Non-local prewar police (Kęty – Lesser Poland region)	Policeman (II. 1940–XII. 1943)	
5.	Teodor Bieniewski (b. 1907)	Wadowice Górne (Kreis Dębica)	Local prewar police (Wadowice Górne)	Policeman (XII. 1939–IV. 1944)	
6.	Wilhelm Jaki (b. 1911)	Warsaw (Kreis Warsaw) Dębica, Wielopole Skrzyńskie (Kreis Dębica)	Non-local prewar police (Warsaw traffic police)	Policeman; later gendarme (XII. 1939–VII. 1944)	
7.	Bronisław Regner (b. 1909)	Paszczyna, Przecław (Kreis Dębica)	Non-local prewar police (Stubno – Przemyśl region)	Policeman; later commandant (promoted VII. 1943) (XII. 1939–VIII. 1944)	
8.	Jan Krupa (b. 1900)	Czarna, Wola Żarczycka, Jarosław (Kreis Jarosław)	Local prewar police (Czarna)	Commandant; later policeman (demoted in early 1943) (1940–VII. 1944)	

	Ties to Underground	Main Accusation(s)	Sentence*
	Home Army (AK) (ps. "Skoczek") (V. 1943–1945)	Participation in the murder of over a dozen fugitive Jews, the capture of Poles evading deportation to Germany; forcing locals to submit food quotas	15 yrs in prison; loss of public rights and honorary rights for 5 yrs; forfeiture of all property to State Treasury (1951)
	Home Army (ZWZ-AK) (ps. "Czerw") (1940–1945)	Participation in the murder of over a dozen fugitive Jews	6 yrs in prison; loss of public rights and honorary rights for 5 yrs; forfeiture of all property to State Treasury (1965)
	Home Army (AK)	Participation in the murder of over a dozen fugitive Jews	12 yrs in prison; loss of public rights and honorary rights for 5 yrs; forfeiture of all property to State Treasury (1955)
	—	Participation in the murder of over a dozen fugitive Jews	10 yrs in prison; loss of public rights and honorary rights for 4 yrs; forfeiture of all property to State Treasury (1955)
	Home Army (ZWZ-AK) (XI. 1939–1945) deserted PP to join partisans in IV. 1944	Participation in the capture of Poles sought for political reasons and a Pole evading the Baudienst	Found not guilty (1950)
	Home Army (ZWZ-AK) (ps. "Korab"); (1940–I. 1945) joined partisans after German retreat	Playing a leading role in the execution of at least 17 Jews and killing various Poles	Life in prison; loss of public rights and honorary rights for 5 yrs (1950) (commuted from death sentence by presidential pardon)
	Peasant Battalions (BCh) (ps. "Kamieński") (VI. 1942–1945) PP weapons given to partisans in mid-1944	Participation in killing of member of BCh Jan Mądry in July 1943	1 yr in prison; loss of public rights and honorary rights for 3 yrs (1951)
	—	Participation with other PP in the shooting of 3 Jews brought to the police station	5 yrs and 6 mos in prison; loss of public rights and honorary rights for 3 yrs; forfeiture of all property to State Treasury (1956)

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	Name	Police Post(s)	Pre-1939 Experience	PP Rank	
9.	Antoni Sroczyński (b. 1895)	Kańczuga, Pruchnik (Kreis Jarosław) Krzywca, Orzechowce (Kreis Przemyśl)	Prewar police (location unclear – perhaps Poznań region)	Policeman; later commandant; then sergeant (demoted Fall 1943) (II. 1940–VII. 1944)	
10.	Mieczysław Oźga (b. 1924)	Jarosław, Leżajsk, Kopki (Kreis Jarosław)	Wartime training in Jarosław PP (3 mos of training)	Policeman (early 1944–VI. 1944)	
11.	Józef Laska (b. 1898)	Bobowa (Kreis Jasło)	Local prewar police (Biecz)	Commandant (1940–VII. 1944)	
12.	Mikołaj Leszega (b. 1902)	Szerzyny, Lipinki (Kreis Jasło)	Local prewar police (Szerzyny)	Policeman (XII. 1940–VII. 1944)	
13.	Marian Lenartowicz (b. 1907)	Jodłowa, Brzostek (Kreis Jasło)	Non-local prewar police (Będzin – Silesian region)	Policeman (III. 1941–VII. 1944)	
14.	Bronisław Stafin (b. 1900)	Szerzyny (Kreis Jasło)	Local prewar police (Szerzyny)	Policeman (1940–VII. 1944)	
15.	Adam Ptaszek (b. 1900)	Jasło (Kreis Jasło)	Non-local prewar police (Równe – Wołyń region)	Policeman (I. 1940–XII. 1944)	
16.	Jan Fereński (b. 1899)	Gorlice PP, Gorlice Kripo (Kreis Jasło)	Local prewar police (Gorlice)	Kripo commandant (I. 1940–VIII. 1944)	
17.	Wincenty Wątorowski (b. 1912)	Biecz (Kreis Jasło)	Local prewar police (Biecz) + Nowy Sącz police academy	Policeman; police officer (promoted VI. 1943) (I. 1940–I. 1945)	

	Ties to Underground	Main Accusation(s)	Sentence*
	In regular contact with Peasant Battalions (BCh)	Participation with the Sonderdienst in hunts for Jews; persecution of the Polish population for disobeying various German regulations	6 mos in prison; loss of public rights and honorary rights for 2 yrs (1951)
	—	Capture of 2 Soviet POWs, who escaped from forced labour in Germany; employment as a Gestapo informer	Death sentence (1945) (hanged in 1945)
	Home Army (ZWZ-AK) (ps. "Orlicz") (1940–1945)	Collaboration with the German occupiers	Sent to a Soviet labour camp in Donbas in 1945 (returned the same year)
	—	Participation with gendarmerie in capture of Jews in hiding; arrest of Poles for illegal slaughter of livestock	5 yrs and 6 mos in prison; loss of public rights and honorary rights for 2 yrs; forfeiture of all property to State Treasury (1950)
	Home Army (AK) (mid-1944); joined partisans after German retreat	Participation with German police in the mass execution of Jews; capturing members of the Communist party	7 yrs in prison; loss of public rights and honorary rights for 3 yrs; forfeiture of all property to State Treasury (1951)
	Home Army (ZWZ-AK) (ps. "Bocian") (1940–1945); joined partisans after German retreat	Participation with gendarmerie in the killing of 3 Jews and the capture of Poles for forced labour	8 yrs in prison (1951)
	—	Maltreating Poles for illegal possession of weapons; participation in the murder of a Jewish woman in summer 1942	Found not guilty (1946)
	Home Army (ZWZ-AK) (ps. "Sep") (I. 1940–1945) deserted PP in VIII. 1944 and joined partisans	Collaboration with the German occupiers; contributing to the fascistization of Poland	7 years in prison (1955)
	—	The shooting of a number of Jews and Poles; maltreatment of the local population; accepted membership of Volksdeutsch	Death sentence (1947) (hanged in 1948)

	Name	Police Post(s)	Pre-1939 Experience	PP Rank	
18.	Edmund Czajka (b. 1914)	Izdebki, Brzozów (Kreis Krosno) Przeworsk (Kreis Jarosław)	Prewar Border Protection Corps (KOP) + Nowy Sącz police academy	Policeman (Fall 1942–VII. 1944)	
19.	Józef Chlebek	Dynów (Kreis Krosno)	Local prewar police (Dynów)	Policeman (1939–summer 1943)	
20.	Edward Grzyb (b. 1910)	Miejsce Piastowe, Jedlicze (Kreis Krosno)	Resettled from Poznań region; wartime training in Nowy Sącz academy (5 mos)	Policeman (mid-1943–VII. 1944)	
21.	Ludwik Ostrowski (b. 1893)	Jedlicze (Kreis Krosno)	Local prewar police (Jedlicze)	Policeman (1940–1944)	
22.	Piotr Zemla (b. 1898)	Brzozów (Kreis Krosno)	Local prewar police (Brzozów)	Policeman (1940–1944)	
23.	Władysław Malawski (b. 1897)	Skołoszyn, Jasło (Kreis Jasło) Oparówka, Wiśniowa <i>Stützpunkte</i> (Kreis Krosno)	Non-local prewar police (Kamionka Strumiłowa – Lwów region)	Police officer (<i>starszy posterunkowy</i>) (1940–VII. 1944)	
24.	Kajetan Paprocki (b. 1897)	Rzeszów PP, Rzeszów Kripo (Kreis Rzeszów)	Editor of <i>Echo Śląskie</i> in Katowice	Kripo policeman (1941–VII. 1944)	
25.	Karol Stachak (b. 1899)	Czudec, Lubenia, Babice (Kreis Rzeszów)	Local prewar police (Czudec)	Policeman; later commandant; then policeman (promoted in 1942) (1940–V. 1944)	

* The data in this column is based on a final verdict after initial sentencing and subsequent appeals.
In almost all cases, the trials of the policemen in district courts were adjudicated by the Supreme Court.

	Ties to Underground	Main Accusation(s)	Sentence*
	People's Army (AL) (1943–1944)	The shooting of a Soviet partisan	Found not guilty (1957)
	—	—	—
	—	Shooting of 2 Jews and participation in capturing of Poles for forced labour	10 yrs in prison; loss of public rights and honorary rights for 3 yrs (1953)
	—	Escorting 4 Jews to gendarmerie in Krosno in fall 1943	5 yrs and 6 mos in prison; loss of public rights and honorary rights for 3 yrs (1951)
	Home Army (AK)	Participation in capture of Jewish woman, Poles for forced Labor and a young man escaped from Baudienst	6 yrs in prison; loss of public rights and honorary rights for 2 yrs; forfeiture of all property to State Treasury (1950)
	—	Participation with gendarmerie in espionage operations against the Polish underground movement and the Jewish population, and the shooting of Jews and Poles	13 yrs in prison; loss of public rights and honorary rights for 5 yrs; forfeiture of all property to State Treasury (1951)
	—	Participation in actions against Jews and pacification actions against Poles	Prosecutorial investigation, no subsequent trial (1945–1965)
	Head of AK Czudec outpost (ps. "Róża"); arrested and tortured by Gestapo in V. 1944 (1940–I. 1945)	Participation in the killing of Poles evading German regulations; the shooting of a Jewish fugitive brought to the station in 1942	Death sentence commuted to 10 yrs in prison; loss of public rights and honorary rights for 5 yrs (1949)

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BEITRÄGE

**Mittäterschaft in Osteuropa im
Zweiten Weltkrieg und im Holocaust
in Osteuropa**

**Collaboration in Eastern Europe
during the Second World War and
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Herausgegeben von/Edited by
Peter Black/Béla Rásky/Marianne Windsperger

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